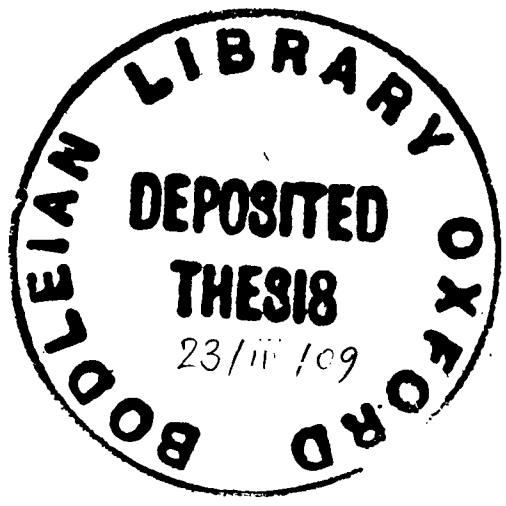
The Castle, The Custom House And The Cabinet: Administration And Policy In Famine Ireland, 1845-1849



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Short Abstract

It is the contention of this thesis that the activities of, and the influences on, the senior administrators based in the Castle and the Custom House in Dublin during the Great Irish Famine are an essential element to understanding the formulation and execution of Irish Famine relief policy. The principal aim of the study is to articulate the role played by these administrators in the formulation of relief policy. Emphasis is also given to the debates in the Cabinet over Irish relief policy and the influence of the administrators on those debates.

The subject of the first chapter is the Science Commission. It examines in turn Peel's motivations for establishing the Science Commission, the chronology of events leading up to its establishment and the activities of the Commissioners both in England and Ireland.

The second chapter concerns the Scarcity Commission established by Peel and Graham. It explores the motivations behind the selection of individual Commissioners and the relationships between the Commissioners. It also considers and contrasts the tasks that were officially assigned to the Commissioners and the limited use to which their conclusions were put by the Government.

Chapters three and four deal with the Board of Works and in particular its influence on the formulation and administration of relief policy of Richard Griffith, Thomas Larcom, and Harry Jones. The activities of the Commissioners after the reconfiguration of the Board of Works by Act of Parliament in 1846 are examined and the fourth chapter seeks to establish in detail the political context surrounding the decision to abandon relief by public employment as revealed in the Cabinet discussions at the time.

The final chapter examines the actions of Edward Twisleton in Ireland during the Famine and his influence, or lack of it, on the formulation of relief policy. A detailed account is offered of the political context of the Poor Law Extension Act. Twisleton's relationships with both the Treasury and Clarendon, and the motives underlying his resignation in March 1849, are investigated.

Long Abstract

In March 1954 Robin Dudley Edwards made the following entry in his diary:

> The essential weakness of the Famine studies came to me very clearly after reading Dr. T. O' Herlihy's booklet published seven years ago ... 'The Circumlocution office' was not exactly the same as Dublin Castle, but the fact remains that we have failed to include anything on the Castle and KBN [Kevin Nowlan] admits they were a sorry lot. In the light of what we see today of Kenya such a factor should get some proper treatment.[1]

Edwards' identification of this Castle lacuna as an 'essential weakness' in his jointly edited work on the Great Famine is significant. For, even if the Castle 'were a sorry lot' in Nowlan's eyes, Edwards still believed that they should have featured in his jointly edited history of the Famine. Over half a century later, a scholarly study of Dublin Castle and The Great Irish Famine has yet to appear.[2] This thesis is intended to make a contribution to addressing that lacuna. It should not be regarded as definitive. In particular it does not attempt to examine the activities of, and influence on the formulation and administration of famine relief policy, of Sir Randolph Routh and Sir John Burgoyne. The Commissariat and Burgoyne's Relief Commission do not feature.

There are two reasons for this. First, during the preparation of this thesis another work was underway which examined in detail the role of Sir Charles Trevelyan in the Great Irish Famine. Part of that study focused specifically on the activities of Routh in Ireland and the impact the Commissary-General had on the formulation of relief policy at the Treasury.[3]

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[1] University College, Dublin, LA 22/37 (R. Dudley Edwards' Academic Diary): 5 Mar. 1954 and quoted by C. Ó Gráda, 'Making History in Ireland in the 1940s and 1950s: The Saga of the Great Famine', *The Irish Review*, 12 (1992), p. 101. Nowlan was the author of Chapter III on 'The Political Background' to the Irish Famine in R. Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams (ed.), *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History 1845-1852* (Dublin, 1956).

[2] Despite extensive publications on the Famine following its commemoration in Ireland in 1995-7.

[3] See R. Haines, *Charles Trevelyan and the Great Irish Famine* (Dublin, 2004). Haines' work, asking, 'How much worse might things have been had a civil servant of the calibre of Trevelyan not been head of the Treasury in those years?' (p. 544) tips the balance too far in Trevelyan's favour. However, her

The second reason concerns the paucity of primary sources relating to John Burgoyne and the Relief Commission's activities during the period in question. Writing to the Commissary-General in February 1846, Trevelyan concluded:

> Our official correspondence will almost certainly be laid before Parliament and it is therefore desirable that nothing should be placed on record but what is perfectly producible.[4]

With the exception of Burgoyne's correspondence with Anglesey, which itself was faithfully reproduced by Wrottesley in his *Life and Correspondence Of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*[5], the principal source for the study of Burgoyne and the Relief Commission's activities is the series of reports the Commission issued which were published in the Parliamentary Papers.[6] Both of these sources have been extensively examined in recent historical accounts of the Famine.[7] Therefore, given Trevelyan's implicit warning about the printed Parliamentary Papers as a reliable source for accounts of the Famine in Ireland, the paucity of alternative evidence to draw upon and the recent treatment of Burgoyne and the Relief Commission by historians in accounts of the Famine, the decision was made to concentrate on areas relating to the Castle and the Custom House that had received less historical attention and where more extensive primary material was available.

Nor will the study focus on the activities of those charged with the permanent administration of Ireland, except in so far as they became implicated in policies

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examination of Routh's contribution to the relief effort is detailed and thorough. The most urgent need for scholarly attention in this field therefore lies elsewhere.

[4] Robinson Library, Newcastle, v (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Routh, 2 Feb, 1846.

[5] G.Wrottesley, *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne, Bart* (London, 1873). The author has consulted the original correspondence, from which Wrottesley's study was drawn, in the Anglesey archives, Plas Newydd, Wales.

[6] See Parliamentary Papers 1847, xvii (799, 819, 836, and 859): *Reports of the Relief Commissioners constituted under the Act 10 Vict., cap. 7.* for the seven principal and one supplementary report issued by Burgoyne and the Relief Commission.

[7] For the most extensive historical treatment of Burgoyne and the Relief Commission, see C. Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-52* (Dublin, 1994), pp. 136-55. See also P. Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics: British Government and Irish Society 1843-1850* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 262-6. O'Neill's study also examines Burgoyne and the Relief Commission. See O'Neill, 'The Organisations and Administration of Relief, 1845-1852', in R.D. Edwards and T.D. Williams, *The Great Famine* (Dublin, 1956), pp. 235-52.

directed at the relief of the Famine. The attention given to Under-Secretaries Edward Pennefather and Thomas Redington is therefore limited. The emphasis of this study instead falls upon the group of administrators based at the Castle and the Custom House (where the Poor Law Commissioners in Ireland were based) who were specifically mandated to investigate the extent of the blight and to administer policies for its relief. An aim of the study is to articulate the role played by these administrators in the formulation of relief policy. Given that the overall direction of relief policy was ultimately determined by the Cabinet, emphasis is also given to the debates in the Cabinet over Irish relief policy and the influence of the administrators on those debates. The two cannot be divorced.

The subject of the first chapter is the Science Commission. It examines in turn Peel's motivations for establishing the Science Commission, the chronology of events leading up to its establishment and the activities of the Commissioners both in England and Ireland. It seeks to place the Commission firmly within the context of the repeal of the corn laws. It challenges the emphasis placed by historians on the importance of the 'science' of the Science Commission.

The second chapter concerns the Scarcity Commission established by Peel and Graham. This Commission has been largely overlooked in the historical accounts of the Famine. The study explores the motivations behind the selection of individual Commissioners and the relationships between the Commissioners. It also considers and contrasts the tasks that were officially assigned to the Commissioners and the limited use to which their conclusions were ultimately in fact put by the Government. This mismatch raises questions about the Government's true intentions in establishing the Commission.

Chapters three and four deal with the Board of Works and in particular the influence on the formulation and administration of relief policy of Richard Griffith, Thomas Larcom and Harry Jones. Relief by public employment was a cornerstone of both Peel's and Russell's relief strategies and it became the battleground upon which many of the debates regarding the future direction of famine relief were fought out. The third chapter examines the struggle between the Board of Works 'proper' - Harry Jones - and the officials charged with administering famine relief who were placed outside of the Board of Works 'proper' by Lord Lincoln - Richard Griffith and Thomas Larcom. This struggle reflected a broader tension between The Treasury and Dublin Castle over the administration of lrish relief policy.

The fourth chapter examines the activities of the Commissioners after the reconfiguration of the Board of Works by Act of Parliament in 1846. It demonstrates the different directions the Commissioners were pulled in by the Cabinet, the Castle and the Treasury. It seeks to establish in detail the political context surrounding the decision to abandon relief by public employment as revealed in the Cabinet discussions at the time. It thereby attempts to discern the impact the Commissioners actually had on the policy formulation process and the impact which they would have liked to have had.

The final chapter examines the actions of Edward Twisleton in Ireland during the Famine and his influence -or lack of it - on the formulation of relief policy. The motivations behind the Commissioner's appointment are explored; Twisleton's background is examined and the Commissioner's own conception of his duties as an administrator are identified. A detailed account is offered of the political context of the Poor Law Extension Act, both within the Cabinet and in Parliament, in order to determine what influence, if any, Twisleton exerted and how this policy was

ultimately shaped. Twisleton's relationships with both the Treasury and Clarendon and the motives underlying his resignation in March 1849 are also investigated.

It is the contention of this thesis that the activities and influences on, and of, the senior administrators in Ireland during the Great Irish Famine are indeed an 'essential' element to understanding the formulation and execution of Famine relief policy.

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Chapter One 5
Peel, the Science Commission and Corn Law Repeal

Chapter Two 73
The Scarcity Commission

Chapter Three 96
The Board of Works: October 1845 – August 1846

Chapter Four 136
The Board of Works: August 1846 – April 1847

Chapter Five 208
Twisleton and the Irish Poor Law

Conclusion 266

Appendix One 271
Chronology of Events June-December 1845

Appendix Two 289
Monthly Statistical Summary of Scarcity Commission Meetings

Bibliography 290

Introduction

In 1997, two years after Joseph Lee had delivered the final lecture in the 'Famine 150' sesquicentennial Irish Famine commemorative lecture series organised by University College Dublin and the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority, Teagasc, Cormac Ó Gráda, the editor of the published edition of the lectures, noted in his introduction to this work:

> In truth, much about the Great Famine remains hidden, waiting to be discovered and studied. In 1995 most of the discussion dwelt on the more familiar issues of narrative, relief, politics, and culpability, while other important aspects were largely ignored. It is to be hoped that during the next few years the commemorations and research will focus interest on new issues, some of which were raised but not resolved during 1995.[1]

That this thesis unapologetically turns its back on such new 'issues' and instead dwells on one of the 'more familiar' issues, the formulation of Irish Famine relief policy, is no accident. It is of course true that this area been 'studied more than any other aspect of the Famine'[2] and that the intensive study has produced a number of substantial studies.

Indeed we are told that the student of the Irish Famine need only to turn to O'Neill's chapter on 'The Organisation and Administration of Relief, 1845-1852' in Edwards and Williams' jointly edited work *The Great Famine*,[3] to Donnelly's chapters on 'Famine and Government Response' in Vaughan's edited work *A New History of Ireland, Ireland Under The Union, 1801-1870* [4] to Ó Gráda's, *The Great*

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[1] C. Ó Gráda, 'Introduction', in Cormac Ó Gráda (ed.), *Famine 150: Commemorative Lecture Series* (Dublin, 1997), pp. iii-iv.
[2] Ó Gráda, *Ireland: A New Economic History, 1780-1939* (Oxford, 1995), p. 191.
[3] Thomas P. O'Neill, 'The Organisation and Administration of Relief, 1845-1852', in R. Dudley Edwards and T Desmond Williams (eds.), *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History 1845-1852* (Dublin, 1956), pp. 209-54.
[4] J.S. Donnelly, Jr, 'Famine and Government Response, 1845-1846', 'The Administration of Relief, 1846-7', 'The Soup Kitchens', and 'The Administration of Relief, 1847-51', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, V, Ireland Under the Union, I, 1801-70* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 272-85, 294-329.

Irish Famine,[5] to Kinealy's *This Great Calamity*[6] and finally to Gray's *The Irish Famine*,[7] to read 'clear accounts of the succession of attempts to cope with the crisis', or to see 'ample documentation' of how the 'public actions' aimed at 'relieving those at risk' have been 'widely discussed.'[8]

But this does not mean that this particular field should now be left to lie fallow. Indeed over half a decade after Dudley Edwards first noted that *The Great Famine* had "failed to include anything on the Castle", a scholarly study of Dublin Castle and the Great Irish Famine has yet to appear and none of the above mentioned accounts comes close to remedying this situation.

This thesis is therefore intended to make a contribution to addressing that lacuna. It should not be regarded as definitive. In particular it does not attempt to examine the activities and influence on the formulation and administration of famine relief policy of Sir Randolph Routh and Sir John Burgoyne. The Commissariat and Burgoyne's Relief Commission do not feature.

Nor does the study focus on the activities of those charged with the permanent administration of Ireland, except in so far as they became implicated in policies directed at the relief of the Famine. As a result, the attention given to Under-Secretaries Edward Pennefather and Thomas Redington is limited.

The emphasis of this study instead falls upon the group of administrators based at the Castle and the Custom House [9] who were specifically mandated to investigate the extent of the blight and administer policies for its relief. As such, one of the priorities of this thesis is to uncover new ground by utilising previously unused

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[5] Ó Gráda, *The Great Irish Famine* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 32-56.
[6] C. Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine, 1845-5* (Dublin, 1994).
[7] P. Gray, *The Irish Famine* (London, 1997).
[8] See Ó Gráda, *Ireland before and after the Famine: Explorations in economic history, 1800-1925* (Manchester, 1993), pp. 129 and 148, FN 54 and Ó Gráda, *Black '47 And Beyond the Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory* (Princeton, 1999), pp. 49 and 244, FN 4.
[9] The Poor Law Commissioners in Ireland were based in the Custom House in Dublin.

archival material, such as the personal letters of Edward Twisleton, or the full set of minutes of the Irish Scarcity Commission, to shed new light on the familiar theme of relief policy formulation.

If this activity sounds straightforward it is far from it, as one of the reasons that the Dublin Castle lacunae exists in the historiography of the Irish Famine is that many of the figures that make up the core dramatis personae of such a study simply either did not set aside collections of manuscripts during their lifetimes or, if they did, those collections have not survived. The historian has thus to turn to other sources to trace the activities, ideas and contributions of these men, not the least of which are the archival papers of others. As a consequence, the study also devotes significant attention to a study of the more mainstream archives relating to the Irish Famine, such as the papers of the members of the Peel and Russell administrations.

The thesis assumes a high level of prior knowledge and understanding of how the Great Famine unravelled in Ireland and therefore little attention is given to providing a narrative account. As regards the relevant secondary source material, the thesis should, in large part, be viewed as part of a conversation with three authors whose own work is most directly relevant to the subject of the present study: Tom O'Neill, through his chapters on 'The Organisation And Administration Of Relief, 1845-52' in *The Great Famine*,[10] Robert Montague, through his 1976 Oxford doctoral thesis, *Relief And Reconstruction In Ireland 1845-1849*,[11] and Peter Gray, through his

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[10] T.P. O'Neill, 'The Organisation and Administration of Relief, 1845-52', in R. Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams (eds.), *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History 1845-1852* (Dublin, 1956), pp. 209-54. The present study also references O'Neill's other work, such as O'Neill, 'The scientific investigation of the failure of the potato crop in Ireland, 1845-1846', *Irish Historical Studies*, v, 18 (Sept. 1946).

[11] R.J. Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction in Ireland 1845-1849: A Study of Public Policy During the Great Famine' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 1976).

seminal work, *Famine, Land And Politics.*[12] The reader may find it helpful to have each of these works to hand when reading the ensuing chapters.

[12] P. Gray, Famine, *Land and Politics: British Government and Irish Society 1843-1850* (Dublin, 1999).

Chapter One

Peel, the Science Commission, and Corn Law Repeal[1]

Historiography

> No man can doubt that he is the strong man of this Parliament – of this political generation. Then it is asked is he honest? But this is a question which I think cannot justly be raised nor treated as admissible in the smallest degree by those who have known and worked with him. [2]

The question of Peel's (Prime Minister, 1841-6) 'honesty' lies at the very heart of much of the debate concerning the motivations and stated reasons for the repeal of the corn laws.[3] For Gladstone (Colonial Secretary, 1845-6), it was a question which could not 'justly be raised'. Lord Lincoln (First Commissioner of Woods and Forests, 1841-6 and Chief Secretary for Ireland, February-July 1846), had begged him to keep his mind 'open and unprejudiced' with regards to the delicate matter of the 'potato case'[4] and, despite Gladstone's repeated protestations that 'the present policy [of repeal] could not be justified ... unless upon the special facts of the Irish case',[5] it took Peel but little time to convince the former minister to take up, again, the seals of office. 'I am convinced' Gladstone wrote hurriedly to his wife on 22 December 1845, 'that we are now in a

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[1] *Please note, on the advice of the Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the British Library, all references to the Graham Papers will include details of the correspondent and the date of the letter or memorandum. Call numbers will not be given as the Papers have recently been transferred to the British Library and are to be assigned call numbers.*

[2] J. Brooke and M. Sorenson (eds.), 'The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone, III Gladstone Autobiographical Memoranda 1845–1866', (London, 1978), 24 July 1846, p. 30. Gladstone subsequently thought better of these aspersions on Peel's integrity and omitted all of the text following 'of this political generation'. See *The Gladstone Diaries 1840 –1847*, ed. M.R.D. Foot & H.C.G. Matthew (London, 1974), 13 July 1846, iii, 558–60, FN 3..

[3] The Corn Importation Bill passed its third reading in the House of Lords on 25 June 1846.

[4] T*he Gladstone Diaries*, iii, 505. The 'potato case' is a reference to the predicted famine in Ireland.

[5] Ibid., 504.

position that requires provision to be made for the final abolition of the corn law'.[6] Peel could not be anything other than unquestionably honest in Gladstone's eyes, for to suggest that he was not was to imply that Gladstone himself had been deceived by the Prime Minister.

Few of Gladstone's contemporaries felt the same way. For Melbourne (former Whig Prime Minister, 1835-41), Peel's proposition of repeal was 'a damned dishonest act',[7] whilst for Lord George Bentinck (MP for King's Lynn, 1828-1848) and Disraeli (MP for Shrewsbury, 1841-1847), the leaders of the Protectionist party, famine in Ireland and the repeal of the corn laws that Peel proposed as a solution to this dearth, was both a 'miserable pretence'[8] and yet another example of the 'burglary' of 'others' intellect' which came so naturally to one whose life had been little more than 'a great appropriation clause'.[9] For Wellington (Minister without Portfolio, 1841-6), who was ostensibly on the same side as the Prime Minister, the nagging feeling that 'a great Mistake' had been made, regarding repeal, would simply not recede.[10] For Lord Glengall (a leading Irish landlord), the potato failure was 'only a means to an end',[11] for Lord Lincoln the facts were not sufficient 'to warrant the abandonment of the law by persons otherwise prepared to maintain it'.[12] While for J.W. Croker (essayist and Tory politician) 'Ireland', and by

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[6] Quoted in F.W. Hirst, *Gladstone as Financier and Economist* (London, 1931), p. 104.
[7] Melbourne to Queen Victoria, Jan. 1846, quoted in *The Grenville Memoirs*, v, ed. H. Reeve (London, 1896), 13 Jan. 1846, 359.
[8] Lord George Bentinck, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, third series, 1846, lxxxiv, 326.
[9] Disraeli quoted in E. Longford, *Wellington: Pillar of State* (London, 1972), p. 366.
[10] Wellington to Lady Wilton, 9 Feb. 1846, *ibid.*, p. 365. See also, Hartley Library, University of Southampton, General Correspondence, 2/134/133 (Wellington Papers): Wellington to Croker, 14 Dec. 1845.
[11] Lord Glengall to Wellington, 16 Nov. 1845, Longford, *Wellington: Pillar of State*, p. 359. Longford has misquoted Glengall here, yet he undoubtedly shared the same sentiments. See General Correspondence, 2/134/54 (Wellington Papers): Glengall, to Wellington, 16 Nov. 1845.
[12] Gladstone's note of Lincoln's opinion on the 'potato case', *The Gladstone Diaries*, iii, 505 (Saturday 20 Dec. 1845).

implication the 'potato case', had 'no more to do with it [repeal] than Kamscatka.'[13] Indeed Peel, as the nation's true 'Knave of Spades',[14] initially rendered so unconvincing a description of Irish distress that Isaac Butt (Irish polemicist), was able to describe this period as one when 'to profess belief in ... the fact of the existence of a formidable potato blight, was a sure a method of being branded as a radical, as to propose to destroy the Church'.[15]

The judgement of history has also been far from forgiving. As Gray has concluded, Peel's 'political position depended on proving that Ireland really faced imminent famine',[16] yet the Prime Minister's failure to perform this task convincingly has resulted not only in a tarnished historical record but also in major subsidence to the edifice of Peel's integrity. Thus Peel, who to Hilton was both 'uncandid and self-deceiving',[17] ultimately only used the idea of famine in Ireland as an 'excuse for repeal',[18] or to employ the language of his contemporaries, 'a pretext for repeal'.[19] Hilton is not alone however in levying this criticism against Peel. Indeed Kemp,[20] Macintyre,[21] Daly,[22] Kinealy[23] and more recently Jackson[24] have all subscribed to the 'convenient pretext' interpretation of the Irish famine and the cull of the corn laws. The corn laws, for these

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[13] Croker to Graham, 21 Feb.1846, quoted in *The Correspondence and Diaries of the late Right Honourable John Wilson Croker, LLD, FRS, Secretary to the Admiralty from 1809 to 1830*, iii, ed. L.J.Jennings (London, 1884), 62.

[14] See Punch's depiction of Peel, *Punch,* x, 235.

[15] I. Butt, 'The Famine in the Land', *Dublin University Magazine,* 1847, 502.

[16] P. Gray, *The Irish Famine* (London, 1997), p. 38.

[17] B. Hilton, 'Peel: A Reappraisal', *The Historical Journal*, 1979, xxii, 605.

[18] B. Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1785 –1865* (Oxford, 1997), p. 249.

[19] See Lord George Bentinck, *Hansard*, third series, 1846, lxxxiv, 322. Hilton employs this phrase in 'Peel: A Reappraisal', 598.

[20] B. Kemp, 'Reflections on the Repeal of the Corn Laws', *Victorian Studies,* (3 Mar. 1962), v, 196, 198.

[21] A. Macintyre, *The Liberator Daniel O'Connell and the Irish Party 1830-1847* (London, 1965), p. 284.

[22] M.E. Daly, *The Famine in Ireland* (Dundalk, 1994), p. 69.

[23] C. Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-1852* (Dublin,1994), pp. xvii-xviii. See also C. Kinealy, *A Death-Dealing Famine: The Great Hunger in Ireland* (London, 1997), p. 59.

[24] A. Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 71-2.

historians, were repealed as a result of Peel's "original disposition to abstract free trade" which went back to the 1820s'.[25] Or, more pertinently, as a method employed by Peel of 'pulling the teeth of the well organized Anti-Corn Law League'[26] and of preventing 'a war between the manufacturers, the hungry and the poor against the landed proprietors, [and] the aristocracy'[27] by playing the 'condition of England' card.[28]

Where historians emphasise other influences acting upon the Prime Minister in his move to alter Britain's commercial laws, the onus of responsibility tends to fall upon social or personal, as opposed to political justification. Thus Peel drove repeal ahead in 1846 as a way of mitigating the lot of the 'Dumb heart of England'.[29] Here was a minister who 'knew the labouring...[and] artisan class' and who had 'under a chill and proud exterior, a singularly sensitive and benevolent heart'.[30] The Prime Minister, we are also

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[25] B. Hilton, 'Peel: A Reappraisal', pp. 605– 6. For other adherents of this argument see J. Prest, *Politics in the age of Cobden* (London, 1977), p. 96; A.A.W. Ramsay, *Sir Robert Peel* (London, 1971), pp. 311, 314; D. Read, *Cobden and Bright A Victorian Political Partnership* (London, 1967), p. 60; J. Morley, *The Life of Richard Cobden* (London, 1903), p. 349; G. Battiscombe, *Shaftesbury: a biography of the seventh Earl 1801-1885* (London, 1988), p. 181; Hirst, *Gladstone as Financier and Economist*, p. 101; Stanmore, *Sidney Herbert of Lea, A Memoir* (London, 1906), i, 43. See also, 'Readings in Natural History. The Butterfly', *Punch,*,1845, ix and x, 180.

[26] B. Jenkins, *Sir William Gregory of Coole: a biography* (Gerrard's Cross, 1986), p. 66. This argument does carry some weight. See, for example, Graham's comments on Cobden, *The Gladstone Diaries*, (10 July 1846) iii, 566.

[27] Prince Albert's Memorandum of his conversation with Peel, 25 Dec. 1845, *Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii, ed. A.C. Benson, Viscount Esher (London, 1908), 66.

[28] Kinealy, *A Death–Dealing Famine*, p. 58. Most historians are agreed that a strong desire to prevent revolution and at the same time to emasculate the growing political power of the Anti-Corn Law League were the principal motivating factors behind Peel's decision to repeal the corn laws. For further examples of this see Kemp, 'Reflections on the Repeal of the Corn Laws', pp. 198, 203, 204; D.C. Moore, 'The Corn Laws and High Farming', *The Economic History Review*, xviii, 1965,533-4; Prest, *Politics In The Age Of Cobden*, p. 88; N. Gash, *Sir Robert Peel, The Life of Sir Robert Peel after 1830* (London, 1972), pp. 553-4; Hilton, 'Peel: A Reappraisal', pp. 604-5; Morley, *The Life of Richard Cobden*, p. 407.

[29] Carlyle's term for the labouring and disenfranchised classes. See T. Carlyle, 'Peel Fragment', quoted in J. Seigel, 'Carlyle and Peel: The Prophet's Search for a Heroic Politician and an Unpublished Fragment', *Victorian Studies*, 26 (Winter 1983), pp. 181-95.

[30] J.M. McCarthy MP, *The Prime Ministers of Queen Victoria: Sir Robert Peel* (London, 1891), p. 139. Peel's speech in the House of Commons on 29 June 1846, praising Cobden and not 'the Honourable Member for Stockport' as the true author of repeal, might also be used as evidence in support of this case.

told, desired repeal both as an act of atonement for the nation's sins[31] and as way of encouraging the adoption of 'high farming' techniques in rural Britain.[32] The list of motivating factors for Peel's instigation of repeal, it seems, is endless. Nevertheless it is possible to identify a theme common to the majority of these interpretations. That theme is the denigration of the Irish Famine as a primary motivating factor for corn law repeal.

'Wonderful times, when potatoes are converted to a political engine.'[33]

Historians, in their neglect of the Famine in Ireland as an incentive for repeal, have again slavishly followed the judgement of Peel's contemporaries. Thus, just as Peel's contemporaries found it difficult to believe that 'mouldy potatoes'[34] could be converted into a 'political engine' and provide a legitimate reason for repeal, so too have modern historians refused to take the potato blight seriously. 'The burden of exculpation (more than one hundred pages of correspondence) fell squarely on the potato blight'. Hilton, in describing the justification given by the Prime Minister for repeal, adopts a lackadaisical tone that is characteristic of the historiography of this subject. The 'Scarcity papers' that Peel goes to such lengths to present, both accurately and credibly, in his *Memoirs*[35] are underestimated. Instead we are simply told that if Peel had been even remotely serious about the Irish Famine in 1845 then he would have suspended the restrictive laws on the importation of foodstuffs at once. 'The reason he would not suspend,' Hilton concludes,

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[31] Hilton, 'Peel: A Reappraisal', pp. 612-13. See also P. Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics: British Government and Irish Society 1843–1850* (Dublin, 1999), p. 111.
[32] Moore, 'The Corn Laws and High Farming', pp. 533, 534, 555, 560.
[33] The Duke of Rutland, quoted in Ramsay, *Sir Robert Peel*, p. 317.
[34] See R. Blake, *Disraeli (London,* 1966), p. 227 for Disraeli's description.
[35] Hilton, 'Peel: A Reappraisal', p. 598 and *Memoirs by the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel. iii, Repeal of the Corn Laws, 1845–1846*, ed. Lord Mahon & Edward Cardwell (London, 1858), 97-325.

'must be that, once it had become clear that temporary repeal was having no effect on the food supply of Ireland his excuse for "committing perfidy to his party connections" would have fallen to the ground'.[36] Such opinion seems moderate when placed besides the beliefs of those who fail to see how repeal and Ireland were conspicuously connected. Corn law repeal for historians such as Daly and Kinealy was 'an essentially English question',[37] whereas for Woodham-Smith, Ireland's 'major misfortune' in this period was 'the entanglement of the Irish famine with the repeal of the Corn Laws'.[38] And despite Ó Gráda's,[39] and more recently Gray's[40] attempts to correct this rather one-sided picture of repeal, the dominant impression left by the historiography of this subject is that Ireland truly was as relevant to repeal as 'Kamscatka'.

It is time that that the spectre of Famine, both in Britain and particularly in Europe, was again placed at the forefront of historical research on corn law repeal. 'Mouldy potatoes' have been treated dismissively by historians for too long, and yet the ministers that mattered most in 1845 argued that they were the *leit motif* behind tariff reform. Historians have written of a desire to see a multi-faceted explanation of the motivations behind repeal[41] and yet, to date, they have conspicuously failed to provide such a balanced account. While the corpus of material associated with the Famine in Ireland may be tedious to consult, to summarise such material with an analysis worthy of Hilton's '100 pages of correspondence', is to produce a picture of repeal where the Famine could be little other than a 'pretext'.

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[36] Ibid., p. 599.
[37] M.E. Daly, 'The Operations of Famine Relief, 1845 – 1847' in *The Great Irish Famine*, ed. C. Póirtéir (Dublin, 1995), p. 128 and Kinealy, *This Great Calamity*, pp. 36–7.
[38] C. Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger Ireland 1845–1849* (London, 1991), p. 50.
[39] C. Ó Gráda, *The Great Irish Famine* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 43.
[40] Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 96.
[41] See, for example, Prest, *Politics in the Age of Cobden*, p. 97.

This chapter will look again at the immediate background to the repeal of the corn laws, and in so doing, will attempt to interpret the significance of wider Tory policies, both for England and Ireland, that has been drowned in the white noise of historical debate. The first part will be devoted to the issues and themes that kept the government ministers at their desks and dominated their thinking in the months prior to repeal. The focus will then shift to a closer examination of the days in which the policy of repeal gained coherence and ultimately crystallised into a legislative possibility. The most important section of the study, however, will be devoted to the Commission set up by Peel in October 1845 to investigate the scientific aspects of the potato blight. Historians have not been shy to weigh and, on balance, to find wanting the 'Science' of this Commission. The present study will argue that in this over-arching concentration upon the scientific aspects of the Commission, historians have missed its true importance.

The long-term context of repeal: the security of the Empire

> Graham has assured me that his own views with regard to our relations with France, have recently undergone an entire change; and such I perceive is also the case with yourself. A policy of friendship and confidence has been converted into a policy of hostility and distrust.[42]

Although Peel had long kept a watchful eye on military developments in France,[43] the Summer of 1845 saw his government launch into a flurry of activity over the nation's weakened defences. Aberdeen (the Foreign Secretary, 1841-6), who from the outset had

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[42] BL, Add. MS 40455 (Peel Papers): Aberdeen to Peel, 18 Sept. 1845. Graham was the Home Secretary from 1841-6.

[43] See, for example, *The Prime Ministers' Papers: W.E. Gladstone. ii, Autobiographical Memoranda 1832-1845*, ed. J. Brooke, M. Sorensen (London, 1972), 7 July 1844: 'He [Peel] referred to general topics, probability of collision with France, Irish dangers in case of a war, position of the church in Ireland,' 265

criticised Wellington's proposed defence increases, deplored the escalation of what he saw as a 'cold war' between France and Britain. 'It seems to me that we are now acting under the influence of a panic' he wrote imploringly to Peel in September 1845, 'and that such a course of conduct has a direct tendency to produce the very evil which it is intended to avert'.[44] However, for the Home Secretary the increased military activity at Boulogne, Calais and Dunkirk, coupled with Guizot's (French Foreign Minister, 1840-7 and Prime Minister of France, 1847-8) concerted plan to bolster the number of steamers of war in the French navy, proved to be the final straw. 'It is vastly well in words to disclaim the old maxim of "Prepare for Wars, if you wish to preserve Peace"' he preached to Peel, 'but the situation at least resolves itself into one of Fact: is France preparing for War, while she professes Peace? My own belief is, that she is so preparing'.[45]

Peel, despite Aberdeen's attempts to cool the government's warmongering by threatening to resign,[46] flew into a frenzy of activity. Graham, Herbert (Secretary at War, 1845-6), and Haddington (First Lord of the Admiralty, 1841-6 and Lord Privy Seal, January to July 1846) were invited to Drayton Manor in the first week of September to discuss the immediate improvements required both in the military and in the Navy.[47] Wellington was dispatched to survey England's coastal defences and Herbert was given the unenviable task of reforming the militia. If Peel had any doubts as to the probity of his actions then the validity of this newfound commitment to defence was further confirmed by the publication, in France, of a pamphlet written by the son of Louis

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[44] Add. MS 40455 (Peel Papers): Aberdeen to Peel, 18 Sept. 1845.
[45] Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 22 Oct. 1845.
[46] See Gash, *Sir Robert Peel*, p. 514.
[47] See Appendix 1, 5 Sept. 1845.

Phillipe (King of the French, 1830-48), discussing the possibility and merits of a war with Britain.[48]

However, the threat posed by France to the nation's safety was not the only problem exercising the Prime Minister's mind at this time. Unfortunately the Empire upon which 'the sun never set' also appeared to be in an increasingly vulnerable position:

> But it is quite true that we are lamentably ill off in the Colonies for means of defence – Our fortifications are dilapidated, our ordnance very deficient; and till about 20 men went out the other day we had not a single Artillery man in all the Australian Colonies together.[49]

The message that Stanley (Colonial Secretary, 1841-5), attempted to convey to Peel here was by no means original. The First Lord of the Treasury had been faced with similar reports, albeit in different forms and permutations, since his assumption of office. Indeed Graham, as recently as August 1845, had attempted to spell out the dangers associated with Imperial over-stretch in a memorandum on defence, which placed these problems firmly in their historical context. Nor was the Home Secretary slow to refer to the government's most recent colonial complication. 'Measures', he reminded Peel, 'are also contemplated for the occupation of Oregon, and for the defence of the Canadian Frontier'.[50] It is difficult to know exactly how seriously Peel's government viewed the question of Oregon[51] for opinions on the subject, at least within the Cabinet, seemed to be in a state of continual flux. For Stanley, the situation in September 1845 was potentially serious:

> You will see that Aberdeen ... expresses an opinion that a war with the United States is not improbable ... I entirely concur with Aberdeen ... in

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[48] See Gash, *Sir Robert Peel*, pp. 524-5.
[49] Add. MS 40468 (Peel Papers): Stanley to Peel, 20 Nov. 1845.
[50] See British Library (Graham Papers): Graham memorandum on Defence, 26 Aug. 1845. For Stanley's comments on the colonial defences, see Graham Papers: Stanley to Graham, 6 Sept. 1845.
[51] The clearest elucidation of the Oregon question is given by Gash in *Sir Robert Peel*, pp. 501-4.

> thinking that we ought to make considerable preparations, if there be the slightest chance of a rupture, for organising a respectable force on the lakes.[52]

Yet by December 1845 Aberdeen had become 'confident [that] there was no disposition to go to war in America'.[53] Peel viewed matters differently and despite hoping optimistically in February 1846, that he 'could not despair of an amicable and satisfactory settlement of the Oregon question',[54] just a month earlier he had felt it necessary to warn Ellenborough (First Lord of the Admiralty, January-July 1846), of the extreme sensitivity of the question: 'Our relations with the United States are so critical that I advise you to confer with Aberdeen as to the effect of any particular act done at this moment'.[55] For the Home Secretary however, the Oregon question presented little more than the perfect opportunity for the British government to disguise the extensive program of re-armament that it had in contemplation, in response to France's own agenda of re-armament: 'We shall make a considerable addition both to our Army and to our Navy. Oregon is opportune for this purpose'.[56] In reality, the situation was more complicated.

According to Kerr, all the evidence would appear to suggest that Peel took the issue of the security of the Empire extremely seriously.[57] It should come as little surprise to learn then that, to Peel's mind, events both in France, the Oregon and within the Empire at large could all be related to the situation in Ireland. 'What an inducement', Peel told

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[52] Add. MS 40468 (Peel Papers): Stanley to Peel, 1 Sept. 1845.
[53] Aberdeen, 24 Dec. 1845, quoted in H. Reeve (ed.), *The Greville Memoirs*, v, 347. His confidence was, in part, due to events on the other side of the Atlantic and partly also the result of his attempts to manipulate American public opinion via Delane and *The Times*. See ibid., 6 Dec. 1845, p. 320.
[54] Add. MS 40479 (Peel Papers): Peel to Heytesbury, 21 Feb. 1846.
[55] Add. MS 40473 (Peel Papers): Peel to Ellenborough, 18 Jan, 1846. See also Add. MS 40479 (Peel Papers): Peel to Heytesbury, 23 Dec. 1845.
[56] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Lord Cowley, 12 Feb.1846.
[57] See D.A. Kerr, *Peel,Priests and Politics Sir Robert Peel's Administration and the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, 1841-1846* (Oxford, 1982), p.119.

his Cabinet in February 1844, 'there is both to France and the United States to presume on the State of Ireland'.[58] And when the Irish nationalist newspaper, *The Nation* made it clear that, in the event of a war over the Oregon, the Americans might rely for assistance upon a 'diversion' in Ireland, Peel's concerns appeared only to be confirmed.[59]

The fear of revolt in Ireland and the subsequent ministerial response to that fear, demonstrate something of the schizophrenic nature of Peel's policy towards Ireland at this time. Pushed to explain his government's introduction of an increased grant to the Roman Catholic College at Maynooth, the Prime Minister appealed to the lessons of history:

> In 1843, there was a formidable excitement in Ireland ... There was a universal feeling at that time that you ought not merely [to] rely on [the] application of force ... you must break up in some way or other, that formidable confederacy which exists in that country against ... the British connection. I do not believe you can break it up by force ... You can do much to break it up by acting in a spirit of kindness, forbearance, and generosity.[60]

In reality, as Peel had demonstrated to his Cabinet earlier in the previous year, his intentions were more Machiavellian. For the Prime Minister had come to realise that his only hope for securing peace in Ireland lay in the policy of 'detaching ... from the ranks of repeal ... a considerable portion of the respectable and influential classes of the Roman Catholic population'.[61] Thus the Tory government forced through Parliament at this time both a Charitable Bequests act to facilitate the private endowment of the Roman Catholic

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[58] Peel, Cabinet memorandum, 28 Feb.1844, ibid., p.118. Peel was not the only politician to make this connection. See, for example, Add. MS 40473 (Peel Papers): Ellenborough to Peel, Mar 1846 and Croker to Aberdeen, 13 May 1846, quoted in L. Iremonger, *Lord Aberdeen* (London, 1978), p. 175. Peel was also able to directly link the policy of rearmament and the situation in Ireland to the repeal of the corn laws. See Mahon & Cardwell (eds.), *Memoirs..Peel*, ii, pp. 193-4.

[59] J. Mitchel, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)* (London, Author's edition, undated), p. 76.

[60] Peel, House of Commons, 18 Apr. 1845, quoted in Kerr, *Peel, Priests and Politics*, p. 120.

[61] Peel, Cabinet memorandum, 17 Feb. 1844, quoted in V. Crossman, *Politics, Law And Order In Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin, 1996), p. 78.

Church in Ireland, and a Colleges act to provide for the education of both Roman Catholics and Presbyterians by the establishment of three Queen's Colleges in Ireland in addition to St Patrick's College Maynooth which had been endowed since 1795. A Commission under Lord Devon (MP for South Devon, 1841-9), was sent to Ireland to investigate the strained relationship between Irish landlords and tenants[62], and desperate efforts were made to gain the co-operation of Roman Catholic priests by offering 'subsidies' from the Irish secret service fund.[63] Peel's government also studiously arranged the appointment of some of Ireland's most eminent Roman Catholics to the boards of the new state sponsored Queen's Colleges,[64] whilst the Roman Catholic barrister, Theobald McKenna, was selected as the new assistant Under-Secretary at Dublin Castle.[65] Yet at the heart of Peel's Irish policy there remained the Prime Minister's burning desire to procure peace in Hibernia and thus ultimately secure Britain from attack. 'We must look beyond the present', he reminded Graham on 19 October 1843, '[we] must bear in mind that the day may come ... when this country may be involved in serious or actual war with other powers – and when it may be of the first importance that the foundations of a better state of things in Ireland should have been

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[62] Although Peel was not 'wholly serious' about the possibilities and benefits of land legislation in Ireland. See Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 42. See also R.D. Collison Black, *Economic Thought and the Irish Question, 1817–1870* (Cambridge, 1960), p. 27.

[63] See British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 30 July 1845 and Graham to Heytesbury, 7, 11, 15 Aug. 1845. For Heytesbury's response, see British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 9, 14, 18 Aug. 1845.

[64] Add. MS 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 14 Nov. 1845. See also British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Fremantle, 6 Sept.1845: 'We ought to evince an equal desire to feed them; and it is wonderful what happy terms subsist between keepers and wild animals on this understanding.'

[65] In order to vest the appointment with greater status in the eyes of the Roman Catholic body in Ireland, it was suggested that the title should also be changed from that of 'Chief Clerk' to 'Assistant Under-Secretary'. See British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 7 Aug. 1845. For the significance of this appointment to Peel, see Royal Archives, Vic/ QVJ/ 1845 (Queen Victoria's Journal): 8 Aug. 1845.

laid'.[66] Lord Ashley (Philanthropist and MP for Dorset, 1831-46 and Bath 1847-51), described this desire of Peel's as an attempt to 'reverse the rule of the Apostle and be first peaceable and then pure'.[67] In reality, it is probable that the Prime Minister never saw the difference between the two. Order in Ireland had to be maintained at all costs, for if lawlessness prevailed in that land there could be little hope of ameliorating Irish grievances.[68]

Peel and Graham therefore viewed the advent of famine, in Ireland, through the prism of a pre-existent Irish policy. 'Harsh injustice to the Irish people on the part of Imperial parliament in this extremity of their need', Graham lectured the Lord Lieutenant in October 1845, 'would justify almost any effort to obtain emancipation from misrule'.[69] The object in view was simple, Ireland had to be pacified. And in order to pacify Ireland, her people had to be fed. For not only did the continued success of the government's Irish measures depend upon it,[70] but ultimately so too did the security of the British Empire. This did not mean that overnight the government would become a soft touch. Indeed Peel, who according to Crossman had 'never been fully anaesthetised by repeated doses of [Irish] outrage reports',[71] had, in fact in 1817 as Irish Chief Secretary been embroiled in a debate over the question of calling on the yeomanry in response to famine induced outrages and may indeed have been aware of serious rioting occasioned by the potato

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[66] Peel to Graham, 19 Oct.1843 quoted in A. Macintyre, *The Liberator: Daniel O'Connell and the Irish Party 1830–1847* (London, 1965), p. 280.
[67] Quoted in H.W. Carless Davis, *The Age of Grey and Peel* (Oxford, 1929), p. 298. See Crossman, *Politics, Law and Order*, p. 78 for further elucidation of Peel's 'carrot and stick approach' to Ireland.
[68] See Peel's later arguments for coercion, quoted in K.B. Nowlan, 'The Political Background' in *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History 1845–1852*, ed. R.D. Edwards, T.D. Williams (Dublin, 1956), pp. 138-9.
[69] Graham to Heytesbury, 13 Oct. 1845 quoted in Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics,* p. 113.
[70] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 29 June 1845: 'We have arrived at a turning point in Irish affairs ... and we must be careful not to throw away the advantage, which we have obtained with so much difficulty.' See also British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 6 July 1845.
[71] Crossman, *Politics, Law and Order,* p. 11.

failure in Leyden. He was therefore, fully aware of the dangers associated with a serious deficiency in the food of the mass of the population.[72] This, coupled with mounting government worries over the recrudescence of the Repeal Association,[73] the renaissance of Orange Lodges in the North West of Ireland,[74] and the increasing number of reports received from both Heytesbury (Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1841-46), and Fremantle (Chief Secretary of Ireland, 1845-6), detailing a disposition amongst the peasantry 'not to submit to privation so patiently as they have done in former years',[75] or 'to make no payments' of rent and to 'help themselves',[76] could only have shored the Prime Minister up in his belief that the 'carrot and stick' policy of conciliation with coercion, remained appropriate for Ireland on the eve of another famine. For, by November 1845 the government was giving serious consideration to the strength of the military in Ireland. While, by December, Peel had authorized Dublin Castle to draw up a Bill (presented to

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[72] See Gash, *Mr. Secretary Peel*, p. 223. Could Peel also have been aware of the serious rioting occasioned by the potato failure in Leyden, The Hague, Delft and Haarlem? One consequence of these *frondes* was the cancellation of King William II's holiday to Germany – an event which must have reached Peel on the international grapevine. See M. Bergman, 'The Potato Blight in the Netherlands and its Social Consequences (1845 – 1847)', *International Review of Social History*, 17, 1967, pp. 390-431.

[73] See British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 30 Sept. 1845 and Graham to Heytesbury, 3, 7 Oct. 1845, for the government's particular anxieties over the repeal meeting at Thurles in the last week of Sept. 1845.

[74] See The *Highland Lady in Ireland: Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus 1840-1850*, ed. P. Pelly, A. Tod (Edinburgh, 1991), Sunday 7 Sept. 1845, p. 191; British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 7 Nov. 1845; Add. MS 40476 ((Peel Papers): Graham and Fremantle to Peel, 3 Dec. 1845.

[75] Add. MS 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 28 Oct. 1845.

[76] Add. MS 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 20 Nov. 1845. The fears were confirmed in an earlier letter from Lord Clare to Mr. Pennefather, dated 5 Nov. 1845, which was copied and sent on to Peel, see, Add. MS 40578 (Peel Papers): Lord Clare to Mr. Pennefather, 5 Nov. 1845. According to Eiríkson, 'far from throwing the Irish poor into immediate despair and submission, the Famine initially, and for almost ten eventful months, prompted a huge wave of often effective and increasingly collective popular protest', A. Eiríkson, 'Food Supply and Food Riots', *Famine 150 Commemorative Lecture Series*, ed. C. Ó Gráda (Dublin, 1997), p. 91.

the House of Lords in February 1846) to combat agrarian crime via the proclamation of disturbed districts.[77]

What then can historians learn from an analysis of Peel's activities prior to the Famine? Fairlie, in a study of the motivations behind repeal, places great emphasis upon the influence of foreign events upon the Prime Minister[78] and, to a great extent, the evidence would appear to bear this interpretation out. For contrary to Greville's (Clerk to the Privy Council, 1821-59 and celebrated diaryist) picture of a First Minister whose 'forte' was 'not in dealing with foreign affairs',[79] the picture that emerges from an examination of the contextual background to the Famine, is one in which Peel's time and energy was dominated by, and dedicated to, events abroad.

Although historians have imposed artificial divisions upon the Prime Minister's activities, it is arguable that Peel never saw the need to do so. For to him the problems associated with, and caused by America, France, Ireland, Oregon and national defence, all came within the broader remit of the office. Historians in their decision to detach, and on occasions to disregard the context of repeal, from the act itself, have ultimately produced an anaemic account of this event. Little is perhaps more revealing of the true importance of the wider international perspective to the repeal of the corn laws, than a study of the immediate chronological background to the act.

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[77] Heytesbury to Graham, 5, 7 Dec. 1845, Graham to Heytesbury, 9 Dec. 1845 and Fremantle to Graham 8 Jan. 1846.

[78] Fairlie, 'The Nineteenth-Century Corn Law Reconsidered', *The Economic History Review* (xviii,1965), 572.

[79] H. Reeve ed., *The Greville Memoirs*, p. 385 (18 Mar. 1846). Hilton also contradicts this claim, see Hilton, 'Peel: A Reappraisal', p. 611, FN. 152, although Hilton is perhaps unduly critical of Gash; see Gash, *Sir Robert Peel*, pp. 482, 497.

The immediate context to repeal

The narrative of events that led to the act of repeal has taken on a familiar, if not formulaic character. In any given account of the 'run up' to repeal one might expect to find a similar stock of oft-repeated quotations concerning the forthcoming scarcity.[80] If these excerpts were to be ranked according to usage, the most popular might include:

> *Graham to Peel, 15 August 1845*
>
> I know not that the state of affairs is exactly sound, when Ministers are driven to study their Barometer with so much anxiety: but under no law will it be found easy to feed 25 millions, crowded together in a narrow space, when Heaven denies the blessing of abundance.
> The question always returns, what is the legislation, which most aggravates or militates the dispensation of Providence.[81]

> *Peel to Graham, 13 October 1845*
>
> There is such a tendency to exaggeration and inaccuracy in Irish reports that delay in acting upon them is always desirable ...The removal of impediments to import is the only effectual remedy.[82]

> *Graham to Peel, 18 October 1845*
>
> It is awful to observe how the Almighty humbles the pride of nations. The sword, the pestilence, and famine are the instruments of his displeasure; the canker-worm and the locust are his armies; he gives the word: a single crop is blighted; and we see a nation prostrate, stretching out its hands for bread. These are solemn warnings, and they fill me with reverence; they proclaim with a voice not to be mistaken, that 'doubtless there is a God, who judgeth the Earth'.[83]

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[80] Despite the apparent scepticism concerning the Irish Famine as a motivating factor for repeal, most historians are happy to cite these 'Famine' quotations in their own explanations of repeal.

[81] Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 15 Aug. 1845. See, for example, Gash, *Sir Robert Peel*, p. 533; Kinealy, *This Great Calamity,* p. 35; Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*,p. 98.

[82] Add. MS 40451, (Peel Papers): Peel to Graham, 13 Oct. 1845 (copy). See, for example, Woodham-Smith, *'The Great Hunger'*, p. 40; Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 99. Kinealy also employs this quotation, however it is derived from a letter of Peel's to Heytesbury that employs identical language; see Kinealy, *This Great Calamity,* p. 34.

[83] Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 18 Oct. 1845. See, for example, Hilton, *The Age of Atonement,* p. 249; Kinealy, *'A Death-Dealing Famine'*, p. 61; Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics,* p. 99.

A single printed work, namely Peel's *Memoirs*[84] provides the most frequently plundered source for their citation. In examining Peel's motivations for corn law repeal, historians have, as a result, relied heavily upon the Prime Minister's own version of events. Peel, it is true, was scrupulous in the attention that he devoted to reproducing these letters. However, the impression remains that historians, whilst content to attack the Prime Minister's motives

for repeal, have been reluctant to embark upon a detailed investigation of the primary sources connected with this subject. For Hilton and many other historians, Peel's '100 pages of correspondence'[85] simply provides evidence that the Prime Minister 'doth protest too much'. In reality, as a study of the primary sources demonstrates, Peel selected but a fraction of the huge mass of correspondence that landed upon his desk in the months and days between August and December 1845 to reproduce in his defence. In this respect, Peel has done himself a disservice.

> In giving these documents at length, I may perhaps appear to overrate their importance ...Even if the details entered into be more copious than is required for such purposes, some allowance will be made for the natural anxiety of one who has been the object of much bitter reproach and very persevering hostility[86]

As can be seen from the above extract from the *Memoirs*, Peel was paranoid about exhausting the patience of his reader. Yet, despite his appeals to posterity – 'They are ... the materials from which the future historian will extract that which is worthy of permanent record'[87] – both he, and later his editors, must have realised that commercial

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[84] *Memoirs by the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, pp. 113-15, 125. Although Peel has edited Graham's letter, dated 18 Oct.1845, ibid., p. 125.
[85] Hilton, 'Peel: A Reappraisal', p. 598.
[86] *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, p. 107.
[87] Ibid.

limitations and the public's desire for a celeritous and pithy account of events would enforce a curtailment of the volume's content. As a result the fallen first minister's account included only the most pertinent letters that he received in this period on the subject of the Irish Famine and, thereafter, on corn law repeal. The account moves rapidly from the 'commencement of the month of August, 1845'[88] through September,[89] to the Prime Minister's own declaration, on 13 October 1845, that the 'removal of impediments to import is the only effectual remedy'.[90] This decision was made apparently upon the basis of nine letters, five of which contained satisfactory or positive accounts of the potato crop, while four of them contained no account at all of the specific nature of the potato crop in Ireland.[91] Historians might, therefore, be forgiven for thinking that Peel had insufficient grounds for deciding that the repeal of the corn laws could be the 'only effectual remedy' to this potential disaster and for their concluding that the Irish Famine was merely a 'pretext' for repeal. Although it is difficult to deduce the Prime Minister's motives in his selection of these letters, it is not difficult to deduce that Peel has done himself a disservice here. To understand why requires a detailed examination of the immediate chronology of repeal.

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[88] Ibid., p. 108.
[89] Ibid., pp. 110-12. Five entries are included for Sept.
[90] Ibid., p. 114.
[91] Ibid., for the satisfactory or positive accounts of the potato crop, see Graham to Peel, 28 Sept. 1845, pp. 111-12; Graham to Peel, 29 Sept. 1845, p.112; Peel to Graham, 30 Sept. 1845, p.112; Peel to Graham, 3 Oct. 1845, pp. 112-13; Graham to Peel, 6 Oct. 1845, p. 113. The following letters contained no specific mention of the nature of the potato crop in Ireland: Peel to Graham, 11 Aug. 1845, pp. 109-10; Graham to Peel, 20 Aug. 1845, p. 110; Graham to Peel, 18 Sept.1845, p. 111; Graham to Peel, 29 Sept. 1845, p. 112. The description of 'nine letters' mentioned in the main text does not include the unquoted letter Peel mentions on p. 108. Peel, and historians writing after him, failed to find this letter, which first brought the potato blight to his attention. It is, however, probable that this letter came from Henry Sewell, writing from the Isle of Wight, and was sent on to Graham, by Peel, to answer. Graham's response can be found in National Archives, PRO HO/43/70 (Home Office Papers), 12 Aug. 1845. Sewell's letter appears to have been written on 9 Aug. 1845.

To facilitate reference, a detailed chronological table of events has been included in the Appendix of this thesis. The principal aim of this table is to demonstrate who the Prime Minister and Home Secretary were in contact with, on a daily basis, in the run up to repeal. The table not only records the letters written and received by these two men but also, where it has been possible to unearth this information, the visitors received and the visits made by them. 'The members of the government', Peel noted in his *Memoirs,* 'upon whom at this crisis the chief responsibility rested, were the First Lord of the Treasury, the Secretary of State for Home Department, and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland'.[92] Peel provides the explanation here for the emphasis placed upon the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary in this table of events. Yet the decisions made by Heytesbury, concerning the predicted Famine and its impact upon the repeal of the corn laws are also amply reflected in the table. For both the letters received, and written by Heytesbury to Graham and Peel, have been included in this catalogue of events. In addition the table includes any information relevant to the subject derived from the papers of leading members of Peel's Cabinet, from officials employed in the Queen's service, from the Royal Archives and from numerous organisations connected either with Ireland or with English agriculture and the eventual repeal of the corn laws.

What is immediately apparent from this table is the protracted length of time that Peel and Graham took to reach a decision over their proposed policy. The first recorded notice the Prime Minister received of blight in the potato crop was contained in a letter from one Henry Sewell, dated 9 August 1845.[93] If one assumes that Peel received this

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[92] *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, p. 108.

[93] PRO HO/43/70 (Home Office Papers): Graham to Sewell, 12 Aug. 1845, p. 14. Henry Sewell was the fourth son of Thomas Sewell who was steward of the Isle of Wight. He later became the first premier of New Zealand.

letter on Monday 11 August, and if one then recalls the fact that the Prime Minister did not declare his predilection for 'the removal of impediments to import' until Monday 13 October, then it becomes evident that the Prime Minister came to this conclusion over a not insubstantial period of time - sixty three days. It might be argued that the letter that Peel received on 11 August was disregarded by the Prime Minister, and that no apprehensions of blight in the potato crops were seriously entertained until the middle of September and, even then, as Peel writes in his *Memoirs*, 'the reports from different parts of the country varied very materially'[94] and perhaps could not be taken too seriously. Yet this was simply not the case. For by 15 September Peel and his Home Secretary were clearly more concerned about the potato blight than the *Memoirs* let on, and they had due reason to be concerned, for despite the rather *blasé* attitude adopted by Peel in the *Memoirs*, the mass of evidence received both by Graham and Peel by this date was far from consoling.

Thus on 12 August 1845 we find Graham forwarding a very dispiriting letter to Peel, from a potato merchant in the south of England.[95] On the 16 August Peel appears to have been agonising over a speech of Cobden's (principal protagonist of the Anti-Corn Law League, MP for Stockport 1841-7 and the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1847-57) which, in all probability, contained references to the forthcoming alarming deficiency in the harvest,[96] whilst only the day previously Graham had found himself questioning the nature of the legislation which 'most aggravates or militates the dispensation of

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[94] *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, pp. 110-11.
[95] Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 12 Aug. 1845.
[96] British Library (Graham Papers): Peel to Graham, 16 Aug. 1845. The author has not been able to locate a copy of this speech.

Providence'.[97] On 18 and 21 August, Graham spent his time harrying Fremantle, for information as to the state of the potato crop and reporting the extent of its injury in the south of England.[98] The Prime Minister meanwhile spent the time perusing the most recent trade returns,[99] agonising over the possibility of a re-run of the situation that faced the country in the bleak winter and spring of 1841 to 1842[100] and contemplating the alarming reports of the harvest and crops of potatoes that he had so recently received from Ireland, Scotland and Wales.[101] To add to the mounting tension, *The Times* carried unfavorable articles on the potato blight – both in England and on the continent – on 8, 9, 11, 13 and 15 September with a leading article on the suspected deficiency in the harvest on 1 September.[102]

The prospect of a serious dearth of food in Ireland finally became official on 12 September when the Lord Lieutenant was forced to make his first 'official' report of the appearance of the blight in that land.[103] Yet the most critical period, for the Prime Minister, was still to come. In his *Memoirs*, Peel devotes two and a half pages, or seven excerpts from his correspondence with Graham, to the four week period culminating in his 'repeal declaration'.[104] In reality, during this period Peel or Graham had received, or were due to receive, three contradictory or favorable reports of the harvest and potato

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[97] Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 15 Aug. 1845.
[98] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Fremantle, 18 Aug. 1845 and Add. MS 40451, (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 21 Aug. 1845.
[99] Add. MS 40455 (Peel Papers): Peel to Aberdeen, 19 Aug. 1845.
[100] Add. MS 40573 (Peel Papers): Peel to Croker, 31 Aug. 1845.
[101] Add. MS 40573 (Peel Papers): Croker to Peel, 31 Aug. 1845; Governor of the Bank of Scotland to Peel, 1 Sept.. 1845; Jones to Peel, 5 Sept. 1845.
[102] *The Times*, 1 Sept. 1845 (p.5 col. b); 8 Sept. 1845 (p. 7 col. c); 9 Sept. 1845 (p. 5 col. f); 11 Sept. 1845 (p.8 co. a); 13 Sept. 1845 (p. 6 col. d); 15 Sept. 1845 (p. 5 col. d).
[103] British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 12 Sept. 1845. By 14 Sept. Heytesbury's language had progressed from that of subdued moderation to that of lugubrious desperation. Compare, for example, the above to British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 14 Sept. 1845.
[104] *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel,* ed. Mahon & Cardwell, pp. 111–13. This second chronological span runs from 16 Sept. to 13 Oct. inclusive.

crop in Ireland from Heytesbury and Fremantle.[105] In addition, four unfavourable reports of the potato crop had been or were to be received from Fremantle[106] and three from the Lord Lieutenant.[107] The Prime Minister was to receive eight other significant unfavourable reports.[108] He had written two letters to Graham stating the foreign reports of the harvest and potato crop to be unfavourable,[109] and two letters reporting more favourable opinions of the Irish crop.[110] Graham, in response, sent Peel four negative[111] and three positive letters[112] concerning the crop. This survey does not take into account the mixed (favourable and unfavourable, contradictory and clear) reports received by Peel and Graham from the Constabulary in Ireland,[113] from selected Irish town mayors and magistrates,[114] and from various branches of the Irish provincial banks.[115] Peel, yet again, appears to have downplayed the importance of this particular period in his *Memoirs.* Instead, the reader is left wondering how the Prime Minister could justify the conclusion that repeal was truly necessary on the basis of such scant evidence. The immediate and

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[105] Add. MS 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 29 Sept. 1845; British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 22, 26 Sept.. 1845.

[106] British Library (Graham Papers): Fremantle to Graham, 15 Sept. 1845; Add. MS 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 9,10,13 Oct. 1845.

[107] British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 10,12 Oct. 1845; Add. MS 40479, ((Peel Papers), f. 497: Heytesbury to Peel, 12 Oct. 1845.

[108] Add. MS 40574, (Peel Papers): Sturge to Peel, 20 Sept. 1845; Croker to Peel, 20, 28 Sept. 1845; Monteagle to Peel, 27 Sept., Everett to Peel, 29 Sept. 1845;Add. MS 40575 (Dillon Croker to Freemantle) - (this letter was then forwarded to Peel), 8 Oct. 1845; Add. MS 40575, Trench to Peel, 11 Oct. 1845; Hanly to Peel, Add. MS 40575, 13 Oct. 1845.

[109] British Library (Graham Papers): Peel to Graham, 19 Sept. 1845; Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Peel to Graham, 28 Sep. 1845.

[110] Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Peel to Graham, 30 Sept. 1845; Add. MS 40451, 3 Oct. 1845.

[111] Add. MS 4045 (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 18, 19, 30 Sept. 1845; Add. MS 40451,13 Oct. 1845.

[112] Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 28 Sept. 1845; Add. MS 40451, 6, 8 Oct. 1845.

[113] See PRO HO/45/1080/ B (Home Office Papers): Pennefather to Sutton, 2, 9 Oct. 1845. See also British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 3 Oct. 1845.

[114] See PRO HO/45/1080/B (Home Office Papers): Pennefather to Sutton, 13 Oct. 1845 and the Irish town enclosures in Add. MS 40575, (Peel Papers), 4–7 Oct. 1845.

[115] See Add. MS 40445 (Peel Papers): Goulburn to Peel, 3, 8 Oct. 1845. Editions of *The Times* in this period also carried prominent articles upon the corn laws, the potato blight and the apprehended dearth of food facing the nation – editions that Peel would have been hard pushed to ignore. See, for example, *The Times*, 25 Sept. 1845 (p. 5 col. b) (p. 8 col. b); 30 Sept. 1845 (p. 8 col. c) and 10 Oct. 1845 (p. 5 col. c).

obvious answer to this question is that he does not. Peel fails to make explicit the reasons behind his decision to repeal the corn laws. He rattles through months as if they were days, reproduces evidence that fails to convince and then, at breakneck speed, declares himself all out for repeal. A transition, which in reality took months, if not longer,[116] is therefore delivered in moments, leaving the reader conscious of a distorted time scale to the account.

If Peel's problem is one of a fundamental failure to convince, then the principal hindrance for historical interpretation, to date, has been an inability to discern what information carried most credibility with this Prime Minister. Peel had been the Chief Secretary in Ireland and he had dealt with failures in the potato crop there before, both as Chief Secretary in 1817[117] and as the Home Secretary in 1822.[118] As a result, he must be accredited with some foreknowledge as to the predicted timetable of a blight in the potato crop. Peel knew that the potato crop in Ireland was a late one, and would not be dug until late October / early November.[119] He must, therefore, have been aware that prior to that date the government would receive only contradictory reports of that crop. Ireland then, at this stage, could not provide the hard evidence the Prime Minister required to form a decision concerning the true extent of the blight. The picture presented, it is true, was already a bleak one, yet the government would have to wait for the true facts to emerge. How then, can Peel's decision to push for repeal be explained?

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[116] See Hilton, 'Peel: A Reappraisal', pp. 605, 606.
[117] See M.A. Trant, 'Government Policy and Irish Distress, 1816-1819' (University College, Dublin, unpublished M.A Thesis, 1965), chs. II and III.
[118] See T.P. O' Neill, 'The State, poverty and distress in Ireland, 1815–1845' (University College, Dublin, Ph.D. thesis, 1971), pp. 90–4.
[119] Even if the Prime Minister had forgotten this, Heytesbury was to remind the government of the fact often enough. See British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 12, 14 Oct. 1845.

On what grounds did Peel base his 13 October declaration of 'no confidence' in alternative remedies to repeal?

In answer to his own question as to the efficacy of voting money to sustain a starving people whilst maintaining strict restrictions on the import of grain, Peel, in a memorandum read to the assembled Cabinet on 1 November 1845, concluded that such a move was untenable. He provided the following reasons for his decision:

> There is the example in the present year, and in consequence of the same apprehensions of scarcity, of Russia, Belgium, and Holland, in each of which the laws imposing duties on foreign grain are suspended.
> Countries from which, under ordinary circumstances, we might draw supplies, are prohibiting export. I heard today that at Mayence and in the countries bordering on the Rhine the export of potatoes down the Rhine is prohibited.
> Some of our ordinary sources of supply are therefore closed to us...
> I cannot disguise from myself that the calling together of Parliament on account of apprehended scarcity – the prohibition of export in other countries – the removal of restrictions on import (sanctioned, as in the case of Belgium, by an unanimous vote of the Chambers) – the demand for public money, to be applied to provide sustenance for a proportion of the people – will constitute a great crisis...[120]

Historians often neglect the foreign dimension to the corn laws and, as a result, studies of this subject tend to be overtly Anglocentric. However, the corn laws were arguably as much about the wider world as they were about Britain. By legislating for the protection of domestic markets, the political *cognoscenti* in Britain effectively issued a critique of what they disliked, or feared, about the nature of foreign farming, production and ultimately, trade. We should not, therefore, be surprised to learn that in the summer and autumn of 1845, when a blight in the potato crop threatened the prosperity of Britain, the Prime Minister immediately turned his attention to the Continent. For not only would the blight have an impact upon the flow of foreign foodstuffs into the nation and hence upon

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[120] *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, pp. 145-6.

the operation of the corn laws, Peel reasoned also that important political lessons were to be learned from the reaction of other administrations to the blight.[121] From the outset the Prime Minister was presented with reports detailing the extent and nature of the disease in foreign climes and one can not help but wonder if, in the light of this knowledge, Peel could have acted in any other way? What is certain, is that viewed from this wider international perspective the Prime Minister's actions, and the evidence he drew upon to justify them, must be viewed more contextually.

'I am given to understand it is so in Holland and France...'[122]

The above extract comes from a letter sent by a southern potato dealer to Graham on 11 August 1845. It is significant because the Home Secretary forwarded it to Peel on 12 August and, as such, it was the first letter concerning the potato blight to be quoted by the Prime Minister, in its entirety, in his *Memoirs*.[123] As this letter so aptly demonstrates, Peel was provided with the impetus to look to events on the continent from the start. It was not an impetus that he was inclined to ignore. Thus on the 19 September we find the Prime Minister warning his Home Secretary that 'there are bad accounts of the state of it [the potato crop] from Belgium, Holland and the adjoining Districts',[124] whilst a letter from the Birmingham corn merchant, Joseph Sturge, at this time also left Peel notably agitated. 'The disease in the potatoes crop ... has been so destructive in some parts of the

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[121] For the progress of the blight in Europe, see P.M.A. Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather, and the Irish famine' (National University of Ireland, Ph.D thesis, 1965), Part II A, ch. 7, pp. 74–81 or A. Bourke and H. Lamb, *The Spread of Potato Blight in Europe in 1845-6 and the Accompanying Wind and Weather Patterns* (Dublin, 1993).

[122] R. Parker to Graham, 11 Aug. 1845, quoted in *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, p. 110.

[123] Ibid.

[124] British Library (Graham Papers): Peel to Graham, 19 Sept. 1845.

Continent' Sturge warned the First Minister, 'that not only is grain intended for the English market ordered there but extensive exports are now taking place from this country of bonded wheat'.[125] Sturge, as a founder member of the Anti-Corn Law League was not a disinterested adviser; on the other hand, Peel had been warned that the situation upon the continent could not but affect Britain, corn laws or no corn laws. What the Prime Minister had to ascertain was the extent of the blight and how other administrations were dealing with it?

The Prime Minister threw himself into a frenzy of activity. Consular returns and reports were requested,[126] accounts of the harvest on the continent were analysed[127] and numerous letters, both from trusted members of the government[128] and from individuals known to the Prime Minister,[129] were received on the subject of the blight abroad. Nor could the Home Secretary or First Minister have ignored the reports prevalent in the newspapers concerning the preventative measures adopted by these nations to mitigate the disease. *The Times*, for example, ran stories on the blight in the potato crop in the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium.[130] Yet, as Peel was to demonstrate in his Cabinet memorandum of 1 November 1845, the actions of foreign ministries, not the warning

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[125] Add. MS 40574 (Peel Papers): J. Sturge to Peel, 20 Sept. 1845. For the impact of this letter upon Peel, see British Library (Graham Papers): Peel to Graham, 29 Sept. 1845.

[126] It is often assumed that Playfair provided the impetus behind the Prime Minister's request for these returns. Yet it seems that reports dated as early as 30 Sept.1845 were being compiled by the consular agencies and sent for the Prime Minister's benefit. See BL, Add. MS 40574 (Peel Papers), 30 Sept. 1845.

[127] See, for example, Add. MS 40451, (Peel Papers): Peel to Graham, 28 Sept. 1845 for Peel's comments on the harvest in Poland.

[128] See, for example, Graham to Peel, 13 Oct. 1845, quoted in *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, p.115.

[129] See, for example, Add. MS 40574 (Peel Papers): Croker to Peel, 28 Sept.1845.

[130] See, *The Times*, 13 Sept. 1845; 15 Sept. 1845 and 15 Oct. 1845. The Andover union affair (*The Times*, 1, 22 Sept., and 9 Oct. 1845), hostilities on the 'River Plate' and U.S. troop movements towards Texas (*The Times*, 26, 30 Sept. and 13 Oct.), the 'Condition of the People of Ireland' and the endowment of the 'Godless Colleges in Ireland (*The Times*, 26, 27 Aug. and 22, 27 Sept.), the 'evils' associated with Railway speculation (*The Times*, 10 Oct. 1845) and affairs in the Punjab (*The Times*, 31 Oct. 1845) were the other recurring news items of this period.

words of the press, ultimately carried most weight with this Prime Minister. 'There is the example ... of Russia, Belgium, and Holland' Peel told his Cabinet on 1 November, 'in each of which the laws imposing duties on foreign grain are suspended'.[131] Peel could not have made his motivations clearer. The blight was clearly serious, a dearth of epic proportions was clearly expected and widespread distress was clearly on the horizon. How did Peel know this? How could he possibly ignore it? For it was written large over the face of Europe in the actions of her various administrations. As Britain agonised over contradictory reports of the potato crop in September, a Royal Decree was issued in the Netherlands reducing the import duties on barley, beans, green peas, potatoes and rice.[132] While Peel attempted to coax and cajole his Cabinet into action in November, duties on foreign grain were being suspended in Russia, Belgium and Holland.[133] 'Unless some decisive and early measures are taken' Sturge had warned the Prime Minister in September, 'it is far from improbable that before another Summer we may experience a scarcity of provisions which may cause great suffering'.[134] Peel took this warning to heart and resolved to formulate a policy upon the basis of the evidence available to him. His declaration for repeal, in the second week of October 1845,[135] was arguably the result of the Prime Minister doing just that. The potato blight had decimated crops in the south of England,[136] on the continent the ravages of the disease had already become so pronounced that legislative action was being taken to combat the canker, and the reports the premier had received from Ireland did not look promising. If one was to add to this

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[131] Peel, Cabinet memorandum, 1 Nov. 1845, quoted in *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, p. 145.
[132] See Bergman, 'The Potato Blight in the Netherlands', p. 418.
[133] See *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, p. 145.
[134] Add. MS 40574 (Peel Papers):.J. Sturge to Peel, 20 Sept.. 1845.
[135] Peel to Graham, 13 Oct. 1845, quoted *in Memoirs by ...Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, p. 114.
[136] See G.H. Pethybridge, 'The Potato Blight yesterday and to-day', *Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society*, 1940, ix, 48.

an element of paranoia induced by French re-armament, instability caused by the situation in Oregon, and fear that the government's recent successes in Ireland were about to be overturned by dearth, distress and disaffection, one can perhaps comprehend something of the nature of the Prime Minister's response to the situation that confronted the government in the Autumn of 1845.

Peel's decision that the situation in Ireland warranted the consideration of serious measures was further confirmed in the days that followed his October declaration. On Tuesday 14 October both the Secretary of State for the Colonies[137] and the Home Secretary were to send Peel negative reports of the Irish potato crop.[138] On Wednesday 15 October Heytesbury was to inform Graham that the failure in the crop was now 'general',[139] while John Young (MP for Cavan, 1831-55) writing from Ireland on Friday 17 October, was to inform Peel that 'the accounts of the potato crop become daily worse'.[140] Peel must have been aware, however, that the solution he was proposing to mitigate the effects of the

blight was likely to raise some opposition from his Cabinet colleagues. It is true that at this time the Premier could have had no conception of the intensity of that opposition, nevertheless he must have been aware that it was not a decision that his Cabinet would take lightly. Was it, therefore, more than coincidental that, on the day Peel wrote to the Duke of Wellington informing him that 'the accounts of the failure of the Potato Crop in Ireland are very alarming. The disease appears to be very prevalent ...We shall have to

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[137] Add. MS 40468 (Peel Papers): Stanley to Peel, 14 Oct. 1845.
[138] Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 14 Oct. 1845.
[139] BL (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 15 Oct. 1845.
[140] Add. MS 40576 (Peel Papers): John Young to Peel, 17 Oct. 1845.

give this subject very early and serious consideration',[141] he had also requested, in a letter to Heytesbury of the same date, accurate information from an impartial, government employed Commissioner, on the state of the Irish potato crop? 'Would a person of intelligence', he asked the Lord Lieutenant, 'specially sent to Galway, Cork ... have better means of ascertaining the facts and prospects of the future, than can be derived from written Reports from Stipendiary magistrates or others'?[142]

Heytesbury lost no time in informing the Prime Minister that the appointment of a special Commissioner would be unnecessary. Instead he suggested that the government could, in time, 'move the Lieutenants of Counties to call meetings of the Residential Landholders' to obtain more detailed accounts of 'the amount of the evil'.[143] Peel remained unconvinced, for on the same day that the Lord Lieutenant dispatched this communication, the Premier was to receive the first indication that the urgency, and indeed the facts of the case, were going to be difficult to prove to the Cabinet. 'It will of course be necessary to consider the Question,' Wellington informed Peel, but the circumstances did not warrant a hasty decision: 'fortunately I understand that the Crop of oats be natural [sic] edible in relief for potatoes, are plentiful as well in Ireland as in England and Scotland'.[144] The time had clearly arrived for the collection of detailed and impartial evidence.[145] For although Peel had convinced himself of the gravity of the situation facing the country he had yet to convince others, and for that he would require the most unimpeachable documentation of the blight's extent.

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[141] Add. MS 40461 (Peel Papers): Peel to Wellington, 15 Oct. 1845.
[142] Add. MS 40479 (Peel Papers): Peel to Heytesbury, 15 Oct. 1845.
[143] Add. MS 40479 (Peel Papers): Heytesbury to Peel, 17 Oct.1845.
[144] Add. MS 40461 (Peel Papers): Wellington to Peel, 17 Oct. 1845.
[145] Graham also concurred in this view. See Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 17 Oct. 1845.

The Science Commission

It is difficult to ascertain the exact moment that Peel resolved to send a Commission to Ireland to investigate the extent of the potato blight. We know that on 18 October Graham forwarded a letter to Peel containing a suggestion, received from Ireland, that a Commission might be appointed to conduct such an investigation.[146] Yet the evidence would appear to show that this letter rather than suggest the necessity of such a Commission in Peel's mind, served only to confirm a decision already made. For by the time of the letter's arrival, late in the afternoon of 18 October or early in the morning of Sunday 19 October, Lyon Playfair had already been invited to the Prime Minister's country seat at Drayton Manor, and it is unlikely that, by that time, Playfair's potential use on such a Commission would have escaped the attention of the Prime Minister.[147] Peel's meeting with Playfair at Drayton Manor tends to be ignored by historians of the Famine and where this meeting is mentioned, details are brief. For example the question of who attended, when it was held, where it was held and what action was resolved upon, are perfunctorily treated by Woodham-Smith in order that the Commission might be swiftly dealt with and she can move on to Peel's handling of the repeal issue, both in Cabinet and in Parliament.[148] An exception to this relative neglect is provided by Bourke, in the Appendix to his thesis on 'The potato, blight, weather, and the

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[146] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Peel, 18 Oct.1845. This suggestion was forwarded to Graham on 15 Oct.1845 in a letter from Heytesbury. See British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 15 Oct. 1845.

[147] The Prime Minister's close friend, Buckland, had written to Peel on 8 Oct. 1845 to arrange a date for his intended visit to Drayton Manor, see Add. MS 40575 (Peel Papers): Buckland to Peel, 8 Oct. 1845. By 12 Oct. Buckland had replied to Peel's own response and had forwarded Playfair's invitation to visit Drayton Manor to the chemist, see Add. MS 40575, Buckland to Peel, 12 Oct. 1845.

[148] Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, p. 44.

Irish famine'.[149] Bourke devotes a significant section of this appendix to a study of the Drayton Manor meeting and the relevance, and potential contributions, of each of its participants. Yet, unfortunately, even Bourke gives insufficient justice to the importance of the meeting, for his account is colored by minor confusions and misplaced emphasis.[150] Nevertheless, this meeting deserves historical attention, for it provides the opportunity to ascertain something of Peel's motives as regards the appointment, and purpose, of the Science Commission.

The first problem to confront the historian, as regards this meeting, is a chronological one. Peel, in his *Memoirs,* is somewhat cavalier about the exact date and details of the gathering – 'About the middle of October I thought it advisable to despatch to Ireland two men of the highest eminence.' This is the only information that the Prime Minister is willing to offer on the subject.[151] Playfair offers the reader little more in the way of detail, providing an account based more on a recollection of events, than an accurate recall of the facts – 'The Prime Minister wished to consult me upon the chances of a serious famine, and invited me to pay a visit at Drayton Manor'.[152] A study of the primary evidence quickly demonstrates why both men chose to be so nebulous in their accounts.

On Saturday 18 October 1845 Peel addressed the following letter to his Home Secretary:

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[149] Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather'(Ph.D. Thesis, National University of Ireland, 1965), Part II B, Appendix 10, 'The Scientific Advisors of Peel on the Potato Rot', pp. 1–31.
[150] See, for example, his section on the Reverand Miles Joseph Berkeley, ibid., pp. 2–3 and his conclusions regarding the significance of Josiah Parkes at the meeting, pp. 9–10.
[151] *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, p. 117.
[152] *Memoirs and Correspondence of Lyon Playfair,* ed. T.W. Reid (Scotland, 1976), p. 98.

> Dr. Lyon Playfair, Buckland and Josiah Parkes are here ... Playfair has seen proofs, even during his short stay here of the absolute necessity of promptitude in the application of any remedy that may be devised.
> He will go by my desire to London tomorrow, will immediately confer with Professor Lindley ... and proceed I trust with Lindley to Dublin.[153]

If Playfair's own account is to be trusted, the chemist did not name Lindley and Kane, as potential Commissioners, until the final day of his visit, when he immediately left Drayton Manor for London, to consult with the renowned botanist.[154] It would seem sensible here to assume that Peel's letter carries greater credibility than Playfair's account, for the latter was written many years after the events it describes, when a lapse in memory might have resulted in the false recall of the facts. However, two letters, one written by Peel and the other by Playfair, unfortunately throw the matter into further confusion. The letter from Peel will be examined first. On 29 September 1845 an old acquaintance of the Prime Minister's wrote, from Boston, to inform him that a general failure in the potato crop had occurred in the North of America.[155] In his reply, dated 16 October, the Premier remarked:

> It was only last night we were talking of you. We in the above sentence means a select philosophico Agricultural party which is assembled at Drayton Manor. It consists of Mr. Parkes ... Dr. Lyon Playfair, Dr. Buckland, Earl Talbot and the Earl of Aylesford.[156]

Clearly, if Peel is to be taken literally here, Playfair had been in attendance at Drayton Manor on the evening of Wednesday 15 October. Yet according to the second letter this appears to be unlikely. 'On my arrival here this evening', Playfair - writing from the Old Bank Hotel, Dudley - informed the Prime Minister, 'I had the honour to receive your kind

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[153] Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Peel to Graham, 18 Oct. 1845.
[154] *Memoirs ... of Lyon Playfair*, ed. Reid, p. 98.
[155] Add. MS 40574 (Peel Papers): Everett to Peel, 29 Sept. 1845. The author has not been able to discover any further details about Everett.
[156] Ibid.: Peel to Everett, 16 Oct. 1845. However the date of this letter is difficult to read.

note of invitation ... I shall be at dinner tomorrow (Thursday) at Drayton Manor in compliance with your request.'[157] It is therefore difficult to ascertain exactly when Playfair arrived at Drayton Manor, and as a result, to what extent the chemist's own account of events, as recorded in his *Memoirs*, should be trusted. We know, for example, that when Playfair writes: 'I went up to London the same afternoon to see Lindley, and the next day we started for Ireland',[158] the chemist is guilty of an inaccurate abbreviation of events. For, as a perusal of the primary evidence demonstrates, Lindley was absent from London on Playfair's arrival in the capital, thus Playfair was not able to deliver Peel's note to the botanist until Tuesday 21 October,[159] while the two Commissioners did not actually arrive in Dublin until Thursday 23 October.[160] The emphasis placed upon ascertaining the precise chronology of this meeting is not the result of historical pedantry, but of a belief that in establishing the exact timescale of the visit, the importance of Playfair's individual role in nominating the board of Commissioners will be questioned.

On Sunday 12 October 1845 Buckland, as we have seen, promised the Prime Minister that he would forward Playfair's invitation to Drayton Manor to the chemist.[161] Whether, as Playfair records, the invitation contained some hint that Peel wished to consult him upon 'the chances of a serious famine'[162] it is difficult to ascertain. Suffice it to say that if this was the case, the idea of an investigative Commission could have been revolving in the Prime Minister's mind from as early as 12 October. Everett's response to

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[157] Add. MS 40575 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 15 Oct. 1845. The date of this letter could easily be mistaken for 18 Oct. 1845.
[158] *Memoirs ... of Lyon Playfair*, ed. Reid, p. 98.
[159] Add. MS 40576 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 21 Oct. 1845 and Lindley to Peel, 21 Oct. 1845 quoted in *John Lindley (1799 – 1865) 'Father of Modern Orchidology': A Gathering of his Correspondence Issued in Installments*, Part II, ed. R. M. Hamilton (Richmond, British Columbia, 1995), p. 22.
[160] British Libraray, (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 23 Oct. 1845.
[161] See footnote 153.
[162] *Memoirs ... of Lyon Playfair*, ed. Reid, p. 98.

Peel, dated from Boston on 28 November 1845, perhaps lends greater clarity to this chronological confusion. In this letter Everett thanks the Prime Minister for his dispatch of 'the 18th of October, which reached London a few hours too late for the Steamer of the following day'.[163] It appears then as if the copy of Peel's letter to Everett, dated 16 October, was therefore incorrectly dated by the copyist – for the letter is not in Peel's hand – and as a result, the letter should actually be dated 18 October 1845. If this is the case Playfair would, in all probability, have been in attendance at the dinner given by Peel on 17 October, for as his letter dated 15 October suggests, he intended to reach Drayton Manor by Thursday 16 October. The question as to when the first notion of a Scientific Commission was made, however, still remains. For all Everett's letter really demonstrates is that Playfair's own, rather breathless rendition of events, is inaccurate.

On Monday 20 October Heytesbury dispatched from Dublin a letter confirming his receipt of Peel's letter of Saturday 18 October. The Lord Lieutenant then went on to confirm that he had instructed Professor Kane to have 'every-thing ready for Dr. L Playfair and Professor Lindley' and had detained Playfair's note to send on to Kane.[164] The suggestion that Lindley and Kane serve upon the Science Commission had therefore clearly been made by Saturday 18 October. However, the first mention Playfair makes of these two men is in a letter to Peel dated Monday 20 October.[165] If Playfair's account, as presented in his *Memoirs,* is to be believed, on the day after his arrival at Drayton Manor Peel asked him to name two men to serve with him upon a Commission into the potato blight. Playfair did so, recorded and justified his decision in a written memorandum, took

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[163] Add. MS 40574 (Peel Papers):Everett to Peel, 28 Nov. 1845.
[164] Add. MS 40479 (Peel Papers): Heytesbury to Peel, 20 Oct. 1845.
[165] Add. MS 40576 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 20 Oct. 1845. The date on the memorandum appears to be written in Peel's hand.

lunch with Peel and then left for London that afternoon to consult with Lindley.[166] For Playfair's account to be correct, and extrapolating on the sequence of events from the basis of the initial 20 October memorandum, this would have to mean that the chemist arrived at Drayton Manor on 19 October, produced his memorandum on the Commission on 20 October and travelled down to London, by train, later that day. As we have seen, however, Peel's own account of the meeting places Playfair at Drayton Manor on at least 18 October. The difficulty is that Playfair's account of events is not entirely unsubstantiated; indeed the chemist's version is supported by his next surviving letter to Peel, dated Tuesday 21 October, sent from the Museum of Economic Geology in London. 'Professor Lindley', Playfair informed the Prime Minister, 'was absent from London on my arrival and only reached London last night'.[167] A letter from Lindley himself, dated 21 October, serves both to confirm and contradict Playfair's narrative – 'Sir, I have had the honour to receive at the hands of ...Playfair your letter of the 19th which I w[ould] have answered immediately had I been in town'.[168] If Playfair had travelled down to London on 20 October, the date given on his memorandum, how does one explain Peel's letter to Lindley appointing him to the Commission, dated 19 October? Or how is one to explain Peel's letter of 18 October to Heytesbury, informing him of Playfair's desire to employ Kane on the Commission? Or, indeed, Peel's letter to Graham, also dated 18 October, informing the Home Secretary that Playfair 'will go by my desire to London

[166] *Memoirs ... of Lyon Playfair*, ed. Reid, p. 98.
[167] Add. MS 40576 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 21 Oct. 1845.
[168] Lindley to Peel, 21 Oct. 1845, Hamilton, *John Lindley*, Part II, p. 22.

tomorrow, will immediately confer with Professor Lindley ... and proceed I trust with Lindley, to Dublin'?[169]

Several potential solutions present themselves. The first is that Peel misdated his letters to both Graham and Heytesbury. The second is that the Playfair memorandum was incorrectly dated 20 October. The third possibility is that Playfair composed this memorandum on reaching London, on 19 October, and sent it by post to the Prime Minister. If so, it may have been dated according to the day of its arrival, which would explain why the date appears to be written in Peel's hand. Putting the first two interpretations aside – though they are credible, since the evidence contained within Playfair's own letter to Peel, written from the Old Bank Hotel, certainly would support the case for Playfair being in attendance at Drayton Manor on 18 October – the third interpretation appears to possess the most potential for accuracy. According to this interpretation Playfair would have had to arrive at Drayton Manor on 18 October (rendering Peel's letters, of that date, to Graham and Heytesbury credible), have composed the memorandum on the following day and then departed for London. However, this interpretation does not appear to take into account Playfair's own letter, dated 15 October, promising his attendance at Drayton Manor on 16 October. We have seen how the facts, as recorded both by Lindley and Playfair himself, do not bear out Playfair's account of events with reference to their immediate departure for Ireland, on the afternoon of the chemist's arrival in London. Indeed Playfair clearly gets this aspect of the Drayton Manor meeting wrong. It would not, therefore, be surprising to learn that his narrative account of arriving at Drayton Manor, and the next day appointing his

[169] Add. MS 40479 (Peel Papers): Heytesbury to Peel, 20 Oct. 1845; Add. MS 40451, Peel to Graham, 18 Oct. 1845.

fellow Commissioners, and then taking his leave of Peel, is also incorrect. If this much of the account is incorrect, the question must surely arise, to what extent was Playfair responsible for the appointment of Kane and Lindley to the Science Commission at all?

It will be remembered that both Peel and Playfair in their published accounts of the Commission are extremely vague as to the chronology of events. It is difficult to say whether this was the result of a genuine lapse of memory concerning this event, of confusion over the chronological aspects of its formation, or of a deliberate attempt to draw a veil of secrecy over its proceedings. The degree to which Playfair was influenced by Peel's printed version of events, in his own *Memoir*, is also difficult to estimate. What is interesting is that both men are equally inexact here. And although one would not necessarily expect to find marked precision in Playfair's *Memoirs*, given the emphasis Peel places upon quoting the specific dates of the various letters that he includes in his own *Memoirs*, such imprecision appears immediately at odds with the tenor of the rest of the work. We are therefore confronted with evidence that not only places Playfair at Drayton Manor on varying days, but also throws into question the role of the chemist in appointing the other Science Commissioners. For just as it is not unfeasible to assume that Playfair informed the Prime Minister of his decision to appoint Kane and Lindley to the Commission at an early stage of his visit to Drayton Manor, but then delayed committing his thoughts to paper until the latter stages of his visit – be it 19 or 20 October – nor is it wholly unfeasible to assume that Peel had a greater impetus in this decision than has previously been recorded.

> Dr. Lyon Playfair, Buckland and Josiah Parkes are here. They are impressed with a belief that it may be possible to mitigate the Evil of the Potato disease, by some Chemical application, and by the issue of plain practical instructions

> for the treatment of those Potatoes which are not all, or only partially affected by the disorder. [170]

As the above letter from Peel to Graham clearly demonstrates, Playfair was not alone in his input upon the Commission, and it will be observed that the later actions of the Commission, in the form of the suggestion of 'plain practical suggestions' are already apparent (albeit in prototype form) here. The subject of a Science Commission to investigate the blight was clearly widely discussed over the course of the Drayton Manor meeting. Yet, despite such discussion, Peel and Playfair appeared, at times, to be at cross-purposes. Thus on 18 October Peel appeared to be under the impression that Lindley would accompany Playfair to Ireland, after both men had concluded their experiments in London on the blight.[171] Yet by 20 October, Playfair was informing Peel that Lindley's presence would not be required in Dublin. 'Lindley', Playfair recorded in his memorandum for Peel, 'could do his part of the work without leaving England'.[172] To add to the confusion, Playfair also suggested the appointment of a fourth Commissioner. Hence the President of the Agricultural Improvement Society of Ireland was put forward as a candidate by Playfair, on the basis that he 'could give Kane through the Society all the practical information he required'.[173] Absolute clarity as to the various options for the Commission, discussed over the course of the meeting, was clearly quite difficult to achieve. Nor, however, can the possibility of discord between the wishes of the Prime Minister and Playfair be discounted. Nevertheless, if Playfair wanted someone else upon

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[170] Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Peel to Graham, 18 Oct. 1845.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Add. MS 40576 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 20 Oct. 1845.
[173] Ibid. This proposal suggests good foreknowledge on Playfair's part of the situation in Ireland and particularly of the part played by this particular society in investigating the blight. See British Library, (Graham Papers): Fremantle to Graham, 15 Sept. 1845 for the government's prior knowledge of the actions of this society.

the Commission he was to be disappointed. For Lindley accompanied Playfair to Ireland, Kane alone completed the Commission, and Peel's wishes won through.

What both Peel and Playfair did appear to be in agreement over was the necessity of a rapid response, on the Commission's behalf, to the blight. 'Playfair', Peel assured the Home Secretary, 'has seen proofs ... of the absolute necessity of promptitude in the application of any remedy that may be devised'.[174] And Playfair himself found it necessary, in his October memorandum, to emphasise the fact that a 'cumbrous Commission' with 'sluggish moments' would be avoided by appointing his suggested candidates.[175] Speed was clearly of the essence here. Peel had high-ranking colleagues to convince of the extent and nature of the dearth, but he could not do so until he had unimpeachable scientific evidence to support his case. Evidence was therefore a priority and, as he clearly made apparent to Playfair, the clock was already ticking.

Peel's rather blasé attitude to the other details of the Commission suggests a certain disinclination on the Prime Minister's part to engage in the mechanics of the body. This nonchalance is perhaps best reflected in the fact that the Prime Minister did not even draw up the frame of reference for the Commission. Thus the Lord Lieutenant was left not only to officially appoint the Commissioners, but to determine and thereafter delegate the various duties to the science men.[176] Such behavior was not uncharacteristic of Peel and he certainly adopted a similar attitude in the case of the Scarcity Commission[177] – where he left, on this occasion, his Home Secretary to concoct the detailed instructions for this body. Yet to suggest that such nonchalance can be explained merely as

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[174] Add. MS 40451 (Peel Papers): Peel to Graham, 18 Oct. 1845.
[175] Add. MS 40576 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 20 Oct. 1845.
[176] Add. MS 40479 (Peel Papers): Heytesbury to Peel, 24 Oct. 1845; The Royal Botanic Gardens Archives, Kew, Heytesbury file (Lindley correspondence): Heytesbury to Lindley, 24 Oct. 1845.
[177] For details see the following chapter.

'characteristic' behavior of this Prime Minister, is to ignore a fundamental aspect of his particular attitude towards the Commission. Peel was interested in the 'Science' of the Commission, and he was certainly eager to ensure that the government not only did their utmost, but were seen to be doing their utmost, to mitigate the effects of the blight by the application of 'Science'. For example, Peel offered to provide any chemicals deemed necessary by the Commissioners to mitigate the blight. However, to assume that Peel placed greater emphasis upon the scientific aspect of the Science Commission, as opposed to its informative aspect, is to misread the Prime Minister's true motivation for forming the Commission. Historians, by emphasising precisely this aspect of the appointed body, give undue prominence to a component of the Commission which was important to Peel but arguably not pre-eminent in his motivations for forming that body in the first place.[178] A study of the Prime Minister's actions during the period immediately prior to the appointment of the Scientific Commission, and in the days after it, clearly demonstrate that Peel had initiated a 'campaign' to bring his Cabinet colleagues up to speed on the events in Ireland.

On 18 and 21 October, the Prime Minister fired off letters to Goulburn (Chancellor of the Exchequer 1841-6), and Wellington respectively, on the state of the potato crop in Ireland.[179] On 23 October Aberdeen was told of the Premier's conviction that repeal was

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[178] The historiography of this Commission is sparse. Where the Commission is mentioned, most accounts devote little more than a few paragraphs to its treatment. See, for example, Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, pp. 101, 104 while many accounts of the Famine ignore the Commission entirely. See, for example, M. E. Daly, 'The Operation of Famine Relief, 1845 – 1847', *The Great Irish Famine*, ed. C. Póirtéir (Dublin 1995). The two most detailed studies of the Commission are T. P. O'Neill's, 'The scientific investigation of the failure of the potato crop in Ireland, 1845 – 1846', *Irish Historical Studies* (Sept. 1946) v, 18 and Bourke, 'The scientific advisors', (National University of Ireland, M.Sc. Thesis, 1965). The scientific aspects of the investigation into the potato blight dominate both studies.

[179] Surrey History Centre, Woking, 304, Box 42 (Goulburn Papers): Peel to Goulburn, 18 Oct. 1845; Add. MS 40461 (Peel Papers): Peel to Wellington, 21 Oct. 1845.

rendered necessary by the blight,[180] and by 24 October Stanley had been informed of the gravity of the situation facing the government in Ireland.[181] Yet the 'campaign' was to take on its most concrete form on Monday 20 October – the day Playfair arguably delivered his memorandum on the Commissioners to Peel – when the Prime Minister was to issue a circular calling for a meeting of the Cabinet to be held on Friday 31 October.[182] In lieu of this fact, it is perhaps not difficult to see why speed was of the essence for Peel in forming this Commission.

In order to comprehend fully the emphasis Peel placed upon the 'informative' aspect, as opposed to the 'scientific' aspect of the Commission, it is necessary to turn again to the Drayton Manor meeting at which the Commission was first conceived. We in the above sentence means a select philosophico Agricultural party which is assembled at Drayton Manor. It consists of Mr. Parkes – the consulting Engineer of the Royal Agricultural Society. Dr. Lyon Playfair, Dr. Buckland, Earl Talbot and the Earl of Aylesford, fair Representatives of the feelings and unbiased sentiments of two powerful classes in England – Men of Rank and Property and Men of Science and practical philosophy.[183] Peel's letter to Everett here is important, for it reminds the reader that other figures were involved in the meeting which preceded the Prime Minister's appointment of the Science Commission. Historians, in so far as they have examined this meeting, have hitherto only remarked upon the attendance of Buckland, Parkes and Playfair as Peel's guests at Drayton Manor.[184] This is an oversight, for in divorcing these men from the true context of the gathering – a gathering involving two others – historians

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[180] Add. MS 40455 (Peel Papers): Peel to Aberdeen, 23 Oct. 1845.
[181] Add. MS 40468 (Peel Papers): Stanley to Peel, 24 Oct. 1845.
[182] Add. MS 40575 (Peel Papers): Peel to the Cabinet, 20 Oct. 1845.
[183] Add. MS 40574 (Peel Papers): Peel to Everett, 16 Oct. 1845.
[184] See Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather' Part II B, Appendix 10, p. 1.

have lost something of the significance of the Drayton Manor meeting. The language Peel employs in the Everett letter goes some way to explaining the significance, at least in the Prime Minister's eyes, of the various parties at Drayton. Thus he talks of a 'select philosophico Agricultural party' as if to imply that the individuals present had been specifically chosen for what they represented and for the information that they would impart. It is almost as if Peel was conscious of the perceived significance of each of these men, and what they represented to the world at large. The fact that these individuals were close acquaintances of Peel is obviously important, and is a consideration that cannot be overlooked when attempting to explain their attendance at the meeting. Yet, as Peel so clearly demonstrates in his letter to Everett, the significance of their attendance at Drayton Manor transcended the bonds of close personal ties. Instead the emphasis was placed upon 'representation' for, as Peel reminded Everett, these men were the 'fair Representatives of the feelings and unbiased sentiments of two powerful classes in England – Men of Rank and Property and Men of Science and practical philosophy'.[185] A brief examination of the careers of each of these individuals is now perhaps pertinent.

Lyon Playfair (1818-1898) appears in the historiography of the Famine variously as a 'noted soil chemist',[186] 'an undistinguished Scots chemist with good political connections',[187] 'a courtier',[188] a 'great sitter on Commissions'[189] and 'the bright young man of the influential group of scientists who surrounded Peel'.[190] As Bourke has demonstrated, Playfair picked up a degree of 'bad press' from his involvement with the

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[185] Add. MS 40574 (Peel Papers): Peel to Everett, 16 Oct. 1845.
[186] B. Jenkins, *Henry Goulburn 1784–1856* (McGill, 1996), p. 319.
[187] J.S. Donnelly JR., 'Famine and government response, 1845–1846' in W.E. Vaughan, ed. *A New History of Ireland: V, Ireland Under the Union, I, 1801–1870* (Oxford, 1989), p. 274.
[188] C. Woodham – Smith, *The Great Hunger Ireland 1845–1849* (London, 1991), p. 48.
[189] T.P. O'Neill, 'The scientific investigation', p. 126.
[190] Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather', Part II B, Appendix 10, p. 3.

Science Commission,[191] and subsequent accounts of this scientist are perhaps viewed with this in mind. Playfair had first studied Medicine and then Chemistry, under Professor Graham, at the Andersonian College at Glasgow, at Edinburgh University and at University College in London.[192] In 1839 he traveled to Giessen in Germany to work under Professor Liebig, where he formed so close an acquaintance with the organic chemist, that Giessen commissioned the young scientist to translate his acclaimed work on 'Agricultural Chemistry' from German into English. Playfair duly completed this task and thereafter presented Liebig's findings at the Glasgow meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in 1840.[193] This meeting and Liebig's subsequent visit to Britain in 1842 were instrumental in bringing Playfair to the attention of the British agriculturists of the day.[194] These agriculturists lost no time in commending this chemist, bestowing honorary membership of the Royal Agricultural Society upon him[195] and, after Faraday's offer in 1842 of a professorial post at King's College in Toronto, by securing the chemist the audience with the Prime Minister that was to be instrumental to his later career.[196] Thus by 1842 Playfair could not only rely upon the scientific support of Henry de la Beche, Justus Freiherr von Liebig, Thomas Graham and William Buckland, he could also include many of the nation's leading agriculturists, and even a Prime Minister, as patrons. Unsurprisingly appointments flowed in and Playfair

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[191] Ibid., p. 6.

[192] *Memoirs ... of Lyon Playfair*, ed. Reid, pp. 36, 42. Playfair began his medical studies at Glasgow in 1835. He continued his academic career in London from 1838, after a brief sojourn in India.

[193] Ibid., p. 43.

[194] Ibid., pp. 50, 52. During Liebig's visit Playfair arranged meetings with Peel, Spencer, Ducie, Fitzwilliam, Pusey and Buckland. Gray refers to Playfair as 'the eminent chemist and advocate of scientific agriculture'. See Gray, *Famine, Land And Politics*, p. 101.

[195] This was received by Playfair in 1842 at the Derby meeting of the society. Ibid., p. 21.

[196] Ibid., pp.58–60. See also Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, University of London Archives, General Correspondence (Playfair Papers): Pusey to Buckland, 23 Oct. 1842 and General Correspondence Pusey 593 and 594 (Playfair Papers): Pusey to Buckland, 27 Oct. 1845.

soon found himself sitting upon a Royal Commission into the Health of Towns (1843),[197] engaged upon research for the British Association into the chemical operation of blast furnaces (1844), securing the appointment as chemist to the Museum of Economic Geology (1845) and being engaged in investigative surveys into the state and condition of Buckingham Palace and Eton College (1845) and the safety of the nation's mines (1845). During this time Playfair still found time to lecture to the Royal Agricultural Society[198] and undertake working tours of the estates of some of Britain's leading agriculturists.[199]

Josiah Parkes (1793 – 1871) worked in Warwick, Manchester,[200] Woolwich and Puteaux-sur-Seine in France, where he fought in the French revolution of 1830.[201] On his return to England he developed the principle of deep systematic drainage. This, coupled with the invention of cylindrical clay water pipes and specially formulated drain cutting implements, combined to make Parkes the darling of a class of British improving agriculturists, of which Graham and Peel were members. Agriculturists aside, it is not unreasonable to assume that Parkes was also drawn into the circle of the radical MP, Richard Cobden, through his brother Joseph Parkes (1796 – 1865), a parliamentary solicitor and close friend and ally of Cobden's.[202]

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[197] Playfair joined Buccleuch, Lincoln, de la Beche, Smith of Deanston, Richard Owen, Stephenson and Cubitt on the Commission. During this investigation he also made the close acquaintance of Edwin Chadwick. For evidence of this relationship, see Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, University of London Archives, Ramsay Diary 1/5 1846 (Ramsay Papers): 1, 15 Feb. 1846.

[198] In 1844 Playfair delivered two lectures to the Royal Agricultural Society 'On the Application of Chemistry to the Feeding of Cattle'.

[199] In this way Playfair soon formed a close acquaintance with Spencer, Ducie and Fitzwilliam. See, *Memoirs ... of Lyon Playfair,* ed. Reid, pp. 69–71.

[200] In Manchester he became a close acquaintance of John Dalton, a Quaker, philosopher and founder of 'atomic theory'. For Playfair's connections with Manchester and Dalton, Ibid., pp.57-8.

[201] See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Feb 2008).

[202] For Joseph Parkes' relationship with Cobden, see N.C. Edsall, *Richard Cobden: Independent Radical* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1986), pp. 45-6 and for his involvement in the anti-corn law movement, see pp. 70, 71, 122.

William Buckland (1784 – 1856) was ordained in 1808. In 1819 he was the first person to hold the chair of Geology at Oxford University, founded by the Prince Regent. He resigned from this post in 1825 and was presented to a canonry of the cathedral of Christ Church, Oxford by Lord Liverpool. In 1845 Peel elevated Buckland, by now one of the Prime Minister's closest scientific confidants, to the position of dean of Westminster. He was elected President of the Geological Society on two separate occasions, was a fellow of the Royal Society and was widely published on geological matters. [203]

Charles Chetwynd, the second Earl Talbot of Hensol (1777 – 1849) was also a close confidants of the Prime Minister's. The two men had become acquainted when, on 9 October 1817, Talbot had been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland with Peel, at least until 1818, acting as his Chief Secretary. As such, both men had to contend with the aftermath of a serious failure in the potato crop (1816 – 1817) and an outbreak of cholera. Talbot was a dedicated agriculturist and devoted much of his time to the improvement of his estates and, when in Ireland, to the improvement of agriculture in that land. For this latter service he was presented with the freedom of Drogheda. He remained the Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire from August 1812 to the end of his life and, on Peel's recommendation, was created a Knight of the Garter in December 1844. He was a vociferous supporter of Peel's legislation to repeal restrictive commercial duties, including the corn laws.[204]

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[203] See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Feb 2008). For Buckland's free trade credentials, see H. Reeve, *The Greville Memoirs*, v, 308.

[204] See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Feb 2008).

Heneage Finch, the fifth Earl of Aylesford (1786 – 1856), was a close neighbour and friend of Sir Robert Peel. He was a leading member of the Royal Agricultural Society of England,[205] dedicated much of his time to the improvement of his Warwickshire estate, Packington Hall, and took a lively interest in railway matters in the House of Lords. His father had been a prominent member of the Royal Household and his mother was a keen geologist and passed a noted collection of minerals and prehistoric animals and fossils to her son, on her death. Heneage Finch succeeded his father as the fifth Earl in 1812 and married Augusta Sophia, daughter of the Earl of Warwick, in 1821.[206]

Over the course of this meeting the Prime Minister was thus able to draw upon the knowledge and expertise of two of his most trusted scientists and three of the leading agriculturists of the day – one of whom had direct experience of famine in Ireland. All of these men were highly respected as individuals, but as Peel explicitly expressed in his letter to Everett, these men were not mere individuals, they were 'Representatives'. As such, not only was the Prime Minister able to consult the feelings of a small circle of close acquaintances, he was also able to draw upon the knowledge and expertise of a powerful national 'interest group'. Peel, as has been said, must have been aware that the decision to repeal the corn laws was going to be difficult to justify to one of the most influential classes in the land – the agriculturists. To be successful in this endeavour the Prime Minister would need to be seen to be consulting the representatives of this body. Peel not only achieved this at the Drayton Manor meeting, he also achieved it in the formation of the Commission to investigate the 'science' of the potato blight.

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[205] The Fifth Earl became a life Governor of the Society on 13 July 1839. See *Register of Annual Members*, Rural History Centre, Reading Univesity, Reading, B xviii – 24 (Archives of the Royal Agricultural Society of England).

[206] I am grateful to the Right Honorable The Earl of Aylesford for this information.

'The disorder', the first minister informed Everett, 'appears to be most widely spread and I doubt not is attributable to the cause which Dr. Buckland assigns for it – some pernicious atmospheric influence exercised at a critical period of the vegetation of the plant.'[207] Peel, it appears, had already formed an opinion as to the cause of the blight before he appointed Playfair to the Commission. Buckland was a close confidante of the Prime Minister's and Peel trusted him. Yet on this occasion the geologist was able to offer the Prime Minister more than just his good word in support of his particular theory.

On 15 September 1845 the French Minister of Agriculture hastily convened a meeting of the Société royal et centrale d'Agriculture to discuss the outbreak of the potato blight in France. Buckland, who was present in Paris at this time, attended the meeting and, as Bourke has demonstrated, appears to have imbibed many of the theories his French fellow scientists offered as to the possible cause of the blight.[208] On his return to England it is unlikely that Buckland would have been unduly reticent about sharing the information garnered at this French meeting, and it is perhaps not unfair to conclude that the meeting was discussed during his October visit to Drayton Manor. Certainly Prince Albert seems to have believed that Peel was heavily influenced by Buckland in his thinking on the potato blight[209]. Yet Playfair himself perhaps provided the most convincing testimony in support of the argument that Peel was not primarily interested in the 'science' of the Science Commission. 'I told Sir Robert Peel before leaving Drayton Manor', Playfair writing in his *Memoirs* remembered, 'that I had no hope of suggesting any remedy for the disease, and all that I really expected to attain was a true estimate as

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[207] Add. MS 40574 (Peel Papers): Peel to Everett, 16 Oct. 1845.
[208] Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather', Part II B, Appendix 10, pp. 7–8.
[209] See Memorandum by the Prince Albert, Osborn, 7 Dec. 1845, *The Letters Of Queen Victoria,* ed. Benson and Esher (London, 1908) ii, 48–9.

to its magnitude, and as to its future consequences on the population. He stated that he did not expect more, but desired that I should write to him daily as to the information which we collected.'[210] The message, unless Playfair was being creative with the truth in the light of his subsequent scientific setbacks in Ireland, was clear. Peel did not expect a scientific solution to the blight. What he did expect was information as to the 'magnitude' of the predicted dearth. That information was not only required rapidly, it also had to come from the most unimpeachable scientific source. Peel knew that he could trust Playfair to be discreet [211] and, as a close personal acquaintance, he also knew that Playfair's account of the extent of the blight would be more trustworthy than those he had previously received. But, most importantly of all, he hoped that many of the potential 'doubters' would find Playfair's evidence unimpeachable. Peel, as we have seen, did not need convincing as to the gravity of the situation; others, however, did. In Playfair the Prime Minister not only found a respected scientist, he found a man with superlative agricultural credentials. Credibility, not scientific prowess, got Playfair hired in October 1845.[212]

Much of the historical literature on the Science Commission is deeply critical of Peel for his unrepresentative selection of the other appointees to the Commission. In this respect many of the accounts of the Commission simply follow O'Neill's diagnosis that 'the three selected scientists [appointed by the government] represented but one school of

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[210] *Memoirs ... of Lyon Playfair*, ed. Reid, p. 98.

[211] Playfair's discretion had been successfully tested by his appointment to, and actions upon, the Board for the Investigation into the State and Condition of Buckingham Palace (1845).

[212] Graham also did not appear to be overly convinced by the 'science' of the Science Commissioners. See Add. MS 40452 (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 8 Nov. 1845.

thought as to the nature of the potato-disease'[213] and as a result, Peel is lambasted for not appointing an advocate of the fungal theory to the Commission. Such criticism is not only anachronistic – it assumes a prescience of the cause of the blight that was simply not tenable at this time – it also implies a degree of concern over the specific 'scientific' aspects of the Commission that was not evident. Peel, as a detailed study of the chronology of the Drayton Manor meeting has demonstrated, had a greater opportunity to assist in the appointment of Kane and Lindley than has perhaps previously been imagined. The question must therefore arise, why did Peel, or Playfair, select these individuals to sit upon the Science Commission?

Playfair, in his *Memoirs*, informs the reader that Peel simply requested that he name two other Commissioners 'in whom I had confidence' to serve upon the committee.[214] However, did Playfair have to know the individual personally to have 'confidence' in him? Bourke proffers the justification that each Commissioner represented an individual region from Britain. Hence Kane, an Irishman, was added to a Commission of Playfair, a Scot and Lindley, an Englishman.[215] In reality it is likely that only Kane was hired for his Irish credentials, while pure coincidence dictated that the other Commissioners were from Scotland and England. In any case a separate Scottish Scientific Commission, partly funded by the government was set up to investigate the potato blight in Scotland.[216] The question therefore remains, why did Peel, or Playfair, select Kane and Lindley to sit upon this Commission?

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[213] O'Neill, 'The scientific investigation', p. 132. Bourke, despite attempting to challenge these views, simply echoes them. See Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather', Part II B, Appendix 10, pp. 2-3. See also Ó Gráda, *The Great Irish Famine*, p. 33.

[214] *Memoirs ... of Lyon Playfair*, ed. Reid, p. 98.

[215] Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather', Part II B, Appendix 10, p. 11.

[216] In any case a separate Scottish Science Commission, partly funded by the government, was to be set up to investigate the potato blight in Scotland. See *The Potato Disease In Scotland*, ed. J.F.W. Johnston (Edinburgh, 1845).

John Lindley (1799 – 1865) was Vice-Secretary of the Horticultural Society, held the first chair in Botany at the University of London, lectured for the Apothecaries' Company in Chelsea and was a fellow of the Linnean, Geological and Royal Societies. Early in his career, as garden general assistant and later, as Assistant Secretary to the Horticultural Society, he had made the acquaintance of many leading figures in the British agricultural world, for example the Duke of Devonshire, and had also become intimate with some of the pre-eminent botanists of the age such as Sir William Hooker and Paxton. In February 1838 Melbourne's government had employed Lindley to survey the Royal Gardens and report upon the specific future of the Royal pleasure gardens at Kew. Lindley pursued this task with zeal and thereafter petitioned many of the most prominent politicians of the age to assist him in his cause to found a national botanic garden.[217] Lindley's publications, which were numerous, also brought the botanist to the public's attention. However, he was arguably best known for his editorship of the *Botanical Register* and, from 1841, of the *Gardeners' Chronicle* – a weekly journal covering subjects of an agricultural and horticultural nature. It was this latter editorial post that perhaps brought him to the attention of Peel, or Playfair, in October 1845. For after the first report of the potato blight had appeared in the *Gardeners Chronicle* on 16 August 1845, Lindley, as editor, thereafter devoted vast amounts of column space to the blight, warning on 23 August of its ravages in Belgium and of its appearance, in Ireland, on 13 September 1845. 'Where' Lindley notoriously asked, 'will Ireland be, in the event of a universal potato rot?'[218] Yet, if Peel and Playfair were aware of Lindley's labours in

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[217] Lindley came to the attention of Sir Robert Peel in this way, in Feb. 1840. See G. Meynell, 'Kew and the Royal Gardens Committee of 1838', *Archives of Natural History* 10, 3 (1982), p. 474.
[218] *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, 16, 23 Aug. and 13 Sept. 1845, quoted in E. C. Large, *The Advance of the Fungi* (London, 2000), pp. 13, 21.

the *Gardeners' Chronicle*, they both performed a remarkable job in keeping such knowledge close to their chests, for one never finds the Prime Minister, in his correspondence of this period, referring to reports contained within this journal. It should also be remembered that Playfair, on his arrival in London, appeared to be genuinely surprised to learn that Lindley had already initiated scientific experiments into the potato blight.[219] It is therefore more than probable that Lindley was selected to sit upon this Commission because he was the most obvious candidate for the post. He was a recognised name, a botanist of some note, widely published and, as his service upon the Commission into the royal gardens demonstrated, could be trusted to be discreet. In addition Playfair also had personal cause to have 'confidence' in Lindley's abilities as a scientist, for the two men were part of the same London scientific scene. In April 1837 Lindley had sought advice from his close friend and patron, William Hooker, on the lecturing credentials of Hooker's friend, Professor Graham, as Graham had appeared upon the short list for the chair of Chemistry at University College in London.[220] Thomas Graham was appointed to the post[221]and thereafter seems to have become well acquainted with Lindley through their mutual friend William Hooker.[222] Playfair was also on extremely close terms with Thomas Graham, his former supervisor at Andersonian College, Glasgow and it is not unfeasible to assume that the botanist and young chemist may have met when Playfair was working as Graham's private assistant at University College in 1838. The two men were also socially connected, not only through Playfair's

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[219] Add. MS 40576 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 21 Oct. 1846.
[220] See Lindley to W. Hooker, 21 Apr. 1837, quoted in *John Lindley ... A Gathering of his Correspondence Issued in Installments* ed. R.M. Hamilton (Richmond, British Columbia, 1995), iv, 51.
[221] See Kew Archives, Directors' Correspondence, English Letters, xxii: Graham to W. Hooker, 28 June 1837.
[222] See Kew Archives, Directors' Correspondence, English Letters, xxii: Lindley to W. Hooker, undated Wednesday 1844.

patron Graham, but also through his close friends Professor Richard Owen[223] and Professor Edward Forbes.[224] Lindley, as an established palaeobotanist,[225] was also well acquainted with Buckland[226] and his coterie of Oxford academics,[227] an acquaintance which lends support to the theory that if Playfair had consulted Buckland upon the appointments to the Commission, the elderly geologist would certainly have approved of his desire to appoint John Lindley.

Robert Kane (1809-1890) became a Licentiate of Apothecaries Hall Dublin in 1829. In 1830, before publishing his first book, *Elements of Practical Pharmacy* (1831) he studied chemistry, in Paris, under Chevallier. At the age of 22 he was elected to the Royal Irish Academy and won the appointment of the chair of chemistry at the Apothecaries' Company Dublin. Kane remained at the Company until 1834 when he was appointed to a lectureship in Natural Philosophy at the Royal Dublin Society. Thereafter he graduated from Trinity College Dublin (1835), spent several months in Liebig's

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[223] Professor Richard Owen was a geologist, a 'Red Lion' (see B. G. Gardiner, 'Edward Forbes, Richard Owen and the Red Lions', *Archives of Natural History* (1993, 20, 3), pp.349–72) and a fellow member of the 1843 Royal Commission into the Health of Towns. For Owen's relationship with Lindley, see Kew Archives, (Lindley Letters): Owen to Lindley, 16 Dec. 1845 and 31 May 1853. For Owen's close relationship with both W. Hooker and J. Hooker, see Kew Archives, Directors Correspondence, English letters, xxii: Owen to W. Hooker, 23 Aug. 1845.

[224] Edward Forbes at this time was the Professor of Botany at King's College London. He befriended Playfair when a student at Edinburgh in 1837. Forbes was a founding member of 'The Red Lions' and a close colleague of Playfair's at the Museum of Economic Geology. For his relationship with Lindley, see J.H. Balfour, 'Sketch Of The Life Of The Late Professor Edward Forbes', *Annals And Magazine Of Natural History* (Jan. 1855), pp. 9–10 and Kew Archives, 8 (Letters to J.D. Hooker): E. Forbes to J.D. Hooker, 11 May (year unknown).

[225] See J.M. Allford, *Bibliography of the Published Works of John Lindley, 1799–1865* (Diploma in Librarianship, University College, London, 1953), p. v. Lindley, with William Hutton, had published *The Fossil Flora of Great Britain*, in installments between 1831 and 1837.

[226] See, for example, Lindley to W. Hutton, 17 Mar. 1832, quoted in *John Lindley ... A Gathering of his Correspondence*, Part I, ed. R. M. Hamilton (Richmond, British Columbia, 1994), p. 22.

[227] For example, Professor Daubeny, the Professor of Agriculture at Oxford University. Lindley, along with H.E. Strickland and Professor Henslow, sat with Professor Daubeny on the British Association sponsored investigation into the 'Preservation Of Vegetative Powers In Seeds'. This committee reported to the British Association at its Plymouth meeting in Aug. 1841. See J.M. Allford, *Bibliography of ... John Lindley*, entry number 182.

laboratory in Giessen (1836), edited *The Philosophical Magazine*, published his *Elements of Chemistry* and delivered a course of lectures on the *Industrial Resources of Ireland* that was to form the framework of his later celebrated publication of the same title (1844). Kane was the son of a United Irishman, married the niece of a committed nationalist and close friend of O'Connell[228] and was widely respected by the upper echelons of the Young Ireland movement.[229] Bourke has argued that his appointment as the Commission's 'token Irishman' did not represent 'the most fruitful selection' on Peel or Playfair's behalf.[230] Yet, Kane was certainly known to the Prime Minister at this time[231] and could be linked to Playfair both indirectly, through their mutual friendship with both Liebig and Thomas Graham[232] and directly, through their joint work on the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Chemical Science committee for the investigation of 'Colouring matters' and the 'Chemical History of Tannin'.[233] The Irish chemist was also known to have expressed an interest in agricultural affairs,[234] had advised the government on the formation of the Irish Geological Survey[235] and was

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[228] See T.S. Wheeler, 'Sir Robert Kane, His Life and Work' in *The Natural Resources of Ireland: A Series of Discourses Delivered before the Royal Dublin Society* (Apr. 1944), p. 13.

[229] See D. Gwynn, 'Sir Thomas Deane And The College Buildings', *Cork University Record* (19, Summer 1950), p. 29 and D. Gwynn, 'The College's First Year', *Cork University Record* (21, Easter, 1951), p 21. For a summary of Kane's political inclinations, see D. O. Raghallaigh, *Sir Robert Kane* (Cork, 1942), pp. 35–6.

[230] See Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather', Part II B, Appendix 10, pp. 11-12.

[231] See British Library (Graham Papers): Peel to Graham, 18 Oct. 1845.

[232] See J. Grimshaw, 'Sir Robert Kane 1809–1890', *Chemistry in Britain* (Aug. 1990), pp.764– 6.

[233] See *The Report of the Thirteenth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (London, 1844), p. xxii.

[234] See Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather', Part II B, Appendix 10, p. 13.

[235] See T.S. Wheeler, 'Sir Robert Kane: Life and Work Part II: 1844 – 1890', *Studies* (Sept. 1944), p. 317. This survey was linked to the Museum of Economic Geology in London. As such, Playfair and Kane were both employees of the same government department before the formation of the Science Commission, Kane being appointed Director of the Irish Geological Museum in 1845.

known to be highly regarded by the people of Ireland.[236] There is, however, another aspect to the appointment of both Kane and Lindley to the Commission; an aspect that would appear to suggest the influence of the Prime Minister, in the appointments of these two men, to an extent hitherto unacknowledged. Indeed Kane and Lindley were to some extent the most natural choice, as Peel's appointees, to sit upon a Commission with Playfair. For both men had proved their discretion and loyalty to the Prime Minister only months before when they had cooperated in the consultative process so favoured by Peel, which preceded the repeal of the duties on glass.[237]

Peel, and to some extent Playfair, had therefore concocted a Commission that would not only work quickly and quietly together,[238] but one whose findings would be least susceptible to hostile challenges. The selection of the constituent members of the Science Commission was, as a result, a process that required a vast investment of time and energy. The Prime Minister simply could not afford to jeopardise the credibility of this Commission's findings by misplacing his appointments. If Playfair was required to

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[236] Kane's lectures at the Royal Dublin Society became so popular that in 1842 the Society had to apply for 'the attendance of policemen at the entrance gate each evening during Dr. Kane's course of lectures'. See T.S. Wheeler, 'Sir Robert Kane', *The Natural Resources of Ireland*, p. 10.

[237] While Lindley is well known for his lobbying action for the repeal of the duties on glass, see, for example, *John Lindley 1799-1865*, ed. W.T. Stearn (England, 1999), pp. 18, 59. Kane and Playfair's part in the reduction of these duties has remained unknown until now. However the author has recently uncovered a critical memorandum, written by Professor Richard Owen, which makes explicit the part played by these two chemists in the consultative process which led to the eventual repeal of the commercial duties on glass. See The General Library, The Natural History Museum, London, 90, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Vol. I, Part III, f. 17–19 (Owen collection): undated Owen memorandum. (*an Act to repeal the Duties and Laws of Excise on Glass* (8 Victoriae Cap. VI) passed into legislation on 24 Apr. 1845. Given their recent involvement in the consultative process which led to the repeal of these duties, perhaps it is not unfair to view Playfair and Kane as part of a specific Prime Ministerial 'scientific team' put together to consult on the reduction and repeal of commercial duties in general. What does seem certain is that both sides – the science men and the premier – would have had ample opportunity to discover each other's views upon the subject and garner some knowledge of how each other operated.

[238] The Commissioners successfully resisted the appointment of a fourth 'agricultural' Commissioner on the grounds that such an addition 'might delay the proceedings of the Commission' and might interfere with the 'unity of action which 'inspired' the committee. See National Archives, PRO HO/45/1080 C (Home Office Papers): Kane to Fremantle, 27 Oct.1845.

have 'confidence' in these individuals, Peel was forced to look to their very credibility as scientists and public men. Little then was accidental about the appointment of Robert Kane, John Lindley and Lyon Playfair to the Science Commission. Yet in many respects this Commission was a sham, involving, as a study of the Commission's activities in Ireland so ably demonstrates, the application of very little actual 'science'.

Despite Ó Gráda's assurance that, from the outset, John Lindley proved to be the dominant force of this Commission,[239] the evidence would seem to support a different conclusion. Lindley and Playfair arrived in Dublin on 23 October 1845.[240] Within twenty-four hours the Commissioners, having received their brief from Lord Heytesbury only on the day of their arrival,[241] had issued their first report.[242] It is therefore unlikely that this report was the fruit of the combined efforts of all three Commissioners, for the scientists would simply not have been able to formulate, draft and issue such extensive instructions in such a condensed period of time. Nor is it likely that Lindley and Playfair drafted the instructions before their departure for Dublin.[243] By implication the responsibility for this report chiefly fell on Professor Kane. We know that Kane was interviewed on the subject of the blight, by Fremantle on 20 October.[244] As a result it is probable that Kane was given at least an indication of the type of investigation the Lord Lieutenant envisaged, in

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[239] Ó Gráda, *The Great Irish Famine*, p.33.

[240] British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 23 Oct.1845.

[241] See Kew Archives, Heytesbury (Lindley correspondence): Heytesbury to the Commissioners, 24 Oct. 1845. The Commissioners were given the task of: i. Devising the best means of preserving the potatoes; ii. Recommending measures to inhibit the progress of the disease; iii. Recommending measures for the productive employment of diseased tubers; and iv. Suggesting how seed potatoes might be secured for the coming year. See Heytesbury to Peel, 24 Oct. 1845 quoted in *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, p.133.

[242] This report offered extensive advice on how best to harvest and store the potato crop. See National Archives, Dublin, RLFC 2 / 441 / 18 Z14350 (Relief Commission Papers): Dublin Science Commissioners to Heytesbury, 24 Oct. 1845.

[243] Once again, there would not have been the time. See Lindley to Peel, 21 Oct. 1845, quoted in *John Lindley ... A Gathering of his Correspondence*, ed. Hamilton, Part II, p. 22.

[244] BL, Aberdeen Papers, Add. MS 43065, Fremantle to Graham, 20 Oct. 1845; Add. MS 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 20 Oct. 1845.

advance of his fellow Commissioners. This headstart, coupled with Kane's previous researches on the potato blight,[245] provided the Commissioner with perhaps the best opportunity to draft this first report. Lindley and Playfair were on Kane's territory. Their centre of operations was the Board Room of Kane's home turf – the Royal Dublin Society at Leinster House – whilst they were being asked to report on a specific situation in a country that they had recently resided in for less than twenty-four hours. Kane, on the other hand, was a native of the island, had been watching the advance of the blight for many weeks,[246] had already undertaken extensive chemical experiments on potatoes, and was known to be extremely headstrong.[247] Ó Gráda is right to say that the Science Commissioners were in broad agreement on the cause of the potato blight – they attributed it to adverse meteorological conditions – but he is arguably not correct in attesting that Lindley was the dominant force in this Commission because of this diagnostic concurrence. The group dynamics of the Science Commission were admittedly complicated. It would be unwise, however, to disregard the initial advantage on the committee held by Robert Kane.

Five days later, on 29 October, the Commissioners issued their second report. This report focused on the question of the preservation of diseased potatoes and the profitable

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[245] Kane was the chairman of a sub-committee of the Agricultural Improvement of Ireland committee of The Royal Dublin Society. This sub-committee had been formed on 16 Oct. 1845 and its primary function was to investigate the potato blight. As such, its members had undertaken a series of experiments on the best means of preserving potatoes from the blight. There are close parallels between these experiments and the recommendations contained within the first report of the Science Commission. For details of the formation of this sub-committee and its experiments, see Royal Dublin Society Archives, Dublin, the Proceedings of the Committee of the Agricultural Improvement Society of Ireland: Thur.16 Oct. 1845, p. 404 and Sat. 8 Oct. 1845, pp. 405-7.

[246] Ibid., p. 388. At least since 11 Sept.1845.

[247] I.S. Wheeler, 'Sir Robert Kane, his Life and Work', *The Natural Resources of Ireland*, p. 30.

extraction of starch from tubers.[248] In its original draft form this report appears to be in the hands of both Lindley and Kane, yet on closer examination the predominant influence of Robert Kane in the findings of the report is clear. Again this is not surprising. For whilst Lindley had spent some time during those days alone, examining potatoes in Dublin's markets,[249] the majority of the Commissioners' time had been spent examining, or arranging to examine, Kane's colleagues from the Royal Dublin Society (RDS).[250] Nor can the fact be forgotten that on 27 October the Commissioners recruited Kane's RDS associate, Edward Bullen, as their secretary.[251] The fact that many of the recommendations in this second report closely mirrored Kane's previous RDS sponsored conclusions is hardly a great revelation and nor was it one that Lindley felt honour bound to conceal.[252] The sheer lack of scientific initiative displayed by the Science Commissioners, however, becomes truly apparent from their subsequent reports.

Bourke has described these documents as being 'subsidiary' to the principal reports of the Commission,[253] but subsidiary or not they were still issued to the Irish public at

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[248] National Archives, Dublin, 2/ 441/ 18/ Z14706 (RLFC): Science Commissioners to Heytesbury, 29 Oct. 1845.

[249] Add. MS 40577 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 28 Oct. 1845.

[250] On 28 Oct. 1845 Lindley and Playfair had interviewed Charles Roper, a prominent member of the Agricultural Improvement of Ireland Committee, see Royal Dublin Society Archives, Dublin: Proceedings of the Committee of the Agricultural Improvement Society of Ireland, pp. 385, 388 and 413. On 26 Oct. 1845 they had written to David Moore, Curator of the Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, requesting his attendance at an interview on 30 Oct. 1845. See Lindley to D. Moore, 26 Oct. 1845, Unpublished Mss. in the possession of Major-General F.D. Moore, Bunclody. The author is grateful to the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin for providing a copy of the above letter.

[251] Royal Dublin Society Archives: Proceedings of the Committee of the Agricultural Improvement Society of Ireland, p. 414.

[252] See the introductory paragraphs of 2/441/18 Z14706 (RLFC): Science Commissioners to Heytesbury, 29 Oct. 1845. If Playfair's voice on the Commission at this juncture seems somewhat muted, it was because much of his time was devoted to the specific task of assessing the extent of the blight in the Irish potato crop. See Kew Archives, Heytesbury (Lindley Papers): Heytesbury to Science Commissioners, 24 Oct. 1845; Add. MS 40577 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 26 Oct. 1845. Playfair took this role extremely seriously and regularly informed Peel of the Commission's most recent appraisal of the extent of the blight. See, for example Add. MS 40577 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 26, 28 Oct.1845.

[253] See Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather', Part II B, Appendix 10, p. 19.

large and, as a result, are deserving of attention. Briefly speaking the 'subsidiary' reports, issued on 29 October and 3 November, were reactive in nature – the first reacted to the criticism of the Commissioners by one Dr. Halpin, that it was a mistake to recommend the creation of 'padded pits', arguing instead for the potato pits to be extensively 'ventilated' to prevent the appearance of blight. The second was issued in response to a request by the Lord Lieutenant for 'short directives', comprehensible to the Irish peasantry at large, regarding the preservation of the potato crops.[254] Neither report contained even an element of 'scientific' novelty, while their third 'proper' report, issued on 7 November, did little more than reiterate the Commissioners' rebuttal of Halpin and repeat the results of Kane's earlier experiments regarding the autumnal planting of seed potatoes.[255] The Commissioners, having declared that their third report was to be their final word upon the subject, then threw the public into confusion by issuing, the very next day (8 November), a fourth report informing Ireland's potato growers of the beneficial effects of 'bog water' in keeping the blight at bay.[256] By contradicting every proposal that they had hitherto propounded on the importance of maintaining dry tubers, Peel's science men soon undermined what little influence they had managed to establish, both in Ireland and in England.[257] Thereafter the Lord Lieutenant had to coax and cajole Playfair and Kane[258] to issue their fifth and final report on the rehabilitation of diseased tubers[259] – a

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[254] Ibid., p. 20; 2/441/19 Z15036 (RLFC): Science Commissioners to Heytesbury, 30 Nov. 1845.
[255] Ibid., pp. 20–2. For Kane's experiments on the early planting of seed see Add. MS 40577 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 26 Oct. 1845.
[256] Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather', Part II B, Appendix 10, p. 23.
[257] Unsurprisingly the Commissioners also found themselves derided in England. See, for example, British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 11 Nov. 1845.
[258] Lindley had left for England by 8 Nov. 1845. The final report was signed by Playfair and Kane.
[259] The report was issued on 12 Nov. 1845. See Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather', Part II B, Appendix 10, pp. 23–4.

report which, again, drew heavily upon the investigative work of the Agricultural Improvement sub-committee of the Royal Dublin Society.[260]

The Commissioners did not only draw heavily upon the advice of the Royal Dublin Society. Indeed, contrary to historical belief, Peel's men were also keen to consult members of the wider scientific community, including the leading proponent of the 'fungal theory' of the blight, the Reverend Miles Joseph Berkeley. Berkeley, an amateur mycologist, had first propounded his views on the blight in *The Gardeners' Chronicle* – the horticultural paper edited by Lindley.[261] Lindley, while dedicating much space to Berkeley's arguments, made it very clear that he disagreed with the parson's proposals.

As a result of this very public clash historians have concluded that, 'The researches of scientists of Lindley's school of thought were, by the fundamental misconception which underlay the meteorological theory, directed into wrong channels'.[262] This is not a wholly accurate assessment of Lindley and his fellow Commissioners' behaviour.

On 24 October, less than twenty-four hours after his arrival in Dublin, Lindley addressed the following letter to Berkeley:

> Here I am on a committee of inquiry instituted by government into the Potato disease. I have read the Causty remedy in the Pagery papers and will send them to you as soon as we have them ... I am perfectly convinced that fungi do not cause it: though God knows they follow it fast enough.[263]

Just four days later, Lindley again addressed the mycologist:

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[260] See Royal Dublin Society Archives: Proceedings of the Committee of the Agricultural Improvement Society of Ireland, 30 Oct, 6 Nov. 1845, pp. 417, 424 for the similarities between the sub-committee' s proposals for the invention of grating machines and the Commissioners final recommendations, chiefly for the potential benefit of the Poor Law Commissioners.

[261] See Large, *The Advance of the Fungi*, pp. 14-16.

[262] O'Neill, 'The scientific investigation', p. 124. The debate concerning the origin *of Phytophthora infestans* continues to occupy scientific attention. See J.B. Ristaino, C.T. Groves and G.R. Parra, 'PCR amplification of the Irish potato famine pathogen from historic specimens', *Nature,* 411 (7 June 2001), pp. 695–7.

[263] Natural History Museum, London, Botany Library (Berkeley correspondence): Lindley to Berkeley, 24 Oct. 1845.

> I am directed by the Commissioners appointed by HM government to enquire into the disease in Potatoes now unhappily ravaging the United Kingdom to request your opinion upon the points mentioned in the enclosed paper.
> I am also desired to express the hope of the Commissioners that you will add any practical suggestions which may occur to you as to the best means of hereafter meeting the evils produced in Potatoes by the attacks of parasitical fungi.[264]

These two letters are extremely important, for although they demonstrate that Lindley remained unconvinced of Berkeley's principal proposition that fungi were the cause, and not the result of the blight, they make explicit the nature of the relationship which existed between these two men a relationship in which both men traded potentially informative references on the nature of this disease,[265] and in which both men were more than willing to draw upon the scientific experiences of the other. The friction supposed to exist between them has clearly been exaggerated; Berkeley frequently found himself in accordance with the views of the potato Commissioners. Thus on 2 November, we find the parson informing Lindley; 'I have read the first report of the Commissioners, and am very much pleased with it. The suggestions seem highly important',[266] and he was more than willing to send his recommendations to the Irish Commissioners[267] and kept up a correspondence with John Lindley, on the subject of the potato disease, long after the Commission had ceased to sit.[268]

O'Neill, in one of the only articles on the Commission, argues that 'the Commission sat for too short a period and at too late a season in the year to observe the

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[264] Ibid.: Lindley to Berkeley, 28 Oct. 1845.
[265] See, for example, ibid.: Berkeley to Lindley, 30 Oct. 1845.
[266] See, for example, ibid.: Berkeley to Lindley, 2 Nov. 1845.
[267] Ibid.: Berkeley to Lindley, 18 Nov. 1845.
[268] See, for example, ibid.: Lindley to Berkeley, 12 Oct. 1846, 29 Apr. 1847, 25 Oct. 1847 and 11 Aug. 1848.

disease accurately'[269] and there certainly seems to be a grain of truth in this appraisal. For the Commission sat, in Ireland, for a total of twenty-one days before Playfair took his leave of the Lord Lieutenant and Robert Kane.[270] We know that both Playfair and Lindley visited the counties of Louth, Meath, Westmeath, and Kildare prior to 4 November,[271] that Kane had attended meetings concerning the blight in Ireland, at the RDS, as early as 11 September[272] and that Playfair intended to survey the potato crops in Belfast, Connaught, and Galway before he returned to London.[273] What remains difficult to explain is how, on 24 October after only a single day in Dublin, Lindley could inform Berkeley that the blight in Ireland was widespread?[274] Or how Playfair, after only three days in Ireland - during which he had not even left Dublin - could inform the Prime Minister that 'Practically we are inclined to believe that one half is under the loss actually sustained'?[275] Obviously the Commissioners had been influenced by what they had read in England about the Irish situation, prior to their departure for Dublin. It is also highly likely that one of the first duties Kane would have performed as a government

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[269] O'Neill, 'The scientific investigation', p. 137.

[270] Although Lindley was only resident in Ireland for sixteen days.

[271] Add. MS 40578 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 4 Nov. 1845. The exact itinerary of their tour is difficult to establish. Further information may possibly be gained from a detailed examination of the Commissioners' 'travelling and Personal Expenses' forwarded by Manners Sutton to Trevelyan on 13 Dec. 1845, see PRO HO/45/1080/ F (Home Office Papers): Trevelyan to Manners Sutton, 19 Feb. 1846, however, the author has been unable to locate a copy of this letter. Additional information might also be gained from a spoof poem, composed by Professor Edward Forbes, on Playfair's activities upon the 'potato Commission' in Ireland. Unfortunately the author has, again, not been able to locate a copy of this work. 'Report of Potato Commission (a squib in verse)' was apparently printed in *Bentley's Miscellany* in 1846. See, P.F. Rehbock, 'Edward Forbes (1815–1854) – an annotated list of published and unpublished writings', *Journal of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History,* 9, 2 (1979), p. 204. Rehbock was also been unable to locate the poem.

[272] See Royal Dublin Society Archives: Proceedings of the Committee of the Agricultural Improvement Society of Ireland, Thursday 11 Sept. 1845, p. 388.

[273] Add. MS 40578 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 4 Nov. 1845.

[274] National History Museum, London, Library, (Berkeley correspondence): Lindley to Berkeley, 24 Oct. 1845.

[275] Add. MS 40577 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 26 Oct. 1845: Draft of a report on 'the extent of the blight in the potatoes in Ireland'.

Commissioner would have been that of bringing his fellow Commissioners up to speed on the situation, as he saw it, in Ireland. We also know that the Commissioners pored over constabulary reports, reports sent by the resident magistrates and any of the local agricultural society reports sent in to the RDS, for relevant information concerning the extent of the blight.[276] However, Peel himself had been fastidious in requesting copies of all of these reports from Dublin Castle and, to an extent, was therefore already aware of their findings. He had sent a Commission to Ireland specifically to affirm the accuracy of these reports: a Commission which deliberately included men of 'no connection with Ireland' and one 'free from the contagion of undue local apprehensions', a Commission which would be 'enabled to form a dispassionate judgement as to the real character and extent of the evil to be apprehended, in short a Commission that would 'give the most trustworthy information as to the facts' of the potato case.[277] Peel must surely have suffered a sense of *déjà vu* when he was presented with the Commission's initial findings. Yet it could not have been a sensation which particularly surprised him for, as we have seen, the drastic situation on the continent had fully apprised him of the danger facing Ireland. Confirmation, with a cloak of scientific, non-Irish impartiality was required by Peel to convince others of the gravity of this danger. This is what he sent his science men to Ireland to provide and this, in these initial reports and in the private letters of Playfair, is what he got. What he may not have realised is that his 'impartial' men of science were far from free of the 'contagion of ... local apprehensions'.

Indeed not only were the Commissioners influenced by Kane, they were also able to draw upon a network of their own individual 'Irish' contacts, for information. Thus it

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[276] Ibid. See also 2/441/18 Z14290 (RLFC): Playfair to Heytesbury, 24 Oct. 1845.
[277] *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, pp. 117– 18.

is highly unlikely that Lindley would have spurned the attentions of the curator of the Trinity College Herbarium, Harvey, on his arrival in Dublin.[278] While Playfair, whom all the evidence would suggest had undertaken a visit to Ireland prior to 1845,[279] could fall back upon a series of contacts made through the Dublin branch of the Museum of Economic Geology.[280] Playfair was thus fortunate in being able, upon his arrival, to draw specifically upon the extensive and localised knowledge of such preeminent colleagues as Sir Warington Wilkinson Smyth and Sir Henry de la Beche.[281] And it appears as if he missed interrogating his close friend and fellow 'Red Lion',[282] Edward Forbes, upon the subject of the blight by a hair's breadth.[283] Peel's Commissioners were clearly influenced by reports of the blight garnered from sources other than those of their own attestation. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the Commissioners relied upon such sources

[278] Harvey acted as a supplier of scarce seed for both Lindley and Sir William Hooker. Lindley repaid Harvey's kindness, in part, with a signed copy of his work, *The Vegetable Kingdom* (1846). See National History Museum Botany Library, London (Berkeley correspondence): Harvey to Lindley, 30 Mar. 1844; Harvey to Lindley, 6 Feb. 1845; Harvey to Lindley, 23 Mar. 1846.

[279] In Aug. 1843 the British Association held its annual meeting at Cork. Playfair's attendance at this meeting is difficult to confirm, however, it is not improbable. See Edward Forbes to Thompson, 20 July 1843 quoted in G. Wilson and A. Geikie, *Memoir of Edward Forbes* (Edinburgh, 1861), p. 350.

[280] Philps and Captain James were two such contacts. See Imperial College Archives, London, 8/625/9 (Ramsay Papers): Playfair to Ramsay, 1 Feb. 1844; 8/389 (Ramsay Papers): Forbes to Ramsay, 22 Nov. 1844 and 8/514 (Ramsay Papers): James to Ramsay, 13 July 1846. See also University of Edinburgh Library, MS 1426 (General Papers): James to Ramsay, 4 Oct.1845.

[281] Sir Warington Wilkinson Smyth was the Professor of Chemistry at the Museum of Economic Geology and had been working in Ireland since Sept. 1845. During this time he had travelled extensively and has focused his research on Counties Carlow and Wicklow. See Imperial College Archives, 8/700/5 (Ramsay Papers): Warington Wilkinson Smyth to Ramsay, 30 Sept. 1845; 8/700/6 (Ramsay Papers) 11 Oct. 1845; 8/700/7 (Ramsay Papers) 17 Oct. 1845 and 8/700/8 (Ramsay Papers) 7 Dec.1845. Sir Henry de la Beche, the Director of the Museum of Economic Geology, had also been in Ireland since Sept. 1845 and had accompanied Sir Warington Wilkinson Smyth on many of his travels. See Imperial College Archives, 17/127 (Ramsay Papers): Sir Henry de la Beche to Ramsay, 27, 30 Sept. 1845; 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 18, 23 Oct. 1845.

[282] The Red Lions were members of a select dining club consisting of the younger members of the British Association.

[283] See Imperial College Archives, 8/389 (Ramsay Papers): Forbes to Ramsay, 14 Sept. 1845 and 17/127 (Ramsay Papers): Sir Henry de la Beche to Ramsay, 23 Oct. 1845: 'Forbes leaves today for London – Playfair has this day arrived upon the potato inquiry – a much important one. He was staying with Sir Robert Peel and this matter was started – Prof. Lindley and Dr. Kane are joined with Playfair - I expect good results'. It is not unreasonable to assume that Playfair might have had a brief opportunity of discussing the details of his Commission with Forbes.

when compiling their own reports on the extent of the blight. However, the similarities between the earlier scientific conclusions of Kane and the Commission's reports to the British government, and the coincidence of a meeting of close friends and colleagues in Ireland, with the promptitude of Playfair's important declaration that the potato crop was decimated, is difficult to ignore. Surprisingly these similarities have never been commented upon and the influence of men such as Smyth and de la Beche upon Playfair, or the influence of Kane upon the Commission as an entity has, until now, remained unrecorded. The Commissioners were thus taken to task for the futility of their instructions;[284] for failing to produce a scientific panacea for Ireland's perishing potatoes;[285] for misleading the public;[286] for 'partaking of the loaves and fishes so profusely distributed amongst government Commissioners';[287] for producing a 'Saxon'[288] report and notoriously for composing such a vast and useless report which 'if it had been eatable, the famine had been stayed'.[289] Although this contemporary criticism can not be dismissed, it should not be allowed to wholly colour subsequent historical interpretations of the Commission. Peel, as has been stated, was not unduly concerned with the 'science' of the Science Commissioners. He was, however, concerned with the informative aspect of their reports, particularly those regarding the extent of the blight in Ireland. The Commission's reports were to be instrumental in his efforts to convince his colleagues that drastic action was required to save both Ireland and the British Empire from the

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[284] *The Irish Farmers' Journal*, 1845, p. 1008 quoted in Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather', Part II B, Appendix 10, pp. 16–17.
[285] *The Times*, 14 Nov. 1845, (p.5 col. b).
[286] See *Kerry Evening Post*, 21 Feb. 1846, quoted in O'Neill, 'The scientific investigation', pp. 137–8.
[287] *Irish Farmers' Journal*, 1846, p. 157, quoted in Bourke, 'The potato, blight, weather', Part II B, Appendix 10, p. 31.
[288] *Gardeners' Chronicle*, 1845, p. 767; Bourke, p. 30.
[289] J. Mitchel, *An apology for the British government in Ireland* (London, author's edition) p. 23, quoted in O'Neill, 'The scientific investigation', p. 131.

approaching catastrophe. Historians, to date, have missed this integral aspect of the Commission in Peel's negotiations with his colleagues and the country at large, and histories of the period have suffered for this neglect.

The question then remains, how did Peel employ the findings of his Science Commission? Contrary to popular belief, the Science Commissioners continued to 'sit', albeit as individuals rather than as a Commission, on the subject of the blight long after their departure from Ireland. Playfair delivered two lectures upon the subject to the Royal Agricultural Society in London on 10 and 11 December 1845.[290] Kane continued to receive papers 'for comment' upon the blight from Dublin Castle, where he sat as a member of the Scarcity Commission[291] and Lindley continued to investigate possible causes of the disease[292] and receive consular reports proposing various palliatives for the blight from the government.[293] He also kept in close contact with Peel and Graham on the subject[294] and was occasionally consulted on the formation of specific agricultural policies for Ireland.[295] However, as we have seen, although Peel maintained an interest in these activities, they carried little real weight with a Prime Minister whose principal motivations in calling this Commission were political. We have seen how Peel initiated a 'campaign' to convince his colleagues of the gravity of the situation almost as soon as he

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[290] See *The Plough, A Journal of Agricultural and Rural Affairs*, Jan. to June 1846, i,166, 173. See also, *The Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, 1845, VI, Part II, 532–65.

[291] See, for example, 2/441/20, Z17470 (RLFC): Kane to Pennefather, 9 Dec. 1845.

[292] In the process he compiled an extensive pamphlet collection upon the subject. See, the Royal Horticultural Society, Lindley Library, London: Vol. 80, Botanical Tracts.

[293] See, for example, PRO/ HO/ 45/ 1080/ B (Home Office Papers): The Prussian Ambassador to Graham, forwarded to Lindley, 25 Mar. 1846.

[294] Lindley advised Peel on the occasional parliamentary matter. See, for example, Lindley to Peel, 16 Mar. 1846, quoted in *Lindley Correspondence*, ii, ed. Hamilton, p. 24. He also developed a good working relationship with Graham, see British Library (Graham Papers): Lindley to Graham, 28 Mar. 1846.

[295] See National Archives, PRO HO 45/1080/A (Home Office Papers): Lindley to Kane, 5 Dec. 1845 and National History Museum Botany Library, London (Berkeley correspondence): Ogilby to Lindley, 24 Mar. 1849. Lindley continued to advise Russell's government upon the 'science' of the blight and soon forged a working relationship with Sir George Grey. See, for example, PRO HO/45/ 1080/B (Home Office Papers): Lindley to George Grey, 11, 12, 24, 31 Aug. 1846 and 5 Mar. 1847.

had got the Commission off the ground. As the first reports of the Commission began to roll in, Peel intensified this approach until finally, on Friday 31 October 1845, calling a cabinet on the subject. The Prime Minister approached this cabinet armed not only with the findings of Playfair's confidential reports on the extent of the Irish blight, but also with three 'official' Commission reports which sent a clear message to the rest of the cabinet that the situation was to be taken seriously.

'With the documents we have in our possession, with the opinions of our own Commissioners as to the probable extent of the evil ... inaction and indifference' Peel warned his Cabinet on the following day, 'might involve the country in serious danger, and the government in the heaviest responsibility.'[296] Unfortunately for Peel, such trump cards - the reports produced by the Science Commissioners and the collective action of various continental administrations[297] – did not secure the immediate Cabinet compliance that the Prime Minister might have hoped for.[298] Peel's failure to convince his Cabinet, when it next met on 6 November, that the situation in Ireland demanded immediate action, led to an intensification in the Prime Minister's 'campaign' to procure the information that might sway the sceptical amongst his colleagues. What is immediately apparent from a study of the nineteen days that preceded the next Cabinet upon the subject, is the extent to which Peel was prepared to rely upon the evidence of his

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[296] Peel, Cabinet memorandum, 1 Nov. 1845, quoted in *Memoirs by ... Sir Robert Peel*, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, p. 142.

[297] Ibid., pp. 145–6.

[298] For two contrasting Cabinet perspectives on the reports of the Science Commissioners, see Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office Trowbridge, 2057 F8 IM. 31 (Herbert Papers): Sidney Herbert's Memorandum, 2 Nov. 1845; Liverpool Record Office, DER 176/ 2 (Derby Papers): Stanley to Browne, 3 Nov. 1845. Peel did, however, win the support of Aberdeen, Graham and Herbert, while Somerset had not been able to attend the Cabinet on 31 Oct. 1845, see Add. MS 40577 (Peel Papers): Somerset to Peel, 27 Oct. 1845. Buccleuch was also late for the important first Cabinet session, see Add. MS 40577, Buccleuch to Peel, 31 Oct. 1845 and Ripon also appears to have absented himself from the meeting, see Add. MS 40466, Peel to Ripon, 2 Nov. 1845. In addition Wellington's extreme deafness rendered his presence at the meeting practically redundant, see Add. MS 40484, Arbuthnot to Peel, 16 Nov. 1845.

Commissioners, both as individuals and as an official body, to bolster support for his proposals. Goulburn, a Cabinet sceptic, was therefore invited to attend Peel and Graham's interview with Lindley on 10 November[299] and a memorandum of this meeting was later circulated to the Cabinet at large.[300]

Thereafter Peel only appears to have ordered one batch of letters to be sent in circulation to the Cabinet[301] before copies of Playfair and Lindley's memorandum of their 14 November meeting with the Home Secretary were sent for the perusal of the executive.[302] Although this memorandum was not to be taken lightly, its true significance lay in its timing. 'We can come to no other conclusion' Playfair and Lindley informed Graham, and thereafter the Cabinet, 'than that one half of the actual potato crop of Ireland is ... destroyed ... We, moreover, feel it our duty to appraise you that we fear this to be a low estimate'.[303] This report was, in essence, little more than a repetition of the Commissioners' initial findings on the extent of the Irish potato blight,[304] but originality was not the Prime Minister's principal concern here. What Peel desired at this particular juncture was to win the initiative back from the Cabinet sceptics and he attempted this with this final report.[305]

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[299] Add. MS 40578 (Peel Papers): Peel to Playfair, 10 Nov. 1845.

[300] See British Library (Graham Papers): Lindley interview memorandum – Goulburn's copy, Nov. 1845. Stanley's attention, in particular, was directed to Lindley's report, see Liverpool Record Office, DER 129/4 (Derby Papers): Peel to Stanley, 10 Nov. 1845 and British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Stanley, 11 Nov. 1845.

[301] British Library (Graham Papers): Peel to Graham, 11 Nov. 1845.

[302] Add. MS 40452 (Peel Papers): Graham to Peel, 15 Nov. 1845 and British Library (Graham Papers): Peel to Graham, 17 Nov. 1845.

[303] PRO HO/45/1080/ B (Home Office Papers): Lindley and Playfair to Graham, 15 Nov. 1845.

[304] See Add. MS 40577 (Peel Papers): Playfair to Peel, 26 Oct. 1845.

[305] Peel's quotation of this report in his Memoirs, ed. Mahon & Cardwell, pp. 171-2 is highly selective and perhaps illustrates his lack of concern for the more 'scientific' aspects of the report concerning the preservation of potatoes. Peel also used this report in Parliament as representative of the Commission's findings as a whole. See Peel, 22 Jan. 1846, *Hansard*, third series, 83, 85.

The Science Commissioners can perhaps be seen as Peel's 'aces'. When the Prime Minister was dealt a rough hand and the going got tough, he would fall back upon their reports to help him out of a tricky situation. Unfortunately, however, circumstance repeatedly dealt Peel a hand that he could do little with. Time and again he lost the initiative in his Cabinet and time and again he had to reinvent his trump moves and reintroduce the few aces he could call upon. When even these moves failed to materialise the support that he was searching for, the Prime Minister was forced to resort to a final bout of 'politicking',[306] before he threw in his hand and resigned responsibility not only for this measure, but also for matters of state.[307] Peel, the 'great convincer', failed to convince his colleagues that corn law repeal was justified by the facts of the Irish case and posterity has perhaps failed to consider his case with the gravity it deserves. The difficulties Peel's contemporaries found in seeking a common ground with this Prime Minister were predominantly those of ingrained prejudice to the measure that he was proposing. The difficulties historians have encountered in seeking to untangle the often disguised forces compelling Peel's actions in the autumn of 1845 are the result of historiographical tunnel vision.

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[306] See Liverpool Record Office, DER 129/4 (Derby Papers): Peel to Stanley, 29 Nov. 1845; Add. MS 40461 (Peel Papers): Peel to Wellington, 29 Nov. 1845; Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office, Trowbridge, 2057, F4 58 (Herbert Papers): Herbert memorandum on the corn laws; Add. MS 40580 (Peel Papers): Arbuthnot to Peel, 2 Dec. 1845; Add. MS 40468, Stanley to Peel, 2 Dec. 1845 and British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 8 Dec. 1845.

[307] Peel tendered his resignation to the Queen on 5 Dec. 1845. In reality he had realised before this date that his days as premier were numbered, yet he resolved to remain in office to prevent the formation of a Protectionist Ministry under Stanley. See Royal Archives, Windsor, Queen Victoria's Journal: 23 Dec. 1845. For a detailed study of the entire gamut of Peel's political 'punches', including his resignation threats, see D.R. Fisher, 'The Opposition to Sir Robert Peel in the Conservative Party, 1841–1846' (Cambridge Universtiy, Ph.D. thesis, 1969), chs. V–VIII.

Chapter Two

The Scarcity Commission

The Commission in context

On 16 and 18 October 1845 Peel received two dispatches from Dublin that were to throw him into a frenzy of administrative activity. The first, from Playfair, assured Peel that 'the account [of the potatoes] is melancholy and it can not be looked upon in other than a most serious light' and concluded by informing the Prime Minister that the reports of the extent of the blight were 'underrated rather than exaggerated'.[1] The second letter, from Lord Heytesbury, was forwarded to Peel from Graham and simply pleaded for government action:

> the accounts received ... continue to be of so alarming a nature that it seems desirable that something should be done, if it be only to tranquillise the public mind and diminish the panic.[2]

Peel's response to these letters was twofold. First he called Sir John Hill, the British naval officer responsible for superintending government relief efforts in Ireland during the scarcity of 1831 and 1836, for an interview in London, before the Cabinet met on 31 October.[3] References to this conference with Hill were, unsurprisingly, later to feature in the Prime Minister's 'campaign' to convince his colleagues of the gravity of the situation in Ireland. Thus when Peel came to deliver his memorandum of proposed options to the assembled

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[1] Playfair to Peel, 26 Oct. 1845 quoted in *Memoirs ... By Peel*, iii, 138-9.
[2] Heytesbury to Graham, 27 Oct. 1845 quoted in Ibid., p.138.
[3] See Buckinghamshire Record Office, Aylesbury, D/FR/230/1/15 (Fremantle Papers): Peel to Freemantle, 31 Oct. 1845: 'I have had a full interview with him (Sir John Hill). He acted in concert with local authorities and police'.

Cabinet, on 2 November, the Prime Minister was to attest, on more than one occasion, to Sir John Hill's experience of relieving famine in Ireland.[4]

Peel's other response was to recommend that the Cabinet:

> Adopt some such measures as were adopted at former periods of much more partial-scarcity – that we should authorise the Lord Lieutenant to appoint a Commission ... for the purpose of considering the mode in which relief, when necessary, can be applied, through the means of employment ...[5]

The idea of an Irish based Scarcity Commission was therefore born. Its instructions were drawn up on 3 November 1845 by Sir James Graham, and approved by the Cabinet at its meeting on 25 November. However, although the Commission's conception and eventual formation went some way to allay the fears and halt the calls of negligence from the people of Ireland,[6] its impact upon the relief policy of the government was to be minimal. For as has been seen, what Peel desired in October and November 1845, aside from information on the accuracy and extent of the potato blight, was unimpeachable scientific support to give his 'campaign' with his Cabinet colleagues credibility. The solution he devised to obtain such information relied heavily upon a personal network of advisors, despite Graham's belief that the Scarcity Commission could provide such information.[7] Thus by the time the Scarcity Commissioners had assembled for the first time,[8] Peel had placed an order for £100,000 of Indian corn with a private merchant house, Baring and Company,[9] and taken delivery of a

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[4] Cabinet Memorandum, 1 Nov.1845,quoted in *Memoirs ... By Peel*, iii, 141-8.

[5] Ibid.

[6]The Lord Lieutenant was coming under increasing pressure from the Mansion House's own Scarcity Committee, set up on 31 Oct. 1845, to investigate reports of distress in Ireland and to implement various emergency measures. See J.S. Donnelly Jnr., 'Famine and government response, 1845-1846', *A New History of Ireland*, ed. W.E. Vaughan (Oxford 1989), v, 276-7.

[7]Graham requested Heytesbury to instruct the Commissioners to 'ascertain the extent of the deficiency of the potatoes in each district', see Nottingham University Library, Nottingham, NeC 9226/1-21 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 26 Nov. 1845.

[8]For the minutes of the first meeting, see National Archives of Ireland, (CSORP) Box 1392, Z/16614, (Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers): Scarcity Commission Minutes, 20 Nov. 1845.

[9] See Surrey History Centre, Woking, Box 304, 42 (Goulburn Papers): Peel to Goulburn, undated (Nov. 1845). For further details about Peel's placement of this order see, Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, p.56, 64 and Gray, *Famine, Land And Politics*, pp. 113-4.

substantial report from the Scientific Commissioners on the blight's extent.[10] The picture of the coming campaign, in Peel's eyes at least, must have been near complete. The proportions of the expected scarcity had been confirmed and the policy directives proposed to meet it were beginning to take shape. The plan, by November 1845, was therefore pretty much in place. The exact role of the Scarcity Commission within that plan was more debatable.

Historians of the Famine, such as Woodham-Smith, Kinealy and Gray have tended to ignore the Scarcity Commission. Indeed they seem uncertain as to who exactly was appointed to the Commission, when it was created and what the role of the Commission actually was. Gray, for example, in *Famine, Land and Politics* fails to produce a comprehensive list of the Commissioners; while Woodham-Smith and Kinealy fail to agree about the make-up or function of the Commission and O'Neill appears confused about the exact chronology of the Commission's appointment and of its duties.[11] By examining such aspects of the Commission as the consideration that was given to the appointment of the individual members of this public body by the government, its actions, outlook and internal divisions and the Commission's eventual collapse, this study will attempt to plug a hole in the historiography of the Famine and shed light on the question of how Peel's Irish relief policy was formulated.

Commission conceived

From the outset the Scarcity Commission was little more than a burden to its architects and the Prime Minster very quickly passed the formalities of its formation to his Home Secretary.[12] Following on from his interview with Sir John Hill, Peel had been able to sketch

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[10] The Commissioners produced their final report on 15 Nov. 1845. See Gash, *Peel,* p. 537.
[11] Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, p.57, Kinealy, *This Great Calmity*, p. 41, Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics British Government and Irish Society 1843-1850,* p. 127 and T.P. O'Neill, 'The scientific investigation of the failure of the potato crop in Ireland, 1845-1846', *Irish Historical Studies*, v, 18 (Sept. 1946).
[12] See, Gray, Famine, *Land and Politics British Government and Irish Society 1843-1850* (Dublin, 1999), p. 127.

out the broad outline of the Commission to his assembled Cabinet on 1 November 1845,[13] but after this, the Prime Minister seemingly lost interest in all but the most superficial aspects of the Commission's formation.

Twenty-eight years before, he had been highly conscious of the importance of public relations in forming a relief committee - 'Put a Quaker or two, a Catholic or two, let it be quite clear there is no party, no government view in the appointments'[14] – and Peel had similar concerns in November 1845. Thus the Prime Minister found himself worrying over the exact proportion of Roman Catholics upon the Commission, not over the intricacies of its instructions and activities.[15] His Home Secretary, however, took a deeper interest in the Commission's conception. Thus, despite Peel's recommendation to the Cabinet that they should not to issue 'peremptory instructions' to the Lord Lieutenant on the matter,[16] Graham, using the cloak of ministerial 'advice', proceeded to do just that. The Lord Lieutenant was therefore 'counselled' to include the Inspector-General of the Irish Constabulary, the Chief Inspector of the Coastguard, the Head of the Board of Works and the Superintendent of Ireland's Fisheries, on the board of such a Commission. A new Irish Poor Law Inspector and Commissary-General were to be sent over to Dublin, from London, at a later date. Yet Graham did concur, albeit with minor reservations, with the Lord Lieutenant's desire to appoint Richard Griffith, a member of the Ordnance Survey Commission to Ireland, to the Scarcity Commission. He also granted the Lord Lieutenant carte blanche to appoint the Chairman of the new body (although he felt compelled to share his opinions as to the aptness

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[13]Peel recommended a Commission comprising the head of the Board of Works and "three or four men of known integrity" to act under Sir John Hill, who was to be sent from England. See *Memoirs ... By Peel*, iii, 142

[14] Peel, 'Instructions on the formation of a Relief Committee', Dec. 1817. Quoted in Gash, *Mr.Secretary Peel*, pp. 220-3.

[15] "I wrote a letter this morning ... pointing out to Graham that we had no Roman Catholics on the Commission ... and recommending him to suggest to Lord Heytesbury the addition of Dr. Kane, as one Roman Catholic to the Commission". D/FR/230/1/7 (Freemantle Papers): Peel to Fremantle, 11 Nov, 1845.

[16]Peel Memorandum, 1 Nov. 1845, *Memoirs ... By Peel*, iii, 144

of Edward Lucas, the former Irish Under-Secretary, or the Third Duke of Leinster for the role).[17]

The precedent of government action during the Irish Scarcities of 1831, 1836 and 1837 can clearly be seen to have influenced Graham's instructions on the subject to the Lord Lieutenant.[18] However, Graham also provided written justification of his own for the various appointments. Thus, the Constabulary, Coast Guard and the Poor Law Officials were to assist the Commission in 'obtaining most correct and early information' as to the condition of the potato crop, and the 'wants of the peasantry'. The Superintendent of the Board of Works, an officer of 'tried merit and experience ... and in every respect worthy of entire confidence' was to supervise the provision of employment to the distressed people at the public expense. The Commissary-General was to establish and distribute stores of food, regulate the Irish market and superintend the finances of the Commission. Mr. Mulvany, the Inspector General of Ireland's Fishery Commission, was to encourage 'the new industrious occupation' of fishing in Ireland in order that the shortfall of human food would be partly negated. And the chairman of the Commission, whose role it was to 'guide' that body, was, at least according to the Home Secretary, to demonstrate sufficient 'patriotism' for the role and should be held in high esteem by his fellow countryman.[19]

Graham reserved the issue of instructions to the Commission, until they had been approved in their entirety by the Cabinet, on 25 November 1845.[20] Far from being the 'broad and flexible' injunction of Darrell Munsell's conception of events, [21] Graham's edict left little to the imagination. In a memorandum or forty-one sides, the Home Secretary considered everything from the co-operation of the resident gentry, to the regulation of the Irish corn and

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[17] NeC 9224/1-9 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 3 Nov. 1845.
[18] Ibid. The Home Secretary alludes to these precedents on more than one occasion.
[19] Ibid.
[20] See *Memoirs ... By Peel,* iii, 179-80. Peel used these instructions as a means of enforcing a decision on the Repeal of the Corn Laws on his Cabinet.
[21] F. Darrell Munsell, 'Charles Edward Trevelyan and Peelite Irish Famine Policy, 1845-1846', *Societas*, i, iv (Autumn 1971), 300

potato markets. He also outlined two principal duties for the Commission. The first was one of intelligence. The Commission had been set up primarily to 'ascertain the extent of the deficiency of the potatoes in each district' and to 'watch the approaching failure of means of subsistence, even in the remotest localities'. Its other remit was of an advisory nature. The Commission was to 'assist in devising and executing such measures for the employment and relief of the people' as the scarcity rendered necessary.[22] Nevertheless, despite Graham's later injunction to Heytesbury to prod the Commission into providing such 'suggestions',[23] the Home Secretary, given the pedantically detailed nature of his instructions and the tenor of his later actions, clearly did not expect to brook divergence from the government's chosen line.

The Commission which first sat in Dublin on 20 November 1845 was not, therefore, very different from Graham's initial conception of it. However, there were some subtle substitutions. The Commission, against Fremantle's wishes, was to be chaired by Edward Lucas. The Chief Secretary seemed to doubt Lucas' ability[24] but Lord Heytesbury thought Lucas to be an 'indefatigable and very efficient servant of the government'[25] and, as a result, the Orange Monaghan landowner and former Under-Secretary was appointed Chairman.[26]

Despite being the chairman, historians agree that Lucas' predominant position in the Commission was effectively usurped by Sir Randolph Isham Routh, the Treasury appointed

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[22] NeC 9226/1-21 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 26 Nov. 1845.
[23] Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Trowbridge, 635/146/1 (Heytesbury Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 23 Jan. 1846.
[24] Add. MS 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 5 Nov. 1845. This seems surprising given the hospitality Lucas had extended to the Chief Secretary on his first visit to Dublin in Mar. 1846. See D/FR/B 10 (Fremantle Papers): Fremantle Diary, 16 Mar. 1845. Peel does not appear to have had a high estimation of Lucas and had described the Under-Secretary's behaviour in June 1843, when Lucas had tendered his resignation, as extremely 'shabby' and 'an ungrateful return for the kindness' he supposed the then Lord Lieutenant, Lord de Grey, had shown him. See Peel to Lord De Grey, 10 June 1843, in *Sir Robert Peel from his Private Papers*, ed. C.S. Parker (London, 1899), iii, 53.
[25] Heytesbury to Peel, 19 July 1845, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 182.
[26] See R.J. Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction in Ireland 1845-1849. A Study of Public Policy during the Great Famine' (Oxford University D.Phil. thesis, 1976), pp. 31-2.

Commissary-General and Superintendent of the organisation's finances.[27] Routh's appointment, at least according to Woodham-Smith, owed a great deal to his ability to 'cheesepare, to save a farthing wherever a farthing could be saved'.[28] The reality was perhaps less Machiavellian. In June 1845 Sir Randolph had paid a visit to Trevelyan (Assistant Secretary to the Treasury 1840-59), at the Treasury, and had presented him with a copy of his recently published paper on the Commissariat.[29] This paper contained a number of maxims so close to Trevelyan's own heart that the two men quickly formed a close acquaintance. Thus, when Goulburn approached the Assistant Secretary in November 1845 for his advice as to the most suitable candidate for the position of Irish Commissary-General, Trevelyan did not hesitate to recommend Sir Randolph Routh. 'I am much mistaken,' Trevelyan later wrote to Fremantle:

> 'if the Lord Lieutenant and yourself will not see reason to be satisfied with the manner in which he [Routh] will co-operate with his colleagues in the Commission in carrying out the course of proceedings which may be determined upon ... he has always been remarkable for the invariable quality of acting cordially and cheerfully in concurrence with those with whom or under whom it is his duty to act.[30]

While following an interview with the Commissary-General, Peel was to inform the Chief Secretary that Routh seemed to him to be 'a careful man ... and quite ready to obey instructions'.[31]

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[27] Compare Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, p. 57 and O'Neill, 'The Organisation and Administration of Relief', p. 213.

[28] Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, p. 58

[29] R.I. Routh, *Observations on the Commissariat Field Service And Home Defences* (Second Edition, London, 1852). Note, the author has only been able to obtain access to the second edition of this work. For Routh's visit to Trevelyan, see Robinson Library, Newcastle, v, (Trevelyan Private Letter Books):Trevelyan to Routh, 10 June 1845. 'It is a point of essential importance that every officer of the Commissariat should obtain the confidence of the commanding officer under whom he is serving' and 'a regard for the public service will be their [potential Commissariat recruits'] predominant feeling' were just two such maxims. By Jan. 1846, Routh was enlisting Trevelyan's support to obtain a recommendation, from Lord Aberdeen, for his son in Paris. See (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Routh, v, 19 Jan. 1845.

[30] Ibid., Trevelyan to Freemantle, 28 Nov. 1845. Routh, according to Trevelyan, also had 'extensive experience ... of the appropriate means of feeding large bodies of people in sudden emergencies'.

[31] D/FR/2301/7 (Fremantle Papers): Peel to Fremantle, 11 Nov. 1845. It is interesting to note that Peel chose to highlight the importance of the ability to 'obey instructions' in an administrator.

The appointment of the President of Queen's College, Cork to the Commission had more to do with the Prime Minister. Kane, with the publication of his principal work, *The Industrial Resources of Ireland*[32] had demonstrated, at least to Peel and also Graham, an invaluable 'acquaintance with the wants and varied resources of Ireland'[33] and, as such, was considered to be a vital member of any Irish Commission. In addition, as Peel was quick to point out, Kane had the advantage of being a Roman Catholic – an aspect which would have directly appealed to Peel's concern to produce a Commission that looked balanced. However, Peel's desire to appoint Kane as the Roman Catholic member of the Commission says more about Peel's own understanding and interest in the intricacies of the Commission, than it does about the actual Commission itself. For although Lord Heytesbury had been unable to secure the services of Richard Griffith for the government, and although the services of William Thomas Mulvany, as a Dublin Castle parliamentary draughtsman, were deemed to be too central to the administration for him to be transferred, the Lord Lieutenant did manage to appoint his own chief clerk, Theobald McKenna, to this body. McKenna, an Irish Catholic advocate with connections to some of the 'leading Roman Catholic families in Ireland',[34] was described by Fremantle as a 'highly respectable and sensible man',[35] and his appointment ultimately bought the tally of Roman Catholics upon the Scarcity Commission board to two, without the Prime Minister apparently realising the fact.

Thereafter, the appointments to the Commission were exactly as Graham had desired. Edward Twisleton, the hero of the relatively recent relief effort in Paisley and a trusted poor law servant of the Home Secretary, was sent over to act as Ireland's resident Poor Law

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[32] R. Kane, *The Industrial Resources of Ireland* (Second Edition, Dublin, 1845).
[33] NeC 923111-3 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 21 Feb. 1846. Peel is known to have possessed a copy of Kane's book. See 304, Box 7 (Goulburn Papers): Catalogue of Peel's Library from Whitehall Gardens, London.
[34] Add. Ms 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 23 July 1845.
[35] D/FR/229/7 (Fremantle Papers): Fremantle to his uncle, 13 Sept. 1845.

Commissioner.[36] Lieutenant Colonel Harry Jones, the 'very careful'[37] and highly distinguished officer of the Royal Engineers, gained a place upon the Commission in lieu of his position as head of the Irish Board of Works,[38] and the deeply experienced Inspector-Generals of the Irish Constabulary and Coastguard, respectively, Colonel Duncan McGregor and Sir James Dombrain found themselves meeting the Commissioners at 11 o'clock on most mornings, in Dublin Castle, as full members of the board.[39] The 'gentleman of education and knowledge of the country',[40] appointed to perform the laborious duties of secretary to the Commission, was the former secretary to the Devon Commission and Donegal and Tyrone land manager, John Pitt Kennedy. Kennedy's appointment also had a distinctive public relations aspect to it, for, as Fremantle hastily pointed out, the former secretary to the Devon Commission was 'well thought of in the Liberal party', a consideration which could only have pleased Peel.[41]

Thus despite Heytesbury's concerns about the 'defective' nature of Ireland's machinery for implementing the government's instructions,[42] by 18 November 1845 Dublin Castle had finalised its appointments to the Commission and the Irish resident Commissioners first sat together just two days later on 20 November.[43] Fremantle thereafter wasted no time in informing the Commissioners that their first duty was to be an administrative one – 'to arrange and classify the various reports and heads of information' that had been received by the government from the localities since the first arrival of the blight.[44]

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[36] For more information on Twisleton see chapter five.
[37] NeC 11678 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Gladstone, 22 Dec. 1845.
[38] A.R.G. Griffith, *The Irish Board of Works, 1831-1878* (London, 1987), p. 68.
[39] Dombrain had rendered assistance to the government Relief Commission during the 1836-1839 Irish distress while McGregor had also played an important role in the relief efforts in the period from 1838 to 1839. See Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, p. 57, and R. Curtis, *The History of The Royal Irish Constabulary* (Dublin, 1871), p. 49.
[40] 1845, 1354, Z/18098. (CSORP): Fremantle to the Treasury Lords, 15 Dec. 1845.
[41] Add. MS 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 6 Nov. 1845.
[42] D/FR/230/1/14 (Fremantle Papers): Heytesbury to Fremantle, Nov. 1845, 'Sir Robert Peel does not have to be aware how defective is our machinery for carrying out what he suggests'.
[43] RLFC 1/58 (Relief Commission Papers): Fremantle to Kennedy, 18 Nov. 1845.
[44] Ibid.

To prevent there being any doubt as to the true responsibilities of the Commission, Lucas opened the first meeting by reading out a letter he had received from the Chief Secretary, cataloguing the Commission's exact duties. Fremantle did not mince his words and the assembled gathering was informed that nothing should emanate from the body which might 'raise expectations in the public and especially in the poor classes of the public which may end in disappointment or engender apathy'.

From the outset then, the Commissioners were told that they were to fix their horizons very solidly upon the duties of 'observation' and of 'procuring the best information' for the government[45] and there was clearly to be no confusion as to their limited role in the wider government relief effort. Until Routh's arrival in Ireland – he attended his first meeting on 3 December 1845 - the Commissioners contented themselves with these duties. Information was sought from the Mansion House Committee,[46] lieutenants of various afflicted counties were interviewed,[47] reports from the localities were checked and cross-checked by the Constabulary and Coastguard,[48] local landlords were consulted and encouraged to action,[49] and the various scientific suggestions for preserving seed potatoes and preventing the advance of the blight, were sorted and sent on to Professor Kane for further study.[50] During this time the Chief Secretary and Lord Lieutenant were kept regularly informed as to the Commissioners' actions, while Graham was sent regular dispatches containing the copied minutes of the Commission.

Following Routh's arrival, the Commission became more pro-active and began to pre-empt the effects of the blight. A discussion on the 'preliminary steps to be recommended for

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[45] 1845, 1392, Z/16614 (CSORP): Minutes of the first meeting of the Scarcity Commission, 20 Nov. 1845. Until now, it has been presumed that these early Minutes were destroyed in the Four Courts Fire.
[46] 1845, Box 1392 (CSORP): Commission minute, 22 Nov. 1845.
[47] The Lieutenant of County Clare, Sir Lucius O'Brien, was a regular attendee of the Commission. See, for example, the Commission minute for 27 Nov. 1845: 1845, Box 1392, Z/16726 (CSORP): Commission Minute, 27 Nov. 1845.
[48] 1845, Box 1392, Z/16860 (CSORP): 1 Dec. 1845.
[49] Ibid., 2 Dec. 1845.
[50] Ibid.

adoption in distressed districts'[51] was initiated, information of the wheat, oats and potato exports returns was ordered,[52] and investigations were launched into such varied subjects as deep sea fishing,[53] the spread of disease,[54] and the general drainage of the land.[55] These discussions were sanctioned by both the Chief Secretary and the Lord Lieutenant, while Sir James Graham continued closely to observe the progress of the Commission from Whitehall.

Nevertheless, Routh soon sought the sympathy of his superiors with detailed descriptions of the Commissioners' average working day. He writes to Trevelyan, 4 April 1846,

> The correspondence is very heavy, and we each take one day in three to manage these details with the secretary ... After the general business of the Commission has been gone through one Commissioner remains to minute the answers to the letters. This duty never takes less than three hours.[56]

The Commission attempted little and accomplished less in terms of actual achievement during this period,[57] yet the formulation and dissemination of a series of far-reaching memoranda by the Commission was soon to change this status quo.

The arrival of Routh elicited one other response from the Commissioners – the polarisation of separately aligned camps within the Commission. In attempting to describe the devolution of executive action during the first stages of the blight in Ireland Peel recorded the fact that the chief responsibility for the government's reaction to the potato blight had fallen on 'the First Lord of the Treasury, the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.'[58] And, to an extent, each of these departments was to attempt to exert an influence upon the final shape as the 'Scarcity Commission.' The result of such

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[51] 1845, Box 1392, Z/16982 (CSORP): Commission minute, 3 Dec. 1845.
[52] 1845, Box 1392 (CSORP): Commission minute, 6 Dec. 1845.
[53] Ibid., 9 Dec. 1845.
[54] 1845, Box 1392, Z/18434 (CSORP): Commission minute, 24 Dec. 1845.
[55] 1845, Box 1392, Z/18668 (CSORP): Commission minute 29 Dec. 1845.
[56] National Archives, London, PRO W0/63/132 (War Office Papers): Routh to Trevelyan, 4 Apr. 1846.
[57] The one exception to this is the Commission's completion of the instructions for the local relief committees. For the impetus behind these instructions see, 1845, Box 1392, Z/1840 (CSORP): Kennedy to Pennefather, 14 Jan. 1846.
[58] *Memoirs ... by Peel*, iii, 108.

departmental exertions was a Commission which, from the outset, contained competing and conflicting members of unaligned interest groups. A high-level taxonomy of these different groups within the Commission might include the following divisions:

Taxonomy of Scarcity Commission

DUBLIN CASTLE	HOME OFFICE	PRIME MINISTER	TREASURY	NEUTRAL/ UNALIGNED
Lucas *McKenna*	*Twisleton*	*Kane*	*Dombrain* *Routh* *Jones* *McGregor*	*Kennedy*

This taxonomy should not be regarded as foolproof and can only be used as a guide to the various forces represented and at play within the Commission.

Lucas, McKenna, Twisleton and Routh were each the appointees of the individual branches of the government that they represented. Kane was proposed by Peel and McGregor, and Dombrain[59] had established strong links with Trevelyan, at the Treasury, over a number of years. Whereas Jones, as the head of the Irish Board of Works, owed his position as head of that board, in part, to Trevelyan's solicitation of support for him in Whitehall.[60] Jones, in Trevelyan's opinion, was a man who had 'the public services so thoroughly at heart' that he could not but recommend him both for promotion. On Routh's arrival in Ireland he also lost

[59] Unlike appointments of Lucas or McKenna, the Lord Lieutenant did not play an active role in the approval of Dombrain for the board. Although the suggestion for his appointment originated with Sir James Graham, Dombrain could not be said to have been Graham's man (in the sense that Edward Twisleton was Graham's man).

[60] See (Trevelyan Private Letter Books) Trevelyan to Jones, v, 12 July 1845.

no time in recommending him to the Commissary-General. By February 1846, when the Commission came to be reorganised, Routh had fallen in with Jones to such an extent that he was to argue fiercely for a place for the Chairman of the Board of Works on the new Commission.[61]

Colonel McGregor, as Inspector General of Constabulary, was also a natural ally of the Commissary-General, since the Constabulary was frequently called upon to help the Commissariat in its distribution of meal, in the creation of grain stores and ultimately in their protection from agrarian attack. Unsurprisingly, McGregor and Trevelyan soon became close correspondents and thereafter, even stronger allies.[62]

Kennedy, as an ally of Jones and a friend of Trevelyan,[63] should also perhaps be located in the Treasury division. Yet, as the administrative secretary to the Commission, his potential influence and impact on the board was drastically curtailed. For this reason he has been placed in the Unaligned/Neutral division of the taxonomy. What is interesting, is that these 'departmental' divisions were united by a single common cause: they shared a dislike for Sir Randolph Routh.[64]

Routh seems to have taken an almost instant dislike, himself, to the chairman of the Commission, Edward Lucas. This antipathy was based upon the chairman's own hostility to the actions and influence of the Commissariat in Ireland and was probably born out of a feeling of insecurity, on Lucas's part, regarding his position as chairman of the Commission,

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[61] PRO WO/63/132 (War Office Papers): Routh to Trevelyan, 18 Feb. 1846. Later the two Commissioners came to be deeply jealous of one another and each grew to resent the other.

[62] (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Routh, v, 4 Feb. 1846. McGregor and Routh had also both spent time with the armed forces in Canada.

[63] Kennedy had also lobbied for Jones' promotion. See (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, v, 12 July 1845.

[64] The exception to this rule was Professor Robert Kane. For Professor Kane did not overly concern himself with the group dynamics and divisions of the Commission, instead preferring to concentrate his energies on matters closer to his own heart, for example on his Presidency of Queen's College, Cork, see WRO, 635/148 (War Office Papers): Kane to Heytesbury, 19 Feb. 1845. It should also be noted that Jones and Routh had not yet fallen out with one another at this time.

given Routh's influence with members of the government in London.[65] Yet Dombrain also found Routh's presence on the Commission unpalatable. The reasons for such animosity are unclear, but Routh's dismissive attitude towards Dombrain's extensive experience of famine and scarcity relief in Ireland could not have helped matters.[66] Moreover, Routh effectively usurped Dombrain's post as chief of the Irish Commissariat. Thus, while Routh would complain to Trevelyan of his difficulties with Dombrain's officers - 'In my report I have said nothing of our difficulties with the Coast Guard ... they are sailors and not men of business'[67], Dombrain would repeatedly appeal to the Lord Lieutenant for assistance, in the face of what he took to be a continual barrage of Commissionary-born criticism.[68] However, the final antipathy Routh faced was the result of a simple misunderstanding between Ireland's newly appointed Poor Law Commissioner, Edward Twisleton, and the Irish Commissionary-General.

Routh's extensive experience of feeding and superintending the relief of a large number of individuals had predominantly been gained in situations of conflict.[69] As a result, he had become familiar with a military system which placed an extensive body of officers at his disposal. In Ireland, however, no such system existed and he was forced to enlist the help of other departments to assist him in the provision of relief. Unfortunately in February 1846 he enlisted the assistance of the wrong department and as he began to issue orders to various Poor Law officials and members of the local board of guardians throughout Ireland, Twisleton's outrage mounted. According to Twisleton's strict interpretation of the Irish Poor Law, Routh's behaviour amounted to the enforced provision of outdoor relief by Poor Law

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[65] See PRO WO/63/132 (War Office Papers): Routh to Trevelyan, 18 Feb. 1846. Routh thought Lucas a 'time waster', whose principal intention was 'to establish for himself a place and a salary as the Chief of the Commission', see PRO WO/63/132 (War Office Papers): Routh to Trevelyan, 21 Feb. 1846.

[66] Dombrain had personally superintended the distribution of food relief in Ireland during the periodic scarcities of 1831-9.

[67] PRO WO/63/132 (War Office Papers): Routh to Trevelyan, 1 Aug. 1846.

[68] See, for example, 1846, Box 1393, Z/10860 (CSORP): Dombrain to Stanley, 23 June 1846. Stanley sent the letter to the Lord Lieutenant.

[69] Routh's experience was largely derived from his actions in the Peninsular War and his efforts during the rising in Canada in 1838.

officials in Ireland and the provision of such relief was not only highly irregular, it was also illegal. The Irish Poor Law officials were ordered by Twisleton to ignore Routh's orders at once and the Commissary General was thrown back upon his own highly limited resources. Although this incident had been unintentional, in the climate of insecurity and control-consciousness that the Commissioners now operated in, following Routh's arrival in Dublin, the incident was taken as a major affront to the liberties of the Poor Law Commissioners by Twisleton and was not one that the two officers were subsequently able to overcome.[70]

By January 1846 the future for the 'Scarcity Commissioners' did not therefore look particularly promising. Although the Commission had only ever been assigned the most limited of roles by the government, as the internal divisions increased and inner hostilities developed, even these minor duties seemed to be beyond the capabilities of this body. And so, racked by division, the Commissioners instead turned their attention and indeed their criticism to the policies of the government.

The Commission in collapse

The proceedings of the Scarcity Commission were wound up by the newly appointed Whig government in August 1846.[71] Yet, in all but name, this Commission had effectively ceased to operate as an autonomous board long before the summer in question. Indeed, following the Home Secretary's reorganisation of the Commission on 21 February 1846,[72] the actions and activities of the newly constituted committee became so imperceptible that even the

[70] PRO WO/63/132 (War Office Papers): Routh to Trevelyan, 9 Feb. 1846.
[71] The Commission sat for the last time on 15 Aug. 1846. See 1/01 (2) RLFC (Relief Commission Papers): Commission minute, 15 Aug. 1846.
[72] NeC 9231/1-3 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 21 Feb. 1846.

Assistant Secretary to the Treasury felt justified in asking its newly appointed chairman about its operations if, indeed, it had any.[73]

Historians, the most pronounced example being that of Woodham-Smith, have traditionally used the example of the reconstitution of the Scarcity Commission to lambaste Trevelyan.[74] For, according to such accounts, Trevelyan sought to bring the culled Commission and it members under the increasingly Machiavellian influence of the Treasury.[75] Graham's own rather dictatorial reconstitution of the Commission should silence such concerns. Indeed a simple perusal of the edict that the Home Secretary issued in February 1846, respecting the changes to the committee, makes it abundantly clear who was in charge at this time.

However, the question remains, why was the Commission ever reorganised in the first place? If one were to believe the recent historical research on the Famine, the answer to this question would be straightforward. The Home Secretary, it is claimed, for example, by Gray and Kinealy, reorganised the Commission in February 1846, in order to 'thwart his administrative critics'[76] and stop them overstepping the bounds of their authority.[77] Although there is a good deal of truth in this analysis, it does not provide the whole answer to this question. Instead a subtler combination of factors that would culminate in the Commission's demise in February 1846 can be delineated. That said, the first of these does relate to the stream of criticism that quickly began to emanate from certain elements of the Commission.

The minutes for the Commissioner's meeting of 2 December 1845, on first examination, seem perfectly innocuous. A deputation consisting of the Earl of Erne and one Dr Robert Collins waited upon the Commission in order to lobby the government to open a

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[73] See PRO WO/63/132 (War Office Papers): Routh to Trevelyan, 6 Mar. 1846, for the chairman's response.
[74] See Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, p. 65
[75] It should be noted that Trevelyan rarely acted without the consent of his immediate superior, Henry Goulburn, at this time. See (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Routh, v, 5 Feb. 1846.
[76] Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction', p.32.
[77] Gray, *Famine Land and Politics*, p. 131. See also Kinealy, *This Great Calamity*, pp. 41-3.

canal between Lough Erne and the Shannon. Reports from the localities were read and McKenna undertook to apply to the Home Office for various consular returns for specified articles of food.[78] Edward Lucas, who was chairing the meeting, did not seem, if the minutes are to be trusted, to achieve much of any great note during this sitting. But according to other evidence, these minutes are not to be trusted.

On 3 December 1845 Dombrain wrote confidentially to Lucas: 'I have been considering with great anxiety the memoranda you were so kind as to read to us yesterday'.[79] This was clearly never intended to be read by a wider audience and the letter indicates a deficiency in the Commission's minutes for the previous date. For it appears that on 2 December Lucas read a memorandum to the assembled group of Commissioners which is not mentioned in the minutes of the meeting.[80] Shortly afterwards that memorandum was converted into a letter, addressed to the Chief Secretary, stating in 'strong terms' the chairman's own apprehensions as to the efficacy of Sir James Graham's instructions to the Commission and, in particular, the advisability of the 'preference given to a Commissarial system of relief' within the instructions.[81] The expected arrival in Dublin of Sir Randolph Routh, and the implications this would have for Lucas's position on the Commission, had clearly already begun to weigh heavily upon the chairman's mind. Fremantle, as expected, directed this critique straight to the Home Secretary in London, where it did not meet with a warm response.

In his letter to the Lord Lieutenant dated 15 December 1845, Graham stated that he did not know whether 'the letter of Mr. Lucas to Sir Thomas Fremantle has been communicated to the Commission', for Lucas had obviously not been specific as to the origins of his opinions. Yet the Home Secretary did know, and took great pains to demonstrate, that Lucas' suggestions were tantamount to a permanent extension of the Poor Law in Ireland. As a

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[78] See 1845, Box 1392, Z/16932 (CSORP): Commission minute, 2 Dec. 1845.
[79] NeC 9305/1-2 (Newcastle Papers): Dombrain to Lucas, 3 Dec. 1845.
[80] Routh had not yet taken up his seat on the Commission, while Jones was absent from this meeting. See 1845, Box 1392, Z/16932 (CSORP): Commission minute, 2 Dec. 1845.
[81] See NeC 92281/1-6 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 15 Dec. 1845.

result, they were to be dismissed out of hand as the untenable suggestions of a man who, at the very least, was not in possession of the bigger British picture. 'Until the instructions contained in my former letter be revoked,' Graham waspishly concluded, 'they must be considered as binding the discretion of the Commission'.[82] Graham had always been concerned as to the strength of the 'Irish element' on the Commission[83] and the arrival of Lucas' letter could only have confirmed the Home Secretary's belief that his darkest fears were about to become a reality. Lucas' suggestions were therefore quickly quashed and the chairman was left in little doubt as to his position.

But Lucas was made of sterner stuff and on 20 January 1846 he again put his name to a highly critical memorial from the Commission, entreating the government to take action in Ireland: 'There is a widespread failure in the potato crop but [there is] no legislation, either in existence or contemplated by government, which could relieve it.'[84] The Home Secretary, on this occasion, contented himself with a rather sarcastic response, chiding the Commissioners to come up with their own suggestions, if they were able, to resolve the forthcoming plight of the starving masses[85] - a problem which he reminded them would affect Britain as well as Ireland. It seems safe, however, to assume that from this moment on Lucas' cards, as chairman of the Commission, were marked.

Lucas's December letter to the Chief Secretary had also apprised Graham of the existence of two further causes for concern in relation to the Commission. The first and arguably the least serious, related to the potential for internal division in this body. For Lucas had made it abundantly clear that he did not approve of the presence of a Treasury-controlled Commissarial officer in Ireland and Graham must have been aware this was a divide in the Commission that would only deepen with time. The second cause for concern for the Home

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[82] Ibid.
[83] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Peel, 12 Nov. 1845, 'we shall be involved in great future mischief if Irish notions should be pushed to the extreme in this Commission.'
[84] See Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, p .65.
[85] W.R.O. 635/146/1 (Heytesbury Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 23 Jan. 1846.

Secretary was arguably more serious. At the heart of Lucas' suggestion, and possibly therefore at the heart of the thinking of the Commissioners themselves,[86] lay a potentially devastating difference in outlook. In his December letter to the Chief Secretary, Graham thought that Lucas had expressed strong concerns that the proposed methods of relief decided upon by the Home Secretary would place a 'fearful responsibility' on the government. The government, Lucas had concluded, would 'scarcely [be able to] advance with safety through the difficulties which its interference ... [would] entail".[87] Lucas had gone on to expound on the importance of local rates paying for local destitution and the further evils of government interference and had concluded that Graham's instructions amounted to a tacit approval of the repeal of the Irish Poor Law.[88] Although Graham agreed with certain theoretical aspects contained in Lucas' letter, the practicalities of the Irish situation demanded a very different response. 'Local contributions,' he stated, 'are as far as possible to be obtained, but if the distress becomes general and severe, public money must be advanced by the Treasury with little or no hope of repayment'.[89]

Therefore while the Home Secretary may have been willing to write off this debt, the former Under-Secretary certainly was not willing to and even questioned the viability of its existence in the first place. Nor was Lucas alone in questioning the relief policies of the government. Thus Dombrain, Jones and Routh's principal assistant, Edward Pine Coffin, all, from the outset, criticised the government for bearing too much of the burden of the relief effort, particularly in interfering with the food supply in Ireland, and warned of the serious consequences that would follow if the Irish people and proprietors were let off the hook and

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[86] This would explain why Graham, in his response to Lucas' letter, was so keen to find out if Lucas had passed his memorandum through the Commissioners. See NeC 9228/1-6 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 15 Dec. 1845.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.

not pushed by government to produce and purchase their own food supplies. Peel's policies of relief, it seems, were never destined to win the approval of these men.[90]

If Graham thought that he could ignore such a serious divergence of opinion between the government and the Commissioners and that a dictatorial line from Westminster would quickly quash such differences, he was to be sorely mistaken. For, following a conclusive meeting of the Scarcity Commission on 2 February 1846, Graham was to receive a written memorial from the Dublin body calling for a radical reorganisation of Ireland's system of taxation.[91] The letter, this time composed by Sir Randolph Routh who had first raised this issue, called for the enactment of a Land Tax of six pence in the pound to be levied on the Poor Law valuation of those districts where grants of public money were deemed necessary to alleviate distress.[92] Once again, the Commissioners were calling for an increase in the contribution made to the relief efforts by the Irish owners of the soil and, by implication, for a decrease in the levels of government interference in Ireland and government subsidised relief. Once again, the Commissioners' efforts met with a similar response from Whitehall:

> The interference of Government to give relief must be the last resort: it must be kept back till the latest moment, but when it is given, it must be freely given and not accompanied by conditions, which would be permanently injurious to the future welfare of all classes in Ireland.[93]

Graham informed the Lord Lieutenant that he could not entertain the idea of the Commission's proposed legislation and that henceforth their observations of fact were to be given and not their opinions. From this date on, the Home Secretary had other plans for this rather tiresome public body.

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[90] See NeC 9305/1-2 (Newcastle Papers): Dombrain to Lucas, 3 Dec. 1845; 1/25 (RLFC): Abstract of Jones to the Relief Commissioners, 5 Mar. 1846 and O'Neill, 'The Organisation and Administration of Relief', p. 218.
[91] This matter had first been raised in the Commission meeting on 19 Jan. 1846 and had subsequently been continuously debated by the Commissioners until a conclusion was reached on 2 Feb. 1846 to petition the government to draw up a bill on the matter, see 1/01 (RLFC): Commission Minutes, 19, 23, 26, 27, 29, 31 Jan. 1846 and 2 Feb. 1846.
[92] NeC 9230/1-3 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 6 Feb. 1846.
[93] Ibid.

On 10 February 1846, Lucas left Dublin to travel to London in order to attend an interview with Sir James Graham.[94] Lucas, it seems, had decided to resign his post as chairman of the Commission and although no full account survives of his meeting with the Home Secretary, it is unlikely that Graham was overly reticent in accepting the chairman's resignation. That said, the thorn in the Home Secretary's side defied removal for a little while longer, as on 18 February 1846, Routh was able to inform Trevelyan that he 'was rather surprised today by the return of Mr. Lucas to the Commission who stated he had not resigned'.[95]

Lucas, however, was bluffing and following the receipt of a letter from the Lord Lieutenant, in which Heytesbury outlined many of Routh's criticisms of the chairman,[96] Graham issued an edict from Whitehall forcibly advising the reorganisation of the Commission and Lucas' removal from it.[97] A combination of consistent criticism, divergent beliefs, internecine feuds and the sheer redundancy of the Commission's activities, led Graham to the conclusions he reached in February 1846. The 'Irish element' that Graham had so desperately feared in November 1845[98] was exorcised. The representatives of the Prime Minister, the Treasury and the Home Office – Kane, Routh and Twisleton respectively – were ordered to form a sub-committee of the Scarcity Commission which, in all but name, took over the duties of the Commission proper. All applications for relief were to be referred to this body and the reduced Commission was to settle the specific details of the nature and extent of the relief to be given by the government.[99]

Although the full Commission was still to meet up once a week, any real independence this body had once had was removed. The full Scarcity Commission was but an emasculated

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[94] PRO WO/63/132 (War Office Papers): Routh to Pine Coffin, 10 Feb. 1846.
[95] PRO WO/63/132: Routh to Trevelyan, 18 Feb. 1846.
[96] Ibid., for Routh's account of his meeting with Heytesbury.
[97] NeC 9231/1-3 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 21 Feb. 1846.
[98] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Peel, 12 Nov. 1845.
[99] NeC 9231/1-3 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 21 Feb. 1846.

shadow of its former self, whose principal duty was simply to approve the actions of its smaller relative. Graham was not taking any chances when it came to the sub-committee either, and the committee of three was also effectively transformed into a rubber stamp, only this time of Whitehall. Its chairman, Sir Randolph Routh, was ordered to make weekly reports, both to the Lord Lieutenant and to the Home Secretary, and Graham ordered regular copies of its minutes to be sent directly to him in London.

Graham's reform of the Commission did not fully stop the internecine feuding of its members, [100] nor did it do much to resolve the difficulties associated with what Peel described as the 'too cumbersome' Irish 'machine'. Nevertheless, as an examination of the Commission's minutes after the February re-organisation so categorically suggests, the shake up did have the required mollifying effect. The puppet that was the newly formed Irish Scarcity Commission at last began to dance to Graham's and Peel's command.[101] Graham, from the outset, had believed in the importance of proper governmental control of the Commission: 'There is a great advantage ... in the decisive preponderance of official influence and control'.[102] It had simply taken the Home Secretary longer than either he or Peel could ever have foreseen to achieve this. As a sort of exercise in public relations, the Scarcity Commission had created more difficulties than it ever solved. However, as Graham's treatment of the Commissioners' various proposals perhaps illustrates, as an exercise in public relations, the Commission was arguably never intended to be taken too seriously in the first place.

As an observatory body the Scarcity Commissions' services had long been rendered obsolete, at least to the Prime Minister and Sir James Graham, by the extensive reports issued by the Scientific Commissioners before the Commission had even got off the ground. As an advisory body, the latitude given to this Commission to formulate policy was also highly

[100] NeC 9282 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Graham, 26 Mar. 1846.
[101] See 1/01 (RLFC) and 1846, 1393 and 1394 (CSORP) for the remaining minutes of the Commission.
[102] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Peel, 12 Nov. 1845.

limited and when this body did attempt to flex its policy formulating muscles, its opinions were dismissed out of hand, its powers were quashed and it was reconfigured. Indeed as an advisory body, the Commission never managed to get off the ground as the relief policy of Peel and Graham had been formulated long before the Commission was even proposed by Peel.

Gray and Kinealy in their recent accounts of the Famine can not, therefore, be too much criticised for turning something of a blind eye to this body.[103] That said, much can be inferred from the reaction of Peel's government to the Commission and from an exegesis of the very instructions this Commission was founded upon. It is clear, for example, that Peel's government was one where accurate and unbiased information, or at least information that would be perceived as being accurate and unbiased, was of vital importance. A study of the Scarcity Commission also strongly indicates that the Commission was formed by a ministry which believed that Irish policy should be conceived and considered in Whitehall rather than in Dublin. Yet, perhaps the most pertinent conclusion that can be drawn from a study of the Scarcity Commission is that the possibility for conflict amongst the senior administrators on the ground in Ireland clearly not only existed, but could erupt with serious consequences.

Nevertheless, while Peel and his ministers could confidently turn a deaf ear to the pleas and proposals of these Castle men and knew exactly how to deal with their feuds, the Whig government that followed, being less well versed in Irish matters and joining the relief effort at a later junction, found that they were reliant upon Trevelyan, the one true constant in the entire relief effort, and thus, by default, on the Castle administrators that the Treasury had established a close working relationship with, for advice. Lt. Col. Harry Jones, at the Board of Works, was one such Castle administrator.

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[103] See, for example, Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 127 and Kinealy, *This Great Calamity*, p. 41.

Chapter Three

The Board of Works: October 1845 – August 1846

Why Public Works?

In a series of articles for the Dublin Medical Press in February, March and May 1848 Dr Daniel Donovan, a medical practitioner from Skibbereen, recorded his experience 'of the peculiar diseases to which the famine of last year gave origin.'[1] On the subject of hunger, Donovan recorded that his patients had informed him that the initial pain caused by a lack of food was acute but then subsided after the first twenty four hours until 'a sensation of coldness over the entire surface of the body and an insatiable thirst for cold water' set in. As his patients deteriorated their skin 'exhaled an offensive odor and was covered with a brownish, filthy looking coating ... The victim staggered as if drunk, spoke weakly ... whined childishly, and burst into tears for no apparent reason.'[2]

Yet hunger was not the actual cause of death for the many that died in Ireland during the famine. Indeed as Dr Pemberton of Ballinrobe reported in 1848 fever, or more specifically typhus or relapsing fever, was the agency responsible for widespread mortality. And if the fever, with Dr Pemberton's minutely described symptoms of a severe chill, a dull aching pain in the head, a furred tongue, petechiae and a flushed countenance and delirious constant talking did not carry the unlucky Irishman off,[3] then

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[1] D. Donovan, 'Observations on the peculiar diseases to which the famine of last year gave origin, and on the morbid effects of insufficient nourishment', *Dublin Medical Press*, 2 Feb., 1 Mar., 3 May 1848 pp. 67-8, 129-32, 275-8 quoted in L. Geary, 'What People Died of During the Famine', in Ó Gráda (ed.), *Famine 150: Commemorative Lecture Series* (Dublin, 1997), p. 97. For further analysis of what people died of during the Famine, see Moky and Ó Gráda, 'Famine disease and famine mortality', in Ó Gráda (ed.), *Ireland's Great Famine* (Dublin, 2006), pp.63-85.

[2] Ibid., pp. 97-8.

[3] Dr Pemberton of Ballinrobe quoted in *Dublin Quarterly Journal Of Medical Science*, 7 (1849), pp. 370-1 quoted in Geary, 'What People Died Of During The Famine' in Ó Gráda (ed.), *Famine 150*, p. 102.

the 'bloody flux' accompanied by its 'twelve or twenty alvine evacuations, often without a trace of mucus or faecal matter', was likely to.[4] Having said that, the common factor in all of these complaints, as one doctor from County Kilkenny put it, was the force that compelled 'even those who were barely able to crawl out of their makeshift beds' to report for work on the government sponsored schemes of employment.[5] That force was hunger and it must have appeared obvious to all of the doctors mentioned that the first solution to widespread mortality in Ireland was to provide food for the starving.

Sir Robert Peel's government had different ideas about the relief of Irish distress. A task of hard toil, it is true, was not the only form of relief offered to the distressed cottier in 1846, and the Prime Minister certainly took the task of the regulation of Ireland's markets through the selective disbursement of his 'brimstone' extremely seriously. But that 'brimstone' came at a price and while the gratuitous distribution of Indian corn and American maize was authorized, the government intended the majority of the distressed people of Ireland to sing for their suppers.[6] This is not to say that Peel in proposing and thereafter in implementing a policy of relief through employment on public works did not evince an awareness of the potential suffering from the famine, fever and 'bloody flux', that doctors Donovan, Pemberton and Cullinan were later to chart in their patients. Indeed Peel's letters and speeches in this period are littered with exhortations to his peers at Westminster to come to the aid of a 'suffering people', their 'suffering fellow subjects'

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[4] Dr Cullinan of Ennis quoted in *Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science*, 7 (1849), p. 91 quoted in Geary, 'What People Died Of During The Famine' in Ó Gráda (ed.), *Famine 150*, p. 107.
[5] Laurence Geary, 'Famine, Fever and the Bloody Flux' in Cathal Poirteir (ed.), *The Great Irish Famine* (Dublin, 1995), p. 82.
[6] The formula was deceptively simple: provide employment for the people to ensure the means of purchase, ensure that sufficient quantities of food are available for purchase and in the gaps, where the markets do not reach, distribute gratuitous amounts of food in a way which ensures the prevention of any widespread contagion.

who were staring famine and fever in the face.[7] But the question still arises, why did Peel or his Cabinet not simply propose a policy of direct food provision for the distressed? Why instead of soup did needy Irish men, women and children receive an average of between six and seven shillings per week for their back-breaking hard labour?[8] After all, soup had been given as a form of famine relief when Peel was resident in Ireland as Chief Secretary in 1817; soup shops had been set up during the distress of 1826, and potatoes had been given as seed and as a source of food by Sir James Graham in 1831, 1836 and 1839, and by Peel's own government in 1842. There were clearly precedents for such direct action and it is not surprising to learn that the medical men in the field expected the government to provide relief in this form for their patients.

But there were also precedents for other forms of relief and it is interesting to note that it was Peel who first had to superintend the workings of the Irish Poor Employment act of 1817[9], which indicates that the Prime Minister would have been more than aware of what could be achieved in Ireland through public works.[10] In addition to this, Peel's own experience told him that soup kitchens did not work. The soup shops set up in the town of Armagh during the 1816-17 scarcity only served to encourage large numbers of

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[7] See, for example, Peel in the House of Commons, 16 Feb. 1846, *Hansard*, third series, 1846, lxxxiii, 1043. The Prime Minister would have been well equipped to paint such a serious picture of the potential of the pestilence and he would have been able to draw upon his own very real experience of famine and its related epidemics, from his time as Chief Secretary during the 1817 scarcity and as Home Secretary during the 1822 famine.

[8] See P. McGregor, 'Insufficient for the support of a family: wages on the public works during the Great Irish Famine', *Economic & Social Review*, 35 (2) (2004), pp. 63-85. Ó Gráda believes this amount to be on the high side. To gain a general understanding of what such a wage represented, see Ó Gráda, *Ireland A New Economic History 1780-1939*, (Oxford, 1995), p. 196: " Mere subsistence for a family of four or five during the winter of 1846-7 cost at least 2 *s.* or 3 *s.* a day, before making any allowance for clothes or lodging."

[9] That act made a special provision of £250,000 for public works in Ireland and was specifically designed to deal with distress.

[10] Thereafter this form of relief was employed in Ireland, in different forms and permutations, in every major scarcity and was also employed to relieve distress after the introduction of the Irish poor law during the scarcities of 1839 and 1842.

mendicants to flock from the rural areas to the town and in the process to spread the contagion of typhus fever ever wider.[11] Perhaps the principal advantage of this policy, for a government that was not at all keen on any form of institutionalised dependence, was that this was not relief by the Poor Law and Peel was to state this to the House of Commons on 27 April 1846.[12] Instead this was a form of relief that many people found economically and morally acceptable;[13] and in an age where, as O'Neill has suggested, 'contemporary morality was as likely to be shocked by the effects of gratuitous relief on the character of the sufferers as it was by their actual suffering',[14] by ensuring that a task of work was extracted from the recipient of relief, before the relief was given, the public works policy had the advantage that it would prevent the demoralization of the helpless beneficiary.

It is no surprise then that following the arrival of the blight in Ireland in October 1845 one of the first suggestions to be made by the all party Dublin Mansion House Committee, on 7 November, was that the government should encourage the promotion of

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[11] T.P. O'Neill, 'The State, Poverty and Distress in Ireland 1815–1845' (University College, Dublin, Ph.D. thesis, 1971), p. 58. This notion soon became institutionalized and by 1818 Peel felt able to state categorically that unemployment in Ireland was one of the principal causes of the fever epidemic ravaging that land, see Robert Peel, *The Speeches of Sir Robert Peel, Delivered in the House Of Commons* (London, 1853), i, 98 quoted in O'Neill, 'The State, Poverty and Distress', p. 49. This conclusion was confirmed by the select committee of the House of Commons on Irish fever, in 1819; see *Parliamentary Papers* 1819, viii, 409,'Second Report From The Select Committee on the State of Disease and Condition of the Labouring Poor in Ireland' quoted in O'Neill, 'The State, Poverty and Distress', p. 49.

[12] Peel in the House of Commons, 27 Apr. 1846, *Hansard*, third series, 1846, lxxxv, 1125-6 quoted in Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 132, FN 176.

[13] Especially given contemporary economic feeling about Ireland's inelastic wage fund: see R.J. Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction in Ireland 1845–1849: A Study of Public Policy During the Great Famine' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 1976), pp. 9-10.

[14] O'Neill, 'The State, Poverty and Distress in Ireland', p. 193.

public works in the distressed areas of Ireland.[15] But Peel did not need a tutorial in relief policy from the Mansion House Committee to know how to act and even if he had been unsure as to what to do, he was to receive clear directions from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in a letter written on 17 October,[16] from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a letter written on 21 October,[17] and from the Chief Secretary, in a letter written on 28 October 1845.[18] These letters variously outlined the precedents for dealing with scarcity in Ireland, discussed the 1822 famine, plugged the benefits of relief by public works and extolled the merits of encouraging drainage in Ireland as the form of relief 'most likely to afford a return for the expenditure' there.[19] Although the Cabinet may have had some difficulty in accepting the gravity of the situation in Ireland, they certainly did not harbor any doubts as to how the distress there, imaginary or otherwise, might be met.[20] The scheme which they proposed was almost formulaic. Relief was to be provided through the provision of employment on works of local improvement, 'either of general utility or of benefit to private property'; a government Commission was to be set up to consider and direct affairs and finally local associations were to be formed to assist the Commission in their duty. [21]

Thereafter the situation appears to have become less straightforward. In the previous chapter we have seen how the Prime Minister was never wholly serious about

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[15] J. Donnelly Jr., 'Famine And Government Response, 1845 – 1846' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, v: Ireland under the Union i. 1801–1870* (Oxford, 1989), 277.
[16] Add. MS 40479 (Peel Papers): Heytesbury to Peel, 17 Oct. 1845.
[17] Add. MS 40445 (Peel Papers): Goulburn to Peel, 21 Oct. 1845.
[18] Add. MS 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 28 Oct. 1845.
[19] Ibid.
[20] By the second meeting of the Cabinet on 1 Nov. the Prime Minister had won the consent of his colleagues to press ahead in drawing up instructions for 'a Commission for the purpose of considering the mode in which relief, when necessary, can be applied, through the means of employment where employment can be had' thereby accepting Peel's policy of relief by employment, see R. Peel, *Memoirs*, ii, 142.
[21] Ibid., 142-3.

the Scarcity Commission to which he asked his Cabinet to give their consent. What we have not seen is how this Commission was to be responsible, from the start, for a hitch in the relief efforts of the Board of Public Works.

Peel wanted the Commission to consider 'the mode in which relief, when necessary, can be applied, through the means of employment where employment can be had',[22] but he appears to have had little desire to wait on a committee to provide the answers to this question. Instead, as the Lord Lieutenant was to inform Graham on 4 November, the Prime Minister had already instructed the Irish government to provide written answers to such questions as to whether they considered the 'immediate interference on the part of the government to prevent very severe pressure in some particular districts' to be necessary? They were also to explain how they proposed to 'distinguish the cases where aid may be granted by means of employment by encouraging the demand for labour and the cases in which there may be no means of finding employment [and] thus no alternative but absolute distribution of provisions?'[23]

Pennefather's answer to the latter question appears to have struck a chord with Peel. For the Under-Secretary not only suggested 'works under the drainage act' as a mode of relief, but also the improvement of harbours 'for fishing boats'; the encouragement of 'fisheries in particular districts ... not only for taking but preserving the fish'; the repair of roads (although he noted that those repaired 'as Grand Jury contracts will most probably all, as in 1822, fall to the ground') and more unusually works on the railroad lines. Interestingly Pennefather completed the relief section of his memorandum with a plea that 'gratuitous relief should be avoided', arguing instead that:

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[22] Ibid., 142.
[23] British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham and enclosed memorandum by Pennefather, 4 Nov. 1845.

> The parties applying for relief should be directed to call a meeting of the parish or district, ascertain the number of persons in such district requiring relief, enter into a subscription, decide upon some local improvement that would give most work to the poor, call upon the county surveyor to report on it and on such steps being taken by government to advance aid in proportion to the numbers requiring relief ....[24]

Here, then, was Peel's public works program, albeit minus the railroad proposal, seventeen days before the Scarcity Commission he formulated to suggest these methods of public employment had even met.[25] Nevertheless the London executive, despite effectively sidelining the Commission over this matter, remained adamant that the 'Scarcity men' should be seen to be doing their bit in the formulation of relief policy.[26] As a result, seats on the Commission were proposed for Griffith, Jones and Mulvany, to reflect the nature of the Public Works and Fishery improvements that the government had in mind[27] and the Home Secretary initially harried the 'Scarcity men' to flesh out the bare bones of the government's proposals[28] and provide the necessary bills for Parliament. But, as has been demonstrated, in its early stages the Commission was little more than a talking shop, only capable of filtering and forwarding reports on the blight's extent. All matters concerning Public Works appear, instead, to have been directly devolved to the

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[24] Ibid.

[25] The Scarcity Commission first met on 20 Nov. 1845. It is clear that Pennefather had had some form of communication with the Chief Secretary on this subject, for the relief measures he proposed were remarkably similar to those suggested by Fremantle in his letter to Peel on 3 Nov., see Add. Ms 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 3 Nov. 1845. Although the two Irish officers disagreed as to when to purchase stocks of corn, see Add. Ms 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 3 Nov. 1845. The government also received many suggestions on the subject from other interested parties, see, for example, Add. Ms 40577 (Peel Papers): Mahony to Peel, 6 Nov. 1845 on the subject of a bill for public employment or NeC 9172 / 1 (Newcastle Papers): Redington to Fremantle, 10 Nov. 1845 for comments on Sommerville's drainage motion and public works in general.

[26] This decision was communicated to the Irish executive in no uncertain terms towards the end of the month, British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Fremantle, 26 Nov. 1845 and NeC 9226 /1–21 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 26 Nov. 1845.

[27] NeC 9224/ 1–9 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 3 Nov. 1845. Although Jones was to be the only one of these three to ultimately secure a seat on the Commission.

[28] See, British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 22 Dec. 1845.

chairman of the Board of Works, the Commission remaining content simply to rubber stamp any proposal that he made.[29] Thus on 6 December, 1845 Kennedy was able to minute that the Commission had consented to the blank forms of returns, 'as agreed upon', being sent by the Board of Works to the county surveyors, calling for information on projects 'of a nature calculated permanently to call forth the resources of the several districts'.[30] Jones himself was not averse to sidelining his fellow Commissioners on such matters, remaining content for example to outline his suggestions: 'for the facilitating of general drainage ... For the encouragement of fisheries ... And for the amendment of the Public Works act' on 9 December, 1845, but being reluctant to allow anyone other than the Chief Secretary, or the executive in London, to approve or amend such proposals.[31] However, although the Commission contributed little to the actual policy formulation process, the very fact that Jones had to go through the Commission for 'official' approval of his policies set a precedent that would only later delay the relief activities of the Board of Works. The extent to which the government initially attempted to sideline the Scarcity Commission from the legislative process can be seen in letters from Fremantle and Heytesbury to Graham dated 22 November, 1845. These letters make it clear that the Cabinet had been exploring, through the Board of Works, the necessity of legislative

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[29] The only time the Commission appears to have been proactive in this matter, during its early sittings, was when it was forced to do something by the absence of Jones. Thus on 2 Dec. Captain Kennedy was instructed to obtain any copies of queries concerning proposed private or public works that the Board may have sent out or had contemplated sending out. The subject was rapidly handed back to Jones on his return to Dublin four days later, see 1845 Box 1392 Z/16932 and Z/17218 (CSORP): Scarcity Commission Minute, 2, 6 Dec. 1845.

[30] Ibid., 6 Dec. 1845. The heads of works mentioned were those of 'fishing piers, docks, harbours ... main drainage of districts, by lowering the levels, removing impediments, and making embankments of rivers ... construction of lines of inland navigation ... making new lines of road ... [and] correction of old important lines of road where defects exist.' Notice that the Commission confined its comments here to approving the type of 'classified blank forms of returns' to be issued by the Board of Works.

[31] Jones made it clear that his suggestions had already been submitted to Fremantle and that Fremantle had directed bills to be drawn up founded upon Jones's suggestions, see 1845 Box 1393 Z/17432 (CSORP): Scarcity Commission Minute, 9 Dec. 1845.

alterations in the fisheries and drainage acts. However as Fremantle concluded: 'The proposed alterations in the drainage and fisheries measures will require the consent of the Treasury and Parliament'. The Lord Lieutenant put the matter more simply when he stated: 'nor do I see how this is to be remedied without the authority of Parliament'. Fremantle, however, remained reluctant to give up the reins of power, informing the Home Secretary that: 'If it be your wish that the new Commission should give their opinion upon these questions, I will refer them to Mr. Lucas for the consideration of the Commissioners. But it would appear to me to be the duty of the government to determine on what terms they will advance public money by loan or otherwise for the encouragement of works likely to provide the people with extensive employment during the next Spring and Summer'. [32]

Public Works relief legislation

The task of drafting the government's Public Works legislation did not fall solely on the shoulders of the Board of Works. On 14 January, 1846 Fremantle informed the Home Secretary that he supported Lucas' specific proposal to employ the people in Ireland. As Lucas was not yet out of favour with the Dublin and London executive, [33] it appears as if his policy to 'authorize Grand Juries in Ireland, at the Spring assizes ... to appoint extraordinary presentment sessions; to empower such sessions to make presentment for county works, and to provide funds for the execution of such works'

[32] See British Library (Graham Papers): Fremantle to Graham, 22 Nov. 1845; Heytesbury to Graham, 22 Nov. 1845 and Fremantle to Graham, 23 Nov. 1845.

[33] Although his Dec. letter to Fremantle critizing the 'preference given to a Commissarial system of relief' had not endeared him to the executive in London who resented his appointment as chair of the Commission, see NeC 9228/ 1–6 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury 14 Dec. 1845.

readily received the consent of the administration.[34] The impetus behind Lucas' measure is not clear, but one possibility is that the chairman of the Scarcity Commission was influenced by a letter he had received from the Lieutenant of County Derry, Sir Robert Ferguson, which he had discussed at a meeting of the Commissioners on 10 December, 1845. Ferguson, perhaps self-interestedly, proposed that it might 'encourage' the Grand Juries to present a 'liberal amount of Public County Works' at the next Spring Assizes for the purpose of 'supplying extensive employment in [the] summer', if an 'arrangement' could be made that the summer levy of Cess was not called for until October.'[35] In the event Lucas' act provided for 'the more prompt payment of contractors for works under [the] Grand Jury presentments in Ireland' and gave little ground to the notion of delaying the payment of the County Cess.[36] However Ferguson's proposal, at the very least, must have brought the Spring Assizes to the forefront of the chairman's mind and it is surely not coincidental that a bill addressing the issue of presentments for County Works at the next Spring Assizes quickly followed.

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[34] The descriptive prologue of 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 2: "*An Act to authorize Grand Juries in Ireland, at the Spring Assizes of the present Year, to appoint Extraordinary Presentment Sessions; to empower such sessions to make Presentment for County Works, and to provide Funds for the Execution of such Works; and also to provide for the more prompt Payment of Contractors for Works under Grand Jury Presentments in Ireland*". Although the bill was placed at the bottom of the government's agenda of public works legislation, being introduced in the House of Commons by Graham and Young on 9 Feb. 1846 after the bills for the amendment of the acts for the extension and promotion of public works (23 Jan. 1846), the act to amend the acts for promoting the drainage of lands (26 Jan. 1846) and the act to encourage the sea fisheries of Ireland (2 Feb. 1846), see *Journals of the House of Commons* 22 Jan.-29 May 1846, ci (Part I), 11, 14, 39, 94. Fremantle was reluctant to get involved in the business of the bill and informed Graham on 20 Jan. that, although he was reluctant to occasion further delay by sending the bill back to Dublin to be drawn, 'no one but Mr. Lucas himself' was 'competent to prepare a bill to carry out his own views' and that the measure involved so much 'complicated and technical machinery' that he feared that the government would have little alternative other than to allow Lucas to draft the measure, see British Library (Graham Papers): Fremantle to Graham, 20 Jan. 1846.

[35] 1845 Box 1392 Z/17468 (CSORP): Scarcity Commission Minute, 10 Dec. 1845. Cess was the general name given to tax in Ireland. The word derives from an abbreviation of assessment.

[36] Extract from the descriptive prologue of 9 and 10 Victoria cap.2.

As one would expect from a former Under-Secretary and a landowner, the act,[37] with its twenty-five well-drawn clauses, demonstrated a good understanding of local circumstances in Ireland. It entered into an almost exhaustive level of detail concerning the form that the works should take,[38] explained how the tenders for the works were to be selected, what securities were to be taken and even specified at what intervals contractors had to pay their labourers.[39] But despite the act's great attention to practical detail, in practice it later floundered on a single clause - clause thirteen - the clause that made provision for funding these works.[40]

On 23 January 1846 the Chief Secretary introduced the government's principal Public Works bill into the House of Commons.[41] This bill, by building upon the provisions of seven previous acts since the Board of Works had been put on its original footing in 1831 was, of necessity, brief.[42] It made provision for the Commissioners of the Board of Works to make:

> additional Advances by way of Grant to an Amount not exceeding in the whole the sum of Fifty thousand Pounds, and for the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury ... to cause to be issued ... in addition ... any Sum or Sums of Money not exceeding in the whole the said Sum of Fifty thousand Pounds ... in relation to Grants.[43]

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[37] The act received the Royal assent on 5 Mar. 1846. See *Journals of the House of Commons*, ci (Part I), 258.

[38] See 9 and 10 Victoria, cap. 2, clause five: 'Applications shall be for any one or other of the following Matters, and no others; ... the lowering a Hill or filling a Hollow, or both, on any public Road, and the making a Road thereon with Stones and Gravel, the building, repairing, enlarging any Bridge, the Cost of which shall not exceed fifty pounds, or any Pipe, Arch or Gullet built of Stones or Brick or Wood under or on any such Road ... or in erecting any Fence, Railing, or Wall ... on the Side of any public Road, the widening of any public Road to a breadth not more than Forty Feet ...'.

[39] Ibid., clauses 10, 11 and 20 respectively.

[40] Provision was made by the Treasury to advance up to one hundred thousand pounds, out of the consolidated fund, in the form of loans at a rate of 'five pounds per centum per annum' each year to be repaid at a time specified by the Treasury. Yet, compared to 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 1, *An Act for the further Amendment of the Acts for the Extension and Promotion of Public Works in Ireland,* with its provision for a 'pound for pound subscription-donation system' (Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 133) the act was always destined to linger in the shadows.

[41] This bill was eventually ratified as the act 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 1.

[42] It contained only thirteen clauses.

[43] 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 1.

Although great emphasis was placed upon a quick decision in the matter of convening special meetings of the Justices and Cess payers formed to apply for advances of money for 'the Alteration, Extension, or Improvement of any then existing Public Work, as fully and effectually as for the Construction as aforesaid of any Public Work',[44] matters were complicated by the fact that the bill also made provision for the 'Improvement of Lands' by providing advances on 'more favourable terms.' This was to allow the Commissioners to assist:

> the Drainage, Embankment, reclaiming, or other improvement of Land ... Provided always, that it shall be made out to the Satisfaction of such Commissioners ... that such Drainage, Embankment, Reclamation or other Improvement, when completed, will increase the Value of such Land in the Proportion of at least Ten per Centum on the Sum proposed to be expended.[45]

The Castle administration had experienced problems with drawing this bill from its very inception and just eighteen days before the bill was introduced into the House of Commons, the Home and Chief Secretaries found themselves in a tug of war over the prickly question of the actual proportion of grants and loans that the government were to provide under the act. The problem was caused by Fremantle's reluctance to specify the monetary amounts and proportions that he felt would make the bill work and which were absolutely critical to the bill's success, and was exacerbated by Graham's reluctance to let the Chief Secretary off the hook in this matter.[46] In the end Graham, no doubt aware of the Irish executive's potential for obfuscation, forwarded the bill to Goulburn and thus

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[44] Ibid., clauses 3 and 4.
[45] Ibid., clause 6. The period of repayment was therefore extended to twenty years.
[46] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Fremantle, 5 Jan. 1846. Graham did request that Fremantle fill in the blanks with red ink, but no evidence survives to suggest that the Chief Secretary complied with this request.

invited the Treasury's involvement at an earlier stage in the process than was strictly necessary.[47] But the real trouble for the bill was still to come.

By the 4 February the bill had been sent to the House of Lords, following a relatively rapid progress through the lower House.[48] It was introduced in the House of Lords on 5 February, read for a second time on 9 February and then amended by a committee of the whole House on 13, 19 and 24 of the month. This committee tabled some considerable amendments to the bill. However, no evidence exists in either the *Journals of the House of Lords*, or in *Hansard*, to explain the upper chamber's next action. On 27 February, Mr. Greene, the chairman of the House of Commons committee appointed to 'inspect the Journals of the House of Lords, with relation to any proceedings upon the Public Works (Ireland) Bill', made his report to the House. The committee, Greene reported, 'had inspected the said Journals accordingly, and had taken a copy of the proceedings of the Lords thereon'. The proceedings read as follows:

> 26 Februarii, 1846
> The Order of the day being read for the Third Reading of the Bill, entitled, 'An Act for ... Amendment of the Acts for the Extension of Public Works in Ireland' ;
> Ordered, That the said Bill be read a third time on this day six months.[49]

This was no small matter, for by imposing such a delay upon one of the principal relief policies of the administration, the House of Lords had effectively disabled part of the government's relief plans. It is difficult to say whether party motives or a genuine dislike of the mechanics of this particular bill lay at the root of their actions but, in the event, the

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[47] Although the bill would have had to receive the sanction of the Treasury in its final stages, Fremantle, by abjuring his responsibility in this matter, allowed the Treasury to determine the funding parameters of the act. In doing this he perhaps passed up the potential to negotiate an even more generous settlement for the distressed people of Ireland, see British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Fremantle, 10 Jan. 1846. Goulburn had sent his comments on the bill by 8 Jan., see NeC 11,913 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Lincoln, 8 Jan. 1846.

[48] *Journals of the House of Commons*, ci (Part I), 10-12, 14, 22, 24-9, 38, 45.

[49] Ibid., p. 215.

upper chamber did not stand firm in their opposition to it for long. When the same bill was returned to the upper chamber on 2 March, the Lords dispensed with Parliamentary procedure in order to enable it to be read a third time within a day of its introduction into the House.[50]

The opposition to the government's Public Works legislation did not stop there as their Lordships were also to voice their concern over the government's Drainage bill.[51] Initially, members of the Cabinet were unsure as to whether they would even require the sanction of Parliament for their proposed alteration to the Drainage and also the Fisheries acts. However, by 22 November, 1845 Fremantle had been able to disabuse his colleagues of the notion that further scrutiny of these bills, in Parliament, was an avoidable fact. Yet, just as Freemantle's colleagues were digesting this unpalatable news, they were faced with a letter from the Lord Lieutenant in which Heytesbury felt it necessary to inform the government of the many serious problems raised by the Drainage act.[52] But Graham, who received the letter, was to face a wait of another month before he could see these problems for himself as, for some unspecified reason, Fremantle was not

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[50] Ibid., pp. 215-6, 226. The bill was introduced into the House of Commons again by Sir James Graham on 27 Feb. 1846 and it was sent to the House of Lords, for ratification, on the same day. The bill was introduced into the Lords on 2 Mar., sessional orders were dispensed with and a committee to table amendments was 'negatived' on 3 Mar. and the bill was read for the third time later that day. Royal assent was given to the act on 5 Mar. 1846: see *Index of the House of Lords, 1833–1853*, pp. 109, 117.

[51] See, for example, the speeches of The Earl of Mountcashel and of Lord Campbell on 9 Feb. 1846, *Hansard*, third series, 1846, lxxxiii, 539, 540. Although following a series of amendments to the bill, tabled in the House of Commons, the Lords apparently found little to grumble with and passed it on 3 Mar.1846, a day after the House had formed a committee to table amendments to the bill, see *Index of the House of Lords*, 1833–1853. The bill had been drafted by Mulvany, see British Library (Graham Papers): Fremantle to Graham, 23 Nov. 1845 and became the act 9 and 10 Victoria cap.4: *An Act to amend the Acts for promoting the Drainage of Lands, and Improvement of Navigation and Water Power in connexion with such Drainage, in Ireland; and to afford Facilities for increased Employment for the Labouring Classes in Works of Drainage during the present Year.*

[52] The principal problem was caused by the clause requiring the consent of two thirds of the proprietors before any work could be undertaken, see British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 22 Nov. 1845.

able to forward a copy of the Drainage bill to the Home Office until 27 December.[53] Thereafter Graham very quickly came to the conclusion that the bill would not provide the requisite level of support[54] and was, again, left to pull the pieces of the proposed legislation together and produce something approaching a workable bill. Nevertheless the Home Secretary could not escape the fact that the fundamental components of the bill had been badly tabled[55] and in the end the bill was only ratified because something was better than nothing in the face of mounting distress.[56]

The act to 'encourage the Sea Fisheries of Ireland by...the Construction of Piers, Harbours, and other works'[57] had been better tabled and Mulvany,[58] was fortunate in that he received the support of the highest authorities[59] in drafting this particular piece of legislation. As a result the act was unusually thorough: it contained eighty eight clauses; revised two previous Fishing acts of Queen Victoria's reign; made provision for a fishery Commissioner to join the Board of Works and set out the conditions under which a grant of fifty thousand pounds was to be advanced for the construction, or reconstruction, of any small harbour, pier, landing place or approaching road, on or near the sea coast of

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[53] British Library (Graham Papers): Stephen Fremantle to O' Brien, 27 Dec. 1845.
[54] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Fremantle, 3 Jan. 1846.
[55] The basic provisions of the act were both complicated and restrictive and in many places rather muddled. For example, the provision for preliminary inquiries for drainage works, clause XLVII, appears towards the end of the act as if it was added as an afterthought, while clause XXXIV – the clause that set the quorum for drainage business at a single Commissioner – was to create great difficulties for the government, at a later date. An idea of the highly restrictive nature of the actual act can be gained from clauses XI, XII, XLII, XLVIII, regarding the relevant proceedings for obtaining various degrees of landlord consent for the public works.
[56] The bill was introduced into the House of Commons by Fremantle and Graham on 26 Jan. 1846, amended by a committee of the whole House of Commons on 9, 10, 13, 14 and 19 Feb.and read for a third time on 19 Feb. see, *Journals of the House of Commons*, ci (Part 1), 14-15, 38, 92-3, 102, 126-7, 142, 152, 160, 164, 173. The bill was introduced into the House of Lords on the same day, a committee of the Lords was formed to table amendments to the bill on 2 Mar. and on 3 Mar., having made no amendments to the bill, the Lords gave their consent, see *Index of the House of Lords, 1833–1853.*
[57] 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 3.
[58] Mulvany was responsible for drafting this act.
[59] Peel was particularly interested in this measure, see, for example, Add. MS 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 5 Nov. 1845 for Fremantle's response to an obviously enthusiastic letter on the subject. This letter also confirms Mulvany's involvement with the act.

Ireland.[60] Nevertheless the act was rendered obsolete by the inclusion of an exhaustive list of required preliminary proceedings and by extensive provisions for the security and repayment of the promised loans.[61]

The fact that many of these bills had been rushed is significant, and although Peel himself did not survive to reap the legacy of this haste in ramming badly drawn and almost unworkable bills through Parliament at a rate of knots, his administration was to condemn both the relief officials responsible for implementing the Public Works acts and the people who were to be most dependent on their effective operation, to a less than leisurely repentance.

Impromptu policy; formulation on the hoof

In addition to the burden of drafting the Public Works bills, the Board of Works had to deal with the very real problem of cases of distress that would not wait for the government's new legislation of relief. On 3 December 1845 the parish priest of Kilkee, Reverend Comyn, waited upon the 'Scarcity Commissioners' to present a statement of the loss sustained to the potato crop in his district. Comyn did not consider the issue of gratuitous relief to be necessary but instead argued that Public Works such as the

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[60] 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 3 clauses I, III, IV respectively.

[61] Ibid., clauses IX–XXIV outline the preliminary proceedings of the act, while clauses LII–LXII outline the provisions for the security of the loans and for their repayment. Unfortunately the act made no provision for the supply of 'plant' materials to the fishermen and it could be argued that the provision of more basic equipment, such as fishing lines, nets and boats would have been more beneficial. For a record of the act's progress in Parliament, see *Journals of the House of Commons*, ci (Part I), 39, 102, 105, 127, 142, 152, 249, 258. The bill was introduced into the House of Commons on 2 Feb. 1846, a committee of the whole House tabled amendments to the bill on 12, 13 and 16 Feb., when the bill was read for a third time and sent to the House of Lords. The Lords tabled no amendments to the bill and the act received the consent of the Lords on 4 Mar. 1846.

improvement of an extensive area of wasteland in his parish, or the provision of a fishing harbour and deep sea fishing boats in the bay of Dunbeg, would provide sufficient employment to carry the people through the period of greatest distress.[62]

Following the receipt of further reports on the gravity of the situation in the Kilkee district on 17 December, Jones informed the Commissioners that he would produce a report on the 'capabilities of the Kilkee district with reference to the subject of Public Works calculated to give employment'.[63] Jones's paper on Kilkee relief was read and approved by the Commissioners on 19 December,[64] the sanction of the Lord Lieutenant for the payment of any preliminary expenses incurred in the investigation, by the Board of Works, of potential Public Works in the Kilkee district was given on 22 December[65] and the instructions for the inspecting officer were sanctioned on 26 December.[66] Over a month later the Lord Lieutenant was able to inform Graham that he had granted £1,500 to the Board of Works as a contribution towards the relief of the distress in Kilkee.[67] That grant followed hot on the heels of an application by the Board for the sanction of various works applied for by the ratepayers of the Barony of Moyarta, County Clare. The application, like that received from the ratepayers of Kilkee, was made under the head of

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[62] 1845 Box 1392 Z/16982 (CSORP): Scarcity Commission Minute, 3 Dec. 1845.
[63] 1845 Box 1392 Z/18016 (CSORP): Scarcity Commission Minute, 17 Dec. 1845.
[64] 1845 Box 1392 Z/18132 (CSORP): Scarcity Commission Minute, 19 Dec. 1845. The surviving section of the paper can be consulted in the Papers of the Relief Commission in Dublin, see 1/25 (RLFC): Jones to Lucas, Dec. 1845.
[65] 1845 Box 1392 Z/18288 (CSORP): Scarcity Commission Minute, 22 Dec. 1845. Heytesbury lost no time in informing Graham about the potential for distress in Kilkee and requested £5000 to meet the cost of the Board's preliminary expenses in investigating other cases of distress in Ireland, British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 22 Dec. 1845.
[66] 1845 Box 1392 Z/18524 (CSORP): Scarcity Commission Minute, 26 Dec. 1845. On 24 Dec. the Scarcity Commissioners received another deputation on the distress in Kilkee which, again, proposed very specific public works in the district and in many respects the deputation anticipated many of the government's own relief policies, see 1845 Box 1392 Z/18434 (CSORP): Scarcity Commission Minute, 24 Dec. 1845.
[67] British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 12 Feb. 1846. For an account of the distress in Kilkee, see Ignatius Murphy, *A People Starved: Life and Death in West Clare 1845-1851,* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1996).

the Public Works act 1 Victoria cap. 21.[68] Just, then, as the government was attempting to amend this act, applications for advances under it began to flood in and very soon the government was forced to concede that the act, and all of the applications made under it, were there to stay.[69] This complicated matters, as not only were potential applicants for relief confronted by a confusing array of new policies, they also found themselves in a situation where they could apply for funds under an act that was in the process of being amended. This situation was deeply worrying for the Treasury and, unsurprisingly, it did not take this assault on its privileges lying down.

It is difficult to ascertain exactly what alteration the Treasury made to the Irish executive's Public Works bill. Nevertheless, because of Fremantle's reluctance to deal with the financial aspects of the bill, the Treasury appears to have played a greater part in the formulation of the act. What is clear is that the act 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 1 [*An Act for the further Amendment of the Acts for the Extension and Promotion of Public Works in Ireland*], for all of its liberal provisions, introduced an element of fiscal control that was not present in 1 Victoria cap. 21 [*An Act to Amend the Acts for the Extension and Promotion of Public Works in Ireland*].[70] The government's decision to continue to relieve distress under this act was therefore always going to have concerned the Treasury. For, from the perspective of the Treasury, a back door had been opened that allowed the

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[68] *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): *Correspondence explanatory of the measures adopted by Her Majesty's government for the relief of distress arising from the failure of the potato crop in Ireland*: Board of Works to Pennefather, 9 Feb. 1846. 1 Victoria cap. 21: *An Act to Amend the Acts for the Extension and Promotion of Public Works in Ireland,* had received the Royal assent on 30 June 1837. The bill contained eleven clauses, was straightforward to use and, as a result, highly effective.

[69] Even after the act amending it, 9 and 10 Victoria cap.1, had come into force, see *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Trevelyan to Jones, 11 Mar. 1846.

[70] Clause VIII providing that loans or advances were to be made in installments not exceeding one fifth of the entire sum agreed on and clause XI allowing for the recovery of any advances in cases where government funds had been misapplied, provide the obvious examples of the increased level of control awarded to the Treasury by 9 and 10 Victoria cap.1. The Treasury was later to emphasize the importance of clause XI in a Minute issued in May 1846, see *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Treasury Minute, 15 May 1846.

applicants of relief to sidestep any newfound financial controls. On 17 February1846 in response to the Moyarta application, the Treasury fired its first defensive shot: on the subject:

> Their Lordships [The Treasury Lords]... feel themselves justified in sanctioning this arrangement only on the condition that the Lord Lieutenant shall be of opinion that there are no landed proprietors or others, in the district ... who, owing to their being benefited by the works to be undertaken in a greater degree than the other Cess payers of the Barony or the County ... may fairly be expected to contribute towards their execution a sum proportioned to the special benefit which they will derive from them.[71]

Fremantle responded cautiously. The requirement made by the Treasury, he informed Trevelyan, was 'not unreasonable' and would 'in some instances, prevent jobbing, or compel a landed proprietor to make some payment in consideration of advantages to be gained by him from an outlay of public money on his estate.' But, he warned Trevelyan that the Treasury should 'be careful ... in dealing with Irish localities, not to press this condition too far'.[72] Nevertheless the Treasury remained adamant and Fremantle was informed that the 'prescribed' course was 'merely a continuation' of that which had 'invariably been followed by the Treasury', when it had exercised the powers which had now been partly vested in the Lord Lieutenant under the new act. The message was clear: the new legislation was about to introduce fresh executive powers and the Treasury intended to employ them. The Board of Works were therefore informed, in no uncertain terms, to report in respect to each application for a grant:

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[71] *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Treasury Minute, 17 Feb. 1846.

[72] Ibid., Fremantle to Trevelyan, 26 Feb. 1846. Fremantle did not, perhaps, wish to burn his bridges with the Treasury or with Trevelyan as he had recently resigned his Irish position and was waiting to be confirmed in the post of chairman of the Board of Customs. The importance of a good working relationship with the Treasury in general and, more specifically, with the Assistant Secretary to the Treasury would not have been lost on him, see British Library, Add. Ms 40476 (Peel Papers): Fremantle to Peel, 22 Dec. 1845 and (Graham Papers): Peel to Graham, 25 Dec. 1845; Fremantle to Graham, 5 Jan. 1846; Graham to Heytesbury, 3 Feb. 1846 and Graham to Heytesbury, 7 Feb. 1846.

1.Whether such a state of destitution has occurred, or is likely soon to occur, in the immediate neighbourhood of the places where the works are proposed ... as to require that means of subsistence should be provided for the people.
2.Whether the proposed works are such as will provide employment for the labouring class generally, or will only, or for the most part employ masons or other artisans.
3.Whether any particular proprietors or other will be benefited by the proposed works in a much greater degree than the others Cess payers of the Barony or County etc.
4.Whether the proprietors in question are willing to contribute in proportion to their respective interest in the work, and if not, what reasons are given by them for refusing to do so?[73]

Yet the Treasury was not alone in its dislike of the system of relief works initiated under 1 Victoria cap.21. and one week later the chairman of the Board of Works wrote to inform the Scarcity Commission that not only had the Board received applications in excess of the £50,000 voted for works under that act, but also that the Board found it 'perfectly impossible' to superintend the numerous works required under the act as 'the preliminaries' were 'tedious and in many cases troublesome.'[74]

Jones did not openly oppose Trevelyan's wishes for the Board to provide the exhaustive preliminary details that the Treasury has asked for, despite the obvious costs to his own department[75] and the evidence suggests that he may even have agreed with the Treasury in its attempt to regulate the number of applications that the Board had to sanction - on 11 March he informed Trevelyan that the Board would be 'very particular'

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[73] *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Trevelyan to Fremantle, 26 Feb. 1846. Trevelyan was careful not to overstate the letter of the law by admitting that 'No power of enforcing contributions from private proprietors is provided by any of the acts relating to grants,' and advised discretion in employing the 'species of coercion' that the Treasury recommended. The concern at the Treasury that lay behind these guidelines was in evidence as early as 28 Jan. 1846, see Robinson Library, Newcastle, v, (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Rt. Hon. T.F Kennedy, 28 Jan. 1846.

[74] National Archives, Dublin, 1/25 (RLFC): Jones to Kennedy (Abstract), 5 Mar. 1846. Jones also observed that: 'very little may be expected as voluntary contribution' and as a result that 'a call from the highest authority of the Realm should be made holding out an offer of a free grant of ___ the amount of any sum subscribed.' He apparently did not see the inconsistency in calling for further government grants and at the same time voicing concerns over the 'troublesome' preliminaries that the government required to protect their investments.

[75] The principal cost being the increased workload that such investigations would produce.

before it recommended any works.[76] Admittedly Jones was stuck between a rock and a hard place, for while he may have agreed with the principle that lay behind the Treasury's insistence upon such preliminary inquiries, he did not necessarily welcome the Treasury's actual method of implementing the principle. The principal reason for this was that his department was severely under-staffed and could not cope with the massive burden of applications that the new legislation and increased pressure of distress had brought.[77]

A 'hitch' at the Board

The 'Scarcity Commissioners' had recognised that the Board of Works would come under pressure in this way back in December and had written to Heytesbury to request him to augment the Board's numbers by applying for six officers from the corps of Royal Engineers,[78] but in February the Chief Secretary was still writing to Graham to request that he prod the Ordnance department into providing these men.[79] The situation was soon made more difficult by Jones's refusal to countenance the assistance of any agency, other than that of his own choosing, that was offered to reduce the mounting backlog of applications at the Custom House.

Despite informing the Lord Lieutenant on 13 March that he would accept the assistance of Thomas Larcom and his ordnance survey team,[80] two days later Heytesbury had to inform Graham that Jones had been so reluctant to accept the offer, made by the

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[76] *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Jones to Trevelyan, 11 Mar. 1846. Jones's distrust of the motives of many of the applicants comes through in this letter. For example, see his comment that 'insisting upon it [that his engineers make personal calls on the relevant landowners to inquire after the level of their contributions] will, I am sure, have a good effect.'
[77] The government's relief acts received the Royal assent on 5 Mar.1846.
[78] 1845, Box 1392 Z/18524 (CSORP): Scarcity Commission Minute, 26 Dec. 1845.
[79] British Library (Graham Papers): Fremantle to Graham, 1 Feb. 1846.
[80] Ibid., Jones to Heytesbury, 13 Mar.1846.

Scarcity Commission, to augment the relief staff at the Board of Works with Ordnance Survey forces, that the offer had been quietly dropped.[81] Jones' situation, however, looked bleak. The backlog of applications for works that had already formed at the Board was clearly unpopular with the Commission[82] and now, when the Commissioners' helpful suggestions to surmount such difficulties were rejected, Jones was left looking not only unreasonable, but also increasingly isolated in the eyes of the Irish executive. But while the chairman of the Board may have seen both the Lord Lieutenant and the 'Scarcity Commissioners' off, he clearly did not reckon on the combined muster of the executive in Whitehall.

The Home Secretary lost no time in setting down to iron the difficulty out, writing to his trusted informant, Twisleton, on 16 March:

> I am afraid that there is some hitch in the executive the precise nature of which I have been unable to ascertain ... Pray explain to me confidentially what is the cause of this delay and suggest to me the measures which are necessary to obviate it.[83]

Twisleton's reply was measured, yet effective:

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[81] Ibid., Heytesbury to Graham, 15 Mar. 1846: 'Sir Randolph Routh ... lost no time in forwarding a copy of the letter [from the Commissioners] to the Board of Works, where the proposal was but coldly received, and an answer returned betraying evident jealousy of interference. After an interview with Sir Randolph, Colonel Jones withdrew this first answer and substituted the note, herewith enclosed, which still can hardly be considered a frank acceptance of the proposed aid.' This suggestion to augment the Board's forces with ordnance survey men who would help with the drainage business, was formulated by Kane, Routh and Twisleton at a meeting of the Commissioners on 12 Mar. 1846 and communicated to the Lord Lieutenant, by deputation, on 13 Mar. 1846, see 1/1 (01) (RLFC): Scarcity Commission Minutes, 12, 13 Mar. 1846.

[82] The Commissioners were probably concerned that they would be held accountable for the delay in the provision of relief through public works. As a result they made sure that the Home Secretary knew something about the tardy proceedings at the Board, see Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, 635/146/2 (Heytesbury Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 16 Mar. 1846: 'I observe also that the Scarcity Commissioners account for the trifling amount of money already actually expended on Public Works, since the readiness of the Board to receive memorials was announced, to a desire to secure contributions in aid of the Government grants from those proprietors whose estates would be improved by the outlay. They say that the Board of Works has even arrested the progress of memorials for relief, and has declined to recommend them for the sanction of the Treasury until the intentions of the landed proprietors with respect to their contributions have been ascertained'.

[83] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Twisleton, 16 Mar. 1846.

> as you invite my opinion, I will confidentially state that the Board of Works appears to me a slow body; and although possessed of the highest professional qualifications, it is unaccommodating, not fitted to adapt itself to new circumstances, with a tendency to be what is called impracticable, and somewhat irritable.

In a postscript to the letter, Twisleton informed Graham that the 'Scarcity Commissioners' were not yet ready to give up on their plans to employ Larcom and his team of surveyors to ease the problem:

> We are anxious to avoid any proceedings which may produce irritation, and trust that the future progress will be more speedy. A proposition has been made today for placing Captain Larcom and his band of surveyors under the Lord Lieutenant in direct relation with the relief Commission, instead of under the Board of Works. This would be highly useful to the Commission, as there appears to be a want of cordiality between the Board of Works and Captain Larcom – at least, on the part of the former.[84]

Twisleton was preaching to the converted as, following the arrival of Heytesbury's 15 March letter enclosing the original proposal of the Scarcity men, Graham had already sanctioned the removal of Larcom and his team to the Board of Works and a Treasury minute on the subject had been issued to the Ordnance.[85] However Graham was not

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[84] Ibid., Twisleton to Graham, 18 Mar. 1846. Twisleton's views on the 'want of cordiality' between Jones and Larcom were supported by Heytesbury, see British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 17 Mar. 1846. The 'proposition', although involving the Commissioners was apparently not discussed by them at their meeting on 18 Mar. although it should be noted that the minutes often fail to include any record of sensitive matters. Alternatively the proposition could have come from Heytesbury and could have been discussed by the three Commissioners out of 'office hours', see 1/1 (01) (RLFC): Scarcity Commission Minute, 18 Mar. 1846.

[85] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 17 Mar. 1846 and *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Treasury Minute, 17 Mar. 1846. The new Inspector General of Fortifications, John Burgoyne, was vehemently opposed to this plan and wrote on 18 Mar. to the Master General of the Ordnance outlining the reasons why such a disturbance to the Ordnance Survey department in Ireland could not be recommended. Burgoyne could not resist venting his annoyance at what he perceived to be the meddling behaviour of Captain Larcom, see *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Burgoyne to Master General of the Ordnance, 18 Mar. 1846 and also Ordnance secretary to Trevelyan, 24 Mar. 1846 for a copy of Burgoyne's memorandum, dated 21 Mar., on a memorandum of Larcom's written for Pennefather, dated 9 Mar. The Ordnance department, having dug their heels in over this matter, finally relinquished their opposition and agreed to the Treasury minute on 24 Mar., see *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Ordnance department to Treasury, 24 Mar. 1846.

inclined to take any chances and so the new Chief Secretary, Lord Lincoln, was sent to Dublin to ensure that the arrangement was carried through.[86]

Lincoln, splenetic at the best of times, arrived in Ireland in no mood to take prisoners as he had been receiving regular dispatches from the Under-Secretary, apprising him of the desperate situation in Ireland. [87] But, as it happened he had to wait for his first and most difficult meeting with Jones as the chairman, having missed the recent missive from Graham ordering Larcom's transfer to the Board,[88] was absent from Dublin at the very moment when his presence there might have helped to see off, or at least to delay, an encroachment on his jurisdiction.[89]

In Jones' absence Larcom quickly moved to obtain the advantage over the Chairman by being the first to gain the ear of the new Chief Secretary, and he appears to have made quite an impression.[90] Jones did not provide the only hitch in Lincoln's plan of a rapid reorganisation of the Board's relief force, as Griffith, who had first suggested this transfer to Goulburn in February,[91] was away in London and Lincoln was therefore forced to delay his plans even further. On 25 March, despite Griffith's continued absence from Dublin, the Chief Secretary finally set down the details of the new relief scheme in a letter to the Prime Minister.

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[86] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 17 Mar. 1846 and Graham to Lincoln, 22 Mar. 1846.
[87] See, for example, NeC 9,322/1, NeC 9,324/1, NeC 9,3271 and NeC 9,328 1/1 (Newcastle Papers): Pennefather to Lincoln, 6, 12, 16 and 18 Mar, 1846. He arrived on 22 Mar. 1846, see British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 23 Mar. 1846.
[88] Jones had been away on official business in Belfast, see British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 19 Mar. 1846.
[89] Jones had been called to give evidence to a railway committee of the House of Lords, see British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 21 Mar. 1846.
[90] NeC 12,157/10/2 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 23 Mar. 1846: 'I have had ... a most satisfactory one [interview] with Captain Larcom. ... he is not disposed to throw any personal difficulties in the way ... He completely falls into my views'. Thereafter both men were to enjoy a good working relationship.
[91] *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Griffith to Goulburn, 26 Feb. 1846.

His plan was straightforward and Peel was informed that each Public Works application would now be referred to Captain Larcom and Mr. Griffith, once it had been registered by the Board, and that both of these men would 'for the time' become officers under the Board. Peel was also informed that Larcom and Griffith would sit on a daily basis at the Mountjoy Barracks, where the Irish Ordnance Survey maps, surveys, statistical and other records were housed and that 'the staff of the Board of Works, the County surveyors and their deputies, the engineer officers' and the men promised from Woolwich would be placed at their disposal.[92]

This plan certainly had the advantage in that it removed Larcom from under the feet of Jones at the Board's offices in the Custom House. The Chief Secretary saw this as a way to ensure that 'the energy of his [Larcom's] active mind [would] not be cramped and brought to a level with Board of Works ordinary proceedings'[93] but in actual fact its principal advantage was that it meant that these two men would not have to come into regular contact with one another as a degree of animosity was clearly present between the chairman and Larcom. Interestingly the two men had seen eye to eye during Jones' days as the secretary to the Irish Railway Commission[94] and Jones had made sure that a separate debt to Larcom, following his work for the Commission for Municipal Corporation Boundaries in Ireland, had been acknowledged.[95] By 1846 both of these

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[92] NeC 12,157/14/1 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 25 Mar. 1846. Jones, who had returned to Dublin on 24 Mar., had little alternative other than to agree to the proposed reforms.

[93] NeC 12,157/10/2 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 23 Mar. 1846.

[94] *Parliamentary Papers* 1837, xxxvii, 'First Report of Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Manner in which Railway Communications can be most Advantageously Promoted in Ireland', p. 288: Jones warmly acknowledges the assistance given to the Commissioners by Colby and Larcom. See also British Library, Add. MS 34528: (C.B.Vignoles Journals), 30 Jul. 1837.

[95] Parliamentary Papers 1837, xxxix: *'Reports from Commissioners for Municipal Corporation Boundaries (Ireland)'* p. 4: Jones to Drummond, 22 Mar. 1836. Larcom's own autobiographical memorandum on the subject suggests that the two men worked closely together on this project, see National Library of Ireland, MS 7574 (Larcom Papers), p. 22: Memorandum, 'Statement of Services', 7 Apr. 1852.

debts were clearly long forgotten, as by then both men had gone from being colleagues and allies to competitors. To understand why this was the case one has to go back to the summer of 1845.

On 26 August 1845 the chairman of the Board of Works, Burgoyne, took his leave of his fellow officers at the Board.[96] Burgoyne, who had presided over the department for fourteen years, was leaving Ireland to take up the more prestigious post of the Inspector General of Fortifications in Great Britain and his departure naturally elicited some debate over who was to succeed him. The government certainly appears to have had some difficulty in filling the post, as Burgoyne's successor was not confirmed in his new seat until early October, 1845.[97] The protracted nature of this appointment resulted not only in increased speculation over who was to fill the post but also, inevitably, in some unusual applications for the job. One such application came from the comparatively youthful supervisor of the Ordnance Survey engraving and publication department at Mountjoy Barracks, Thomas Larcom. Larcom, like Burgoyne, was a Royal Engineer and like Burgoyne, had some influential supporters.[98] However, in 1845 he was still of a junior rank[99] and had a rather limited record of service, so it is surprising that he saw himself as a contender for this position.

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[96] National Archives of Ireland, OPW 1/1/1/13, 2D/56/105 (Office of Public Works General Minute Books): 26 Aug. 1845.

[97] (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, v, 12 Jul. 1845 and Add. MS 40445 Peel, Goulburn to Peel, 26 Sept. and 3 Oct. 1845. Jones did not attend his first board meeting as chairman until 16 Oct. 1845, see OPW 1/1/1/13, 2D/56/105 (Office of Public Works General Minute Books): 16 Oct. 1845.

[98] Eliot (on behalf of de Grey), Hill and Morpeth had all signed testimonials on Larcom's behalf in the past, see Add. MS 40575 (Peel Papers): ff. 43–56. Adare was also both a keen ally and friend, see J.H. Andrews, *A Paper Landscape: The Ordnance Survey in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2002), p. 170.

[99] He was a second Captain, see Royal Engineers Museum, KLM Index (Connolly MS Papers), p. 490: Larcom.

Whether Larcom was fully aware of the fact that his fellow Royal Engineer, Lieutenant Colonel Jones,[100] had applied for the same position is difficult to say, but it is hard to envisage the circumstances in which the Captain would not have been aware of this fact. Nevertheless Larcom obviously decided to try his luck and as a result he sent a letter of application, with testimonials, direct to the Prime Minister.[101] Although Larcom's overtures were rebuffed his application did succeed in raising the hackles of his competitor, Lt. Colonel Jones and thereafter Jones never appears to quite trusted this irksome junior officer.

Treasury 'interference'

Although the Chief Secretary's new scheme was soon up and running,[102] Lincoln still found that he had one more 'hitch' to remove in the Irish machinery before he could return to electioneering in England.[103] That hitch, which had first been communicated to him by the Under-Secretary on 16 March,[104] was the thorny one of undue Treasury interference in the application process for Public Works. According to Gray, the ensuing

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[100] A man his senior in age, rank and both military and administrative experience.

[101] Add MS 40575 (Peel Papers), f. 40: Heytesbury to Peel, 1 Oct.1845. The way Larcom went about applying for this position was, in itself, peculiar for the chairmanship was in the Treasury's gift and Larcom, by writing directly to the Prime Minister, effectively sidelined the Treasury over this matter. It could be argued that this was not only a breach of official etiquette but also a ploy to circumvent Treasury disapproval of Larcom's application, as Jones had already secured the support of Trevelyan at the Treasury by this date. See also Add. MS 40571 (Peel Papers): Larcom to Peel, 26 July 1845. Lincoln was aware that Larcom and Jones had been up for the chairmanship of the Board of Works and that Jones had apparently been Heytesbury's choice, see NeC 12,134 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 4 Apr. 1846.

[102] Lincoln squared the measure with Griffith in an interview on 30 Mar. 1846, see NeC 12,130/1 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 31 Mar. 1846. For details of how the new system worked, in practice, see NeC 12,136/1 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 8 Apr. 1846.

[103] Lincoln was still without a parliamentary seat at this time, having lost the South Nottinghamshire election on 26 Feb. 1846. He went on to contest and win the Falkirk Burghs on 5 May 1846 having arrived in Falkirk to begin his canvass on 25 Apr., 1846, see F. Darrell Munsell, *The Unfortunate Duke: Henry Pelham, Fifth Duke of Newcastle, 1811–1864* (Columbia, 1985), pp. 64-6.

[104] NeC 9,327/1 (Newcastle Papers): Pennefather to Lincoln, 16 Mar. 1846.

conflict over the interpretation of the Public Works legislation has been 'well documented',[105] but the fact remains that the conflict has not been documented well. Although historians such as Gray and Darrell Munsell have traditionally seen this conflict as one of a battle of wills between a strong-minded Chief Secretary and a meddling assistant Treasury Secretary, wedded to 'his own policy agenda',[106] the reality was more complicated than this.

On 6 June 1845, within months of attaining a seat in Cabinet,[107] Lincoln informed the Prime Minister that a serious problem existed over the constitution of his department. The problem was straightforward: as head of the Office of Woods and Forests he felt that his powers and privileges were under 'systematic attack' from his junior Commissioners, Charles Gore and Alexander Milne.[108] Peel referred the matter, unofficially, to the Treasury but when Lincoln had still not heard any news on the matter by late August he despaired and sent an extremely hostile letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer threatening to resign over the matter.[109] Goulburn was affronted by Lincoln's behavior and lost no time in complaining to Peel,[110] who decided to bring the matter officially before the Treasury Commissioners.[111] Unfortunately for Lincoln the Treasury minute on the subject, which was issued on 16 September 1845 and which was intended to settle the matter, only truly settled one of the areas in dispute – the dispute over the Northern

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[105] Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 135. For a fuller account, see Darrell Munsell, *The Unfortunate Duke*, pp. 71-7.
[106] Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 135 and Darrell Munsell, *The Unfortunate Duke*, pp. 69, 77.
[107] Lincoln was promoted to the Cabinet following Gladstone's resignation, over Maynooth, on 4 Feb. 1845.
[108] This dispute arose because the junior Commissioners questioned Lincoln's authority over the creation of a combined Northern Receivership of Crown Rents and the subsequent appointment to that position and because they refused to sign the accounts of the British Geological Survey as they had not been examined personally by the Commissioners, see Darrell Munsell, *The Unfortunate Duke*, p. 55 and NeC 9074 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Goulburn, 5 Sept. 1845.
[109] NeC 9,042A (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Goulburn, 28 Aug. 1845.
[110] Add. MS 40445 (Peel Papers): Goulburn to Peel, 31 Aug. 1845.
[111] Ibid., Peel to Goulburn, 8, 10 Sept. 1845.

receivership of the Crown rents. Lincoln's authority was eventually upheld in the other matter (regarding the Geological Survey accounts), but the fundamental reform of the Board that the First Commissioner had asked for was quietly dropped by the Treasury and Lincoln was left to nurse his bruised pride. Lincoln had not only lost out to two non-elected permanent pipsqueaks, he had also lost the goodwill of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and had been forced to learn the hard way about the perils of involving the Treasury in such matters.

When faced with a similar situation some months later,[112] after the Treasury had issued a set of 'ancillary instructions' relating to the Public Works, it is no coincidence that Lincoln reacted in the hostile way that he did. As such, historians are best advised to take his subsequent protestations with a healthy pinch of contextual salt. [113] The genesis of these 'ancillary instructions' lay in a Treasury minute on the Moyarta works issued on 17 February 1846[114] and it is deeply misleading to conclude that they were issued under the sole authority of the Assistant Secretary to the Treasury. Trevelyan did develop this minute in a private explanatory letter addressed to Fremantle on 26 February,[115] but to surmise that he was solely responsible for the instructions is naïve. These instructions were confirmed in another minute issued by members of the Treasury Board on 3 April 1846[116] and even then the Minute contained a proviso overriding these inquiries.[117]

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[112] The authority of a Cabinet minister being undermined by a non elected official, see NeC 12,137A (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 9 Apr. 1846; 'They feel that I am sent over here to make arrangements which have the approbation of the Heads of the Government and these arrangements are thwarted by a subordinate.'

[113] Lincoln regularly complained about Treasury interference, in this matter, to different members of the executive in Westminster, see British Library (Graham Papers): Lincoln to Graham, 26 Mar. 1846 and NeC 12,136/1; NeC 12,137/2 and NeC 12,138/2 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 8, 9, 11 Apr, 1846.

[114] *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Treasury Minute, 17 Feb. 1846.

[115] Ibid., Trevelyan to Fremantle, 26 Feb. 1846.

[116] Ibid., Treasury Minute, 3 Apr. 1846.

[117] Ibid., 'But their Lordships desire that the precautions which these points of inquiry imply, may, on no account, be allowed to interfere with the timely application of the relief which it is the object of these

Gray perhaps comes nearer to the truth in his conclusion that 'an excessive concentration on these [Trevelyan's practices] can obscure the real divisions within the government over his activities'.[118] For discounting the emphasis placed upon Trevelyan, as opposed to the Treasury, Gray is right to suggest that the real issue at stake was one of perceptible 'divisions'. But while his attentions are directed to discerning how various members of the Cabinet differed in their views on how the distress in Ireland should be relieved (a concern that can be translated into one of sparring government departments - with the Treasury fighting Dublin Castle and the executive in London on who should have the last word on how unconstrained the relief should be) the real 'divisions' were not between the government departments represented by their respective Cabinet heads, but between the officials on the ground and the Castle executive.[119]

The instructions that caused this 'hitch' were not the result of a Treasury whim, but instead represented a concerted attempt, on the Treasury's behalf, to respond to the abuses that the Treasury Lords perceived to be arising from Public Works sanctioned under the old act, 1 Victoria cap. 21.[120] The Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary wanted the Treasury to relax its insistence upon the application of these rules,[121] but Goulburn was reluctant to do this because he perceived the principle behind the instructions to be important;[122] and so the matter became an inter-departmental concern -

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arrangements to afford.' Also ibid., Trevelyan to Jones, 16 Mar. 1846. This proviso is not normally included in historical accounts (see, for example, Darrell Munsell, *The Unfortunate Duke*, pp.67-81 and Kinealy, *This Great Calamity,* pp.54-60) and little notice is also taken of a letter written by Goulburn to the Chief Secretary, in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer specifically excused Trevelyan of any censure: 'beyond any which may be supposed to attach to the phraseology in which the instructions received from me were expressed', see NeC 9241/1 (Newcastle Papers): Goulburn to Lincoln, 15 Apr. 1846.

[118] Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 136.

[119] Ibid., pp. 136-7.

[120] *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Treasury Minute, 17 Feb. 1846.

[121] For Heytesbury's views, see British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 11, 17 Mar. and 10, 12, 15 Apr. 1846.

[122] NeC 9241/1 (Newcastle Papers): Goulburn to Lincoln, 15 Apr. 1846.

one of the Irish executive, with the assistance of Peel and Graham[123] - versus the Treasury.

Nevertheless, if this was the only sticking point then the provision included in the Treasury minute of 3 April 1846 stating that 'the precautions which these points of inquiry imply, may, on no account, be allowed to interfere with the timely application of the relief',[124] coupled with Lincoln's forceful representations on the subject, the reorganisation of the Board of Works, and the eventual interference of Peel and Graham in the matter, should have been enough to resolve the problem. But these interventions did not solve the problem and Lincoln thought that he knew why:

> They feel that I am sent over here to make arrangements which have the approbation of the Heads of the government and that these arrangements are thwarted by a subordinate and then they reflect that I must soon leave Dublin and however ready I may be to incur any responsibility by disobeying Mr. Trevelyan they dare not do so.[125]

The explanation, at least according to the Chief Secretary, was simple – the relief officials were all terrified of Trevelyan because of the influence he wielded over their future career prospects.[126] It should be noted that most of Lord Lincoln's briefings on Board matters came from the executive branch of Dublin Castle and not from the relief officials in question, so Lincoln's assertions should be viewed contextually.[127] What

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[123] See British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 22 Mar., 20 Apr. 1846 and NeC 11,977/1, 11,981/1 and 11,985/1 (Newcastle Papers): Peel to Lincoln, 24, 31 Mar. and 10 Apr. 1846.
[124] *Parliamentary Papers* 1846 (735): Treasury Minute, 3 Apr. 1846.
[125] NeC 12,137/2 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 9 Apr. 1846.
[126] Lincoln never attempted to specify why this might have been the case.
[127] See, for example, NeC 9,327/1, 9,345/1, 9356/1 (Newcastle Papers): Pennefather to Lincoln, 16 Mar. and 4, 28 June 1846.

Lincoln could not clearly envisage was that the relief officials may have agreed with the Treasury's stance on this subject.[128]

Lincoln was right when he predicted that he would soon have to leave Dublin, for he had an election to win in Scotland, and in his absence things once again began to fall apart.[129] Before his departure, Lincoln had managed to surmount the problem of the Treasury's refusal to sanction various public works[130] by having Heytesbury's discretionary powers increased;[131] had seen off Larcom's arch adversary Colby;[132] and had even managed to buoy up the Board with further engineers.[133]

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[128] For specific examples of this see, *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Jones to Trevelyan, 11 Mar., 4 Apr., 2, 21 May 1846; National Archives, London PRO T64/369A/3 (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 1 Apr. 1846 and NeC 12,156/1 (Newcastle Papers): Jones to Lincoln, 9 Apr. 1846. It is difficult to say at this early stage what Larcom and Griffith believed. The relief officials in question here are those acting under Jones at the Board of Works. Jones, as chairman of the Board, naturally set the tone for the organisation and his fellow Board members appear not to have disagreed with him over matters of basic policy, see NeC 1,331/1/1 (Newcastle Papers): Pennefather to Lincoln, 3 May 1846. The nature of the power balance between Jones and Griffith and Larcom was to change in time.

[129] Lincoln left Dublin for Belfast on 22 Apr. and arrived in Falkirk to begin his canvass on 25 Apr. 1846, see NeC 9,481 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Goulburn, 21 Apr. 1846 and Darrell Munsell, *The Unfortunate Duke*, p. 66.

[130] See, for example, NeC 12,148, 12151, 12,154 and 12,155 (Newcastle Papers): Trevelyan to Pennefather, 4,6,7, Apr. 1846.

[131] Heytesbury experienced some teething problems in understanding and exercising these powers, see NeC 12,140 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 19 Apr. 1846 but he was soon able to inform both Jones and Routh that he was ready to utilise them, see British Library (Graham Papers): Heytesbury to Graham, 30 Apr. 1846. Heytesbury clearly did not realise that the Chief Secretary had been in on the act of increasing the Castle's discretionary power in this matter, see NeC 9312 (Newcastle Papers): Heytesbury to Lincoln, 6 May, 1846.

[132] For the origins of the breach between Larcom and Thomas Colby at the Irish Ordnance Survey, see Andrews, *A Paper Landscape*, pp. 190-1. For the saga of Colby's visit to Dublin in early Apr. 1846, see *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Treasury to Pennefather, 1 Apr. 1846 and NeC 12,134/1 and NeC 9239 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 4 Apr. 1846, Goulburn to Lincoln, 7 Apr. 1846 and National Library of Ireland, MS 7520 (Larcom Papers): Larcom to Colby, 26 Mar. 1846 and Larcom to Lincoln, 18 Apr. 1846.

[133] See *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Ordnance to Treasury, 30 Mar., 1 Apr. 1846. Increasing the force of sappers and miners, engineers and ordnance men employed by Larcom and Griffith to investigate the Public Works proved to be no small feat. The Ordnance resented the use of military men in non-military, 'scientific' pursuits, see NeC 9025 (Newcastle Papers): Murray to Peel, 25 Aug. 1844. It is hardly surprising that Larcom was not highly popular in the Ordnance department and that any requests for further Ordnance forces to be employed, under him, were viewed with suspicion. Lincoln believed that Larcom was also deeply unpopular with Burgoyne, see NeC 12,134 (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 4 Apr. 1846. This opinion is born out by the frosty nature of relations between the two men, see *Parliamentary Papers* 1846,xxxvii (735): Burgoyne to Master General of the Ordnance, 18 Mar. 1846 for Burgoyne's implicit criticism of Larcom and his later refusal to come to Larcom's assistance when Larcom was removed from the staff of the Irish Ordnance Survey. When Larcom attempted to patch matters up in

However by 7 May Heytesbury was again lamenting the slow progress of the Public Works in Ireland, despite the fact that, as he himself emphasized, Jones had been made 'fully aware' of the fact that the Lord Lieutenant was 'ready to advance the sums necessary for giving immediate employment to the people' whenever real distress prevailed, 'without waiting for the usual forms.'[134] But the crux of the matter was that Jones was not willing to see those powers readily employed for, as Pennefather explained to the absent Chief Secretary:

> the Commissioners ... [have] unfortunately formed an opinion that the distress ... [is]
> much exaggerated, and that the necessity for vigorously carrying on public works to
> employ the people ... [does] not exist to ... [the] extent that ... [it has] been represented to the government.[135]

This fundamental difference in outlook between the Commissioners of Public Works and Griffith, Larcom and the Castle executive, resulted in further serious delays in the progress of the Public Works programme. In the case of works initiated under 1 Victoria cap.21 the Board now decided to ignore, wherever possible, the reports from Mountjoy about the extent of the distress in specific areas and instead began to insist that the county surveyors should take the final decisions as to whether sufficient distress existed to warrant the sanction of the proposed works.[136] As a result, Pennefather was driven to

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Dec. 1846 he received short shrift from the Inspector General of Fortifications, see MS 7520 (Larcom Papers): Larcom to Burgoyne, undated and 29 Dec. 1846.

[134] NeC 9313/1 (Newcastle Papers): Heytesbury to Lincoln, 7 May 1846.

[135] NeC 1,331/1/1 (Newcastle Papers): Pennefather to Lincoln, 3 May 1846. Pennefather later went on to explain that the Commissioners had had their noses severely put out of joint by Griffith's visit to Clare and Limerick, a visit that gave rise to a widely divergent report from the one issued by Radcliffe following his earlier visit to the south of Ireland. The result of this was that the Commissioners were not working 'cordially with either him [Griffith] or Larcom', see NeC 9,332/1 (Newcastle Papers): Pennefather to Lincoln, 5 May 1846. For confirmation of the tension between Jones and Larcom, see MS 7520 (Larcom Papers): Larcom to Adare, 6 May 1846.

[136] See NeC 9345/1 (Newcastle Papers): Pennefather to Lincoln, 4 June 1846. When Pennefather pleaded with the Board not to pursue this policy and not to overload the County Surveyors, the Board remained intransigent.

send increasingly desperate protestations and cries for help in combating this intransigence to London,[137] where they fell on deaf ears as the Chief Secretary was too caught up in the hurly-burly of the Westminster session[138] to return to Dublin to straighten matters out.[139] The matter was made worse because these were the very last days of the Peel administration.[140]

What the Under-Secretary's and Lord Lieutenant's letters from this period demonstrate is that the Castle executive firmly believed that the Treasury was calling the tune at this time.[141] What the Castle executive do not appear to have realised is that the Board of Works, or more specifically Jones and the old Board (*sans* Larcom and Griffith), and the Treasury were of one mind on many of the questions regarding the how, why and when of relief administration and in their approach and attitude towards the Irish landlords. Nor was Jones alone in this regard, for the 'Scarcity Commissioners' themselves argued for the imposition of a labour rate on the Irish proprietors to ensure that self-interested Public Works proposals were thwarted, from the very start.[142]

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[137] Ibid., and NeC 9356/1 (Newcastle Papers): Pennefather to Lincoln, 28 June 1846.

[138] Lincoln was responsible for the following Bills in Parliament: the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) bill, the Ejectment and Distress bill, the Leases (Ireland) bill, the Rateable Property (Ireland) bill and the Protection of Life (Ireland) bill. He also consulted Mulvany and Jones upon a Wasteland Improvement (Ireland) bill in this period, see NeC 9399 (Newcastle Papers): Jones to Lincoln, 24 June 1846.

[139] Lincoln never returned to Ireland as Chief Secretary after Apr. 1846.

[140] The resignation of the government was announced in both Houses of Parliament on 29 June 1846, See Reeve, ed. *The Greville Memoirs* (8 vols., London, 1896) v, 409 and Gash, *Sir Robert Peel*, p. 602. Peel mistakenly records the 28 June as the day of his resignation speech in the House of Commons, see Mahon and Cardwell (ed.), *Memoirs By ... Peel* (3 vols., London, 1857), iii, 309.

[141] Lincoln went further and argued that the Board of Works officials feared the reprisals of the Treasury, see NeC 12,137A (Newcastle Papers): Lincoln to Peel, 9 Apr. 1846.

[142] See RLFC 1/1 (01): Scarcity Commission Minute, 2 Feb. 1846. Although Jones was not present at the meeting that adopted this proposal, no evidence exists to suggest that he disagreed with the principle of a labour rate and he certainly made no effort later on to block the suggestion of his fellow Scarcity Commissioners. Thereafter he appears to have demonstrated a consistently hostile attitude towards the self-interest of the Irish proprietors, see for example, *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Jones to Trevelyan, 11 Mar., 4 Apr., 2, 21 May, and 3 Jul. 1846 and T 64/369A/3 (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 1 Apr. 1846 and NeC 1,331/1/1 (Newcastle Papers): Pennefather to Lincoln, 3 May 1846.

Of course the case could be made that Jones was simply acting in line with the sentiments expressed by Trevelyan in a private letter written to the chairman as early as 15 January 1846 because he knew where his bread was best buttered in terms of his future career prospects.[143] But Jones was reminding Irish proprietors and their agents of their duty to act responsibly in times of scarcity and bemoaning the lack of landlord subscriptions for the alleviation of distress, when he was employed as a government inspector in Donegal in the summer of 1836.[144] Given what we also know about Jones's later outbursts on the subject of the Irish landlords, it seems fair to conclude that his sentiments were genuinely in accord with the sentiments held by Trevelyan and those at the Treasury at this time.[145] Lincoln therefore misdiagnosed the problem. Trevelyan was not the trouble in the spring and summer of 1846; the relief officers at the Board of Works proper were.[146]

The reorganisation of the Board of Works

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[143] Robinson Library, Newcastle, vii, (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 15 Apr. 1846.
[144] 1836 Box 277 (CSORP): Jones to Drummond, 27, 29 June 1836. Jones's attitude towards the Irish proprietors only appears to have hardened in the intervening years.
[145] It is also important to note that when Trevelyan wrote his Apr. memorandum recommending the abolition of the half grant system of financing certain relief works, he was responding directly to the substance of letters written both by Jones and the other Public Works Commissioners. See *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Trevelyan memorandum, 15 Apr. 1846. Gray views this memorandum as evidence that 'Trevelyan's hand' can be seen behind the Whig's decision to abandon the half grant system in their Poor Employment Act of Aug. 1846 (9 and 10 Victoria cap.107), see Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 229. If this interpretation is correct then Trevelyan's views in Aug. 1846, when the subject was being debated in Cabinet, must be seen in part as an endorsement of the views contained in Jones's letters of 3 and 21 July 1846. See *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Jones to Trevelyan, 3 and 21 July 1846. Nor can the discussions which the Assistant Secretary held with Jones on 10 Apr. 1846 at the Treasury be ignored. See Robinson Library, Newcastle, vii, (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Captain Perceval, 10 July 1846. Trevelyan was also keen to receive Jones's comments on the memorandum on the relief measures that he had drawn up for submission to the Cabinet in early Aug., see Robinson Library, Newcastle, vii, (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 27 July 1846. For the views of the other Public Works Commissioners on this subject see *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Jones to Trevelyan, 4 Apr. 1846 and Commissioners of Public Works (First Report) to Treasury, 7 Apr. 1846.
[146] The Board of Works proper did not include Griffith and Larcom.

Whereas Pennefather's last letters to Lincoln had concentrated upon the details of Jones' various transgressions, the Lord Lieutenant preferred to focus his attention upon the broader question of how the Board could be reorganised to place it 'more under the control of the Lord Lieutenant' and less in the sway of 'clerks in the Treasury'.[147] Heytesbury's ideas in this regard were not novel, as the reorganisation of the Board had been raised by Lords Stanley[148] and Devon[149] and more recently by Burgoyne, on his retirement from the Custom House in the summer of 1845.[150] However, Heytesbury was soon out of office and the influence that he had wanted quelled in the Board of Works was instead given the task of remodeling that very Board.

It is difficult to discern whether the need to reform the Board of Works was communicated to the new Whig administration by the outgoing ministers but, if it was not, the matter was soon placed on the agenda by the new Under-Secretary at the Castle, Thomas Redington[151] Redington's hand in the matter was almost certainly forced by the retirement of one of the senior Board members, Ottley,[152] and in turn prompted something of a feeding frenzy for office. Radcliff petitioned Jones to become the deputy chair of the Board[153] and Jones harried Trevelyan on Radcliff's behalf.[154] Mulvany, who

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[147] NeC 9321/1 (Newcastle Papers): Heytesbury to Lincoln, 29 June 1846.
[148] Liverpool Record Office, DER 36 (Derby Papers): Undated Confidential Memoranda – Ireland, pp. 27-33.
[149] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 15 July 1845.
[150] Ibid.: Heytesbury to Graham, 7 Aug. 1845.
[151] ING Baring Archives, London, NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Redington to Labouchere, 19 July 1846.
[152] See Department of Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 20 July 1846. Ottley's proposed retirement had been the cause of some speculation amongst the Board's other members for some time, see MS 7520 (Larcom Papers): Radcliff to Larcom, undated (May or June 1846).
[153] PRO T64/364/2 (Treasury Papers): Radcliff to Jones, 18 July 1846.
[154] PRO T64/364/2 (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 20 July 1846.

had already enlisted the support of Lincoln in his bid to have his salary raised,[155] now pressed his claims for preferment[156] while Larcom pushed for his services to be renewed at the Board,[157] having fallen foul of Colby at the Ordnance Survey in early May.[158]

Redington had initially suggested that the government form a Board of Improvement with Griffith, Larcom or Mulvany as the Commissioners.[159] But Trevelyan saw no reason radically to reform the existing structure of the Board and as a result he kept his proposals simple. The Shannon Commission was to be abolished; the new Board was to consist of a chairman, a deputy chairman and three other members; the office establishment was to be increased; and an accountant was to be appointed who would 'freely' be 'admitted to the consultations of the Board'. However, there was a twist, for the Assistant Secretary, after expressing concern for the lack of 'promptness and unity' that an increased number of new members would bring to the Board, proposed an increase in the powers of the chairman. Thus the 'concurrence of the chairman' would be necessary to 'constitute a decision of the Board' and his signature would be required for every appointment and contract made by the Commissioners.[160] The motivation that lay behind Trevelyan's inclusion of this proviso in his proposal[161] is not difficult to discern

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[155] PRO T64/364/2 (Treasury Papers): Lincoln memorandum on Mulvany's salary, 4 July 1846.
[156] PRO T64/364/2 (Treasury Papers): Mulvany to Jones, 20 July 1846.
[157] Ms 7520 (Larcom Papers): Larcom to Jones, 24 May, 1846.
[158] Larcom was dismissed from the Ordnance Survey on 4 May 1846, see MS 7520 (Larcom Papers): Colby to Larcom.
[159] NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Redington to Labouchere, 19 July 1846.
[160] PRO T64/364/2 (Treasury Papers): Trevelyan memorandum on the reorganisation of the Board of Works, 22 July 1846.
[161] Trevelyan had been present at a meeting with Wood, Labouchere and Bessborough the day before he sent the memorandum to Labouchere and he was to request another interview with Labouchere in his covering letter when forwarding the memorandum, see MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Letter Books): Trevelyan to Labouchere, 22 July 1846. We know that Trevelyan had been tutoring the new Chief Secretary on the workings of the relief statutes, see NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Labouchere to Redington, 22 July 1846 and that the Cabinet that met on 21 July 1846 was the first to discuss the subject of Irish distress. It would therefore be extremely unlikely if the subject of the reform of the Board had not

and it is interesting to note that, even at this juncture, the Irish Under-Secretary wanted little or nothing to do with Jones. Indeed his proposal of a Board of Improvement had completely sidelined the involvement of the chairman. Trevelyan, however, saw Jones as an important ally and he therefore wanted to ensure that the chairman was the dominant force on a committee whose new members gave increased scope for uncertainty. But Jones was wary of burning his bridges with potential allies on the Irish side of the water and so, in the same breath that he was to alert Trevelyan to the possibility of an agitation involving Larcom at the Ordnance Survey, he also reminded the Assistant Secretary to be courteous to Griffith in issuing him with his instructions for winding up the Shannon business.[162]

Griffith, Larcom and Mulvany, on the other hand, did not sit idly by while these plans were up in the air and as soon as they sensed that changes were afoot, they lost no time in lobbying key members of the executive, on both sides of the Irish sea, for pounds and power.[163] Their pleas did not fall on deaf ears; the salary of the fishery Commissioner was increased;[164] Larcom's fall was cushioned by Labouchere's (Chief Secretary 1846-7, President of the Board of Trade, 1847-52) offer of a Private Secretary's post[165] and

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come up, although it is difficult to say to what extent Trevelyan directed ministerial thinking on this subject.

[162] PRO T64/364/2 (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 27 July 1846.

[163] They had won Redington over by 19 July 1846, see NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Redington to Labouchere, 19 July 1846 and they then lost no time in crossing over to London to gain the ear of Labouchere, see NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Labouchere to Redington, 22 July 1846 and MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 23 July 1846.

[164] See NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Redington to Labouchere, 1 Aug. 1846 for Redington's plea on Mulvany's behalf for his salary to be increased and also PRO T64/364/2 (Treasury Papers): Labouchere to Parker, 13 July 1846 and Trevelyan to Jones, 30 July 1846.

[165] See Ms 7520 (Larcom Papers): Morpeth to D'Agiular, 3 July 1846 and Castle Howard Archives, J/19/8/12 (Morpeth Diary): 3 July 1846.

Griffith was tempted over to the Board, on a permanent basis, by the offer of the deputy chair.[166]

However, despite More O' Ferrall's (MP for Kildare, 1830-46 and Governor of Malta, 1847-51) repeated warnings to include fewer Commissioners and to bulk up the powers of the chairman,[167] the bill to extend and consolidate the powers of the Board[168] did not include Trevelyan's provision for increasing the chairman's authority.[169] And while the Treasury must have been a little concerned by clause VI of the bill (a clause that ensured that all acts executed by any two Commissioners were valid) the provisions of the act, in most other respects, closely followed Trevelyan's 22 July memorandum and very soon Jones found himself sitting around a board table with Griffith, Radcliff, Mulvany and Larcom.[170]

Trevelyan had first hinted to Jones in July that the Treasury planned to rely upon the assistance of Griffith and Larcom in 'this most important service.'[171] But the experience of having to work so closely with Larcom at the Board could not have been a welcome one for Jones and it certainly took some time for the dust to settle at the Custom

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[166] See MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 13 Aug. 1846. Griffith's appointment must have been seen as something of an unwelcome usurpation by Radcliff, see MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Letter Books): Trevelayn to Radcliff, 31 Aug, 1846.

[167] Ibid.: Trevelyan to More O'Ferrall, 30 July 1846 and PRO T64/366C/1 (Treasury Papers): More O'Ferrall to Trevelyan, 3 Aug. 1846 and PRO T64/364/2 (Treasury Papers): More O'Ferrall to Trevelyan, 6 Aug. 1846.

[168] See *Journals of the House of Commons*, Vol. 101, Part II, 1184-5, 1193, 1200, 1202, 1209, 1212, 1291 for the progress, through the House of Commons of the act which became 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 86.

[169] Although the Treasury Board did reserve the right to set the rules and regulations for the Commissioners, see clause IX of the act.

[170] After a few minor amendments, the bill passed to its third reading a week after its introduction into the House, see *Journals of the House of Commons*, Vol. 101 Part II, 1212: 15 Aug. 1846. The bill received the Royal Assent on 26 Aug. 1846.

[171] See MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 23 July 1846. Jones appears to have thought that the system initiated by Lincoln, whereby Larcom would remain at Mountjoy, would prevail. See PRO T64/364/2 (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 4 Aug. 1846.

House after these reforms had been implemented.[172] In time these reforms did help to settle the nerves of the chairman and of his former colleagues and the Board was finally able to put its shoulder to the wheel and collectively confront the problems of a new season of distress.

This was not necessarily a good thing for the recipients of relief on the public works. For while men like Griffith and Larcom had remained outside the official fold of the Board, and had been in the sway of the Castle, as opposed to the Treasury, the Public Works ticket holders had stood a better chance of receiving an independent assessment of their position and, as a result, more adequate assistance. The *Act to Extend and Consolidate the Powers of the Board of Works* brought an end to this. For Griffith and Larcom were left to develop a new relationship with their immediate employer - the Treasury. And while the Treasury was prepared to listen to what these officials had to say its hearing, as the next chapter will demonstrate, could be remarkably selective.

[172] Jones was still smarting over these changes in Dec., see *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, l (764): Jones to Trevelyan, 2 Dec. 1846.

Chapter Four

The Board of Works: August 1846 – April 1847

The decision taken by the Cabinet in January 1847 to abandon relief by employment on Public Works in favour of the distribution of soup and thereafter an extended Poor Law, has received a great deal of historical attention.[1] Gray, in his recent history of the Famine, has developed the argument first put forward by Montague in 1976,[2] that, with regard to Irish relief policy, a memorandum written by Larcom in January 1847: 'brought one train of thought to a halt and set another in motion'.[3] Thus, for Gray: the 'growing criticism of the public works system by senior Irish administrators' was 'more important' an 'element' in the government's decision to abandon relief by employment on the Public Works than the 'orthodox objections to Bessborough's (Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1846-7) proposed labour rate'.[4] The importance of Larcom's memorandum in this 'growing criticism' is not neglected: 'By early January, senior administrators were pushing for the abandonment of public works relief, and a strict separation of relief from the labour market in future'.[5]

This chapter will seek to investigate the correctness of Montague's and Gray's claims about the centrality of the proposals put forward by Larcom, Griffith, and Jones to the decision of the government to abandon one mode of relief in favour of another. The

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[1] See, for example, Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 262; Kinealy, *This Great Calamity*, p. 101; R.J. Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction in Ireland 1845-1849' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil. thesis, 1976), p. 122 and Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, p. 171.

[2] In his unpublished doctoral thesis. See Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction', pp. 122-3. Although Gray cites Montague's thesis in his Bibliography he does not refer to the thesis in his treatment of Larcom's memorandum. See Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, pp. 262-3.

[3] Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction', p. 124.

[4] Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 262.

[5] Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, pp. 262-3.

proposals put forward by these men will be examined and conclusions will be drawn about the changing nature of the relationship which existed between them and their superiors, on both sides of the Irish Sea. Most importantly the decision to abandon relief by state sponsored employment on Public Works will be placed in its full historical context. The political background to this policy change has often been glossed over by historians of the famine.[6] However, this chapter will demonstrate that the series of compromises forced on the Castle by the Cabinet; the disingenuousness displayed by the Lord Lieutenant; the differences which existed within the Irish executive; the confusion created by the Lord John Russell, Prime Minister 1846-52, and the Irish executive over a plethora of poorly distinguished relief proposals; and the wavering nerve and indecision of Henry Labouchere, and Lord John Russell had far greater impact on the decisions of the Cabinet than the memoranda and pleadings of Larcom, Griffith and Jones.

The blueprint for relief

Despite issuing a Treasury Minute winding up the previous relief works[7] it soon became clear to the Cabinet that further measures were required to meet the distress in Ireland.[8] As a result, Bessborough and Labouchere took the decision to stay on in London in order to maximise their influence in guiding Irish policy through the Cabinet.[9] But

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[6] See, for example, J. Donnelly, 'The administration of relief, 1846-7', in W.E.Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland*, pp. 294-306 and Kinealy, *This Great Calamity*, pp. 90-101.

[7] *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Treasury Minute, 21 July 1846.

[8] Castle Howard, J/19/8/12 (Morpeth Diary): 21 July 1846 and University of Durham, GRE/V/C3/12 (3rd Earl Grey Journal): 21 July 1846. Russell had put Bessborough on the alert over the possibility of increased distress in Ireland in June, see National Archives, London, PRO 30/22/5A, (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 29 Jun. 1846.

[9] Howell-Thomas has Bessborough arriving in Dublin on 11 July 1846, see D. Howell-Thomas, *Duncanon, Reformer and Reconciler 1781–1847* (Norwich, 1992), p. 284. Yet Bessborough was still writing to Russell

Irish affairs were not as pressing as other affairs of State and it was not until 16 and 17 July that they appeared upon the Cabinet agenda, in the form of the question of the restoration of the repeal magistrates. By 21 July this subject was still dominating Cabinet proceedings and although ministers did find some time to discuss the subject of Irish distress,[10] again the subject could not have been that pressing for the next Cabinet meeting was dominated by what the government could do to encourage industry in Ireland.[11] The Prime Minister himself was late for the next Cabinet and a bad storm ensured that little official business could be conducted due to a small ministerial turn-out,[12] so the discussion of Irish relief matters was delayed for another week.

This delay must have given the ministers ample time to get their teeth into Trevelyan's blueprint for relief – an eleven page memorandum the Assistant Secretary had drawn up and had printed at the request of Sir Charles Wood (Chancellor of the Exchequer 1846-52) – which had been delivered to the Cabinet on 1 August.[13] The Assistant Secretary's proposals for future relief works came right to the point. Lincoln's bill cutting out 'the agency of contractors' from the relief works and placing the County

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from Cavendish Square on 25 Aug. 1846 – the day the Prime Minister was to wish him a happy journey over to Ireland. The first letter sent by Bessborough, from Dublin, that appears in the Russell Papers is dated 2 Sept., 1846. While Labouchere was still at the Irish Office in London and at a meeting with Wood on 29 Aug. He did not write to Russell from Dublin until 8 Sept. 1846, see PRO 30/22/5B (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell and Russell to Bessborough, 25 Aug. 1846 and Labouchere to Russell, 29 Aug. 1846. See also PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 2 Sept. 1846 and Labouchere to Russell, 8 Sept. 1846 and J/19/8/12 (Morpeth Diary): 29 Aug. 1846.

[10] GRE/V/C3/12 (Grey Journal): 16 July1846 and BL, Add. MS 43748 (Hobhouse Diary, Broughton Papers), 17 July 1846 and J/19/8/12 (Morpeth Diary), 21 July 1846 and GRE/V/C3/12 Grey Journal, 21 July 1846. The Cabinet most probably discussed the closure of relief operations, as detailed in the Treasury Minute of 21 July 1846, see *Parliamentary Papers*, xxxvii, 735, Treasury Minute, 21 July 1846.

[11] GRE/V/C3/13 Grey Journal, 31 July 1846.

[12] Ibid., 1 Aug. 1846.

[13] See MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 23 July1846 and PRO T 64/368/A (Treasury Papers): Two Memoranda On The Relief Operations Of 1846-1847, 1 Aug. 1846 and 25 Jan. 1847. The importance of Trevelyan's paper can not be too much stressed for here, under three heads – relief works, local committees and the commissariat – Trevelyan outlined a series of proposals that were to form the skeleton of Russell's subsequent Irish relief bills.

Surveyors under the authority of the Board of Works was recommended.[14] The Lord Lieutenant was to be given the authority to assemble Baronial relief sessions in areas experiencing distress and where those sessions did not present for works he was to have the authority to sanction various works and, thereafter, to compel the Barony to repay any advances the Treasury had sanctioned for the works.[15] The types of work the Baronial sessions could apply for were to be strictly defined;[16] the costly system of proceeding with half grants and half loans was to be abandoned in favor of loans that were to be fully repaid to the government;[17] and the rate by which the advances for carrying on the relief works was to be repaid was to be based upon the Poor Law valuation, as opposed to the Grand Jury cess.[18]

This latter proposal had first been recommended by the Scarcity Commissioners on 31 January 1846, but it seems more likely that Trevelyan took the idea from Griffith, who had sketched out the proposal in his July paper entitled 'Notes relative to the employment of the poor in Ireland.'[19] Trevelyan certainly referred to Griffith's endorsement of the scheme in his paper[20] and although he did not send a copy of his Cabinet paper on relief

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[14] PRO T 64/368/A (Treasury Papers): Two Memoranda, 1 Aug. 1846, p. 3. The bill, which became 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 71 had been suspended on its third reading in the House of Lords.
[15] Ibid., pp. 4 -5.
[16] Ibid., p. 4. Trevelyan proposed that the works were to be confined to those adverted to in the fifth section of the act 9 Victoria cap. 2. Such works included : 'the lowering of a Hill or filling a Hollow ... on any public Road ... the building, rebuilding, repairing, enlarging any Bridge ... erecting any Fence, Railing, or Wall for the Protection of Travelers from dangerous Precipices or Holes lying on the side of any public Road, or for making, widening, or deepening Drains on the Side of any such Road...' Trevelyan distinctly specified that 'the formation of new roads or any improvements of private estates' were not to be undertaken.
[17] Ibid., pp. 4 -5.
[18] Ibid., p. 6.
[19] PRO T64/366/C/1 (Treasury Papers): Griffith, 'Notes relative to the employment of the poor in Ireland', 30 July 1846. This memorandum had been communicated to the Relief Commissioners and was then sent on to the Treasury, see NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Redington to McCullagh, 29 July 1846.
[20] PRO T 64/368/A (Treasury Papers): Two Memoranda, 1 Aug. 1846, p. 7.

in Ireland to Griffith and the other relief aficionados until 6 August,[21] we know that prior to 5 August the Assistant Secretary had sent drafts of the memorandum for comment to Jones,[22] Routh[23] and Kane[24] and that Griffith and Trevelyan had been in communication on the subject of the Poor Law assessment tables[25] - an integral part of the proposals - and that he had also requested an interview with Griffith in his letter dated 1 August.[26]

Although Griffith was certainly being used as an advisor to the Treasury at this time,[27] it is important to note that where his and Larcom's proposals did not tie in with the views held at the Treasury, they were simply ignored. Thus Griffith placed far greater emphasis on various measures connected with Land Improvement and proposed an apportionment system of labourers in proportion to the amounts contributed by cess

[21] MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Griffith, Larcom, Routh, Kane and Jones, 6 Aug. 1846.
[22] Ibid.: Trevelyan to Jones, 27 July 1846.
[23] PRO T 64/366C/1 (Treasury Papers): Routh to Jones, 3 Aug. 1846.
[24]MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Routh, 5 Aug. 1846. It is difficult to know whether Trevelyan had sent Larcom a draft of his relief proposals before he sent the Cabinet copy to Larcom on 6 Aug. 1846. Larcom certainly sent his comments on Trevelyan's memorandum back to the Assistant Secretary on 6 Aug. 1846, see MS 7460 (Larcom Papers): Larcom to Trevelyan, 6 Aug. 1846. However this could either imply that Larcom had received a draft of the memorandum before 6 Aug. or that Larcom was in London on 6 Aug. 1846 and simply replied to Trevelyan by return of post. Unfortunately he does not give an address in his letter and the author has been unable to establish whether he was in Ireland at this time. The comments in his memorandum on Trevelyan's proposals illustrate that he and Trevelyan were in accord in their beliefs over how to proceed with the relief works, with one exception - that Larcom thought that the public might contribute one quarter of the cost of the works for another year, rather than abolish public grants of money entirely, see MS 7460 (Larcom Papers): Larcom to Trevelyan, 6 Aug. 1846, p. 2.
[25] PRO T64/368/A (Treasury Papers): Two Memoranda ..., 1 Aug. 1846 and PRO T64/366/C/1 (Treasury Papers): Griffith, 'Notes relative to the employment of the poor in Ireland', 30 July 1846. This memorandum had been communicated to the Relief Commissioners and was then sent on to the Treasury, see NP5142. (Northbrook Papers): Redington to McCullagh, 29 July 1846.
[26] MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Griffith, 1 Aug. 1846.
[27] It is safe to say that Griffith's influence was undoubtedly in its ascendancy in this period on both sides of the Irish Sea and Redington suggested to Labouchere that he ask Griffith his opinion on Irish relief matters. See NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Redington to Labouchere, 21 Aug. 1846. Following his visit to London in July, Griffith and the Chief Secretary appear to have struck up a good working relationship where Labouchere would call upon Griffith for advice on a wide range of Irish matters, see NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Labouchere to Redington, 22 July 1846. The fact that Jones thought it worthwhile to keep Griffith happy clearly indicates that the Chairman of the Board valued his support and guidance. See PRO T64/364/2 (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 27 July 1846.

payers for relief far in advance of what the government was willing to consider.[28] Larcom, by contrast, thought that the public might contribute one quarter of the cost of the works for another year, rather than abolish public grants of money entirely.[29] This selective 'editing' by the Treasury of what the officials on the ground were actually proposing is significant because the Treasury was to behave in a similar manner in January 1847 when, as in July and August 1846, the elements of the Board's proposals that did not fit the Treasury schema were simply ignored.

The proposals that the Assistant Secretary put before the Cabinet at the beginning of August were not only the product of Trevelyan's pen and Griffith's guiding hand. Indeed the hands of Wood, Bessborough and Labouchere can also be seen in this document and Bessborough's and Labouchere's policy of hanging around to see their Irish measures through the Cabinet certainly paid off. For, despite conducting at least one conference with Trevelyan and Wood before the Assistant Secretary drew up his Cabinet proposals,[30] both men still found themselves having to defend various provisions of the memorandum to the Cabinet. Thus while the Cabinet meeting of 8 August appears to have gone off smoothly,[31] the following meeting of the Cabinet saw Bessborough and Labouchere having to fight Clanricarde (Postmaster General 1846-52), Palmerston (Foreign Secretary 1846-51) and others on the question of the compulsory powers to be awarded to the Lord Lieutenant to enable him to force Baronies to present and pay for Public Works. Both Clanricarde and Palmerston had extensive Irish estates, while Morpeth (First Commissioner of Woods and Forests, 1846-50), the ex-Chief Secretary saw the proposals

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[28] PRO T64/366/C/1 (Treasury Papers): Griffith, 'Notes relative to the employment of the poor in Ireland', 30 July 1846.
[29] MS 7460 (Larcom Papers): Larcom to Trevelyan, 6 Aug. 1846, p. 2.
[30] See MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Labouchere, 22 July 1846.
[31] Add. MS 43748 (Hobhouse Diary, Broughton Papers), 8 Aug. 1846.

as 'the nucleus of a Poor Law with outdoor relief'.[32] Nevertheless, despite the opposition of these Cabinet members, the pressure was on for the government to legislate and in the end Labouchere and Bessborough succeeded in pushing through many of the proposals contained within Trevelyan's memorandum. As a result the government's principal short-term Irish relief bill, 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 107 [*An Act to facilitate the Employment of the labouring Poor for a limited Period in the distressed Districts in Ireland*] not only provided for the Lord Lieutenant to enforce presentments at extraordinary sessions and for the Treasury to enforce the repayment of the presentments;[33] it also ensured that the rate by which the advances were to be repaid was to be levied like the poor rate.[34] The Cabinet did, however, ignore Trevelyan's proposal that government grants for Public Works should be abolished and two bills were introduced into Parliament by Wood on 18 August,[35] providing for further outright grants of public money for the relief of Irish distress.[36]

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[32] Ibid., 13 Aug. 1846, see J/19/8/12 (Morpeth Diary): 13 Aug. 1846. Labouchere, who was a member of the Cabinet sub-committee that Russell had appointed to look into the Irish measures to be put before Parliament (consisting also of Russell, Earl Grey, Minto [Lord Privy Seal 1846-52] and Wood) did not at all impress Lord Grey at this meeting: 'Nothing could be worse than the manner in which business was brought before us by Labouchere ... I am much mistaken if the Irish Government does not prove the destruction of the whole administration', see GRE/V/C3/13 (Grey Journal): 13 Aug. 1846.

[33] 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 107: clauses I, III and VIII. These provisions can also be found in the act introduced into Parliament by Lincoln and inherited by the Whig administration – 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 71. Trevelyan informed the Cabinet in his memorandum that much inspiration could be drawn from this act.

[34] 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 107: clause IX. In total, the Whig administration guided seven Irish relief bills to Royal assent. These became the acts; 9 and 10 Victoria caps. 71, 78, 85, 101, 107, 108 and 109. This final act also carried a heavy Treasury stamp, for it formalized in its first provision the 17 February Treasury minute calling for contributions to the public works from interested parties.

[35] *Journals of the House of Commons*, Vol. 101 Part II: 18 Aug. 1846.

[36] 9 and 10 Victoria caps. 108 and 109. Trevelyan did his best to stifle any publicity for these bills, see MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Routh, 31 Aug. 1846. This measure was not far removed from the proposal made by Larcom. See MS 7460 (Larcom Papers): Larcom to Trevelyan, 6 Aug. 1846, p. 2.

Non-Public Works

Bessborough was back in Ireland by 2 September but, at first, it appears as if the Lord Lieutenant was at sea as regards the details of the government's bills. Not knowing who to turn to for advice, he addressed his queries to London.[37] But the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave him short shrift and he was informed that Griffith was the man to speak to on such matters.[38] The subject in question was the drainage bill and it is interesting to see the immediate degree of confidence the Chancellor of the Exchequer bestowed on Griffith, in referring Bessborough to him for counsel, as opposed to the chairman of the Board or, indeed, the Commissioner in charge of drainage matters, Mulvany. Bessborough decided to take the Chancellor's advice and quickly informed the Chief Secretary that he would devote a day, twice a week, in the Castle to going over various reports and papers with members of the different boards and he was soon able to report that he could call upon the near permanent advice of not only Griffith but also of Jones.[39]

Jones, who had given vent to some particularly acerbic comments in a letter written to Trevelyan when Board matters were still all up in the air,[40] nevertheless appeared content with the way matters were progressing. For, although he had been hauled in (with

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[37] Borthwick Institute, York, A4.99 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Bessborough to Wood, 5 Sept. 1846 and PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 5 Sept. 1846.
[38] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Wood to Bessborough, 9 Sept. 1846.
[39] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 13 Sept. 1846. See also PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers):Bessborough to Russell, 19 Sept. 1846.
[40] In a letter to Trevelyan dated 4 Aug., Jones had complained that Mulvany had been 'made so much of by the Chief Secretaries that he greatly overrates his value' and the Chairman believed that he should resign rather than continue to hound the government for a pay rise. Jones also stuck the knife into Larcom; 'I dare say there will be much the same system pursued with Larcom. The Chief Secretaries generally unacquainted with Ireland will gladly seize upon any clever man who adopts their views', but the true depth of his feeling was reserved for the issue of putting a stop to 'the employment of individual members of the Board by the Irish government without the knowledge of the chairman.' Lincoln, Jones pleaded, had encouraged such actions on several occasions in the past and he had no intention of seeing it replicated under the new administration. See PRO T64 /364/2 (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 4 Aug. 1846.

Routh) for a meeting with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Trevelyan at the end of August,[41] and although several of his suggestions had been vetoed as 'impracticable',[42] there could have been little doubt in his mind, at this point, as to the scope of his influence both in Dublin and in Downing Street.

In his letter to the Treasury of 6 September, Jones had outlined how the duties of the Board had been divided amongst the various Commissioners. The deputy chairman, alongside his Shannon duties, had been given the task, with Larcom, of superintending all of the activities connected with the acts for the relief of the distressed. Radcliff had been given the task of supervising any of the government grant roads and of superintending any works connected with Ireland's bridges, public buildings, colleges and prisons and finally of issuing the advances for the drainage of Irish lands. Mulvany had been given the charge of the duties connected with the drainage, fishery and consolidated railway acts. Jones, however, designated his role not only as one of general superintendence and as the Commissioner for Irish piers and harbours, inland navigation and the Shannon; but also ensured that he was to be the principal conduit for all Castle references and of all of the government correspondence.[43] As such, he was ideally placed to influence thinking in the Treasury and to keep an eye on developments at Dublin Castle and this, contrary to all of Redington's efforts, is exactly what happened.[44] Indeed one needs only to examine

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[41] See, MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 18 Aug. 1846: 'You are much wanted to settle with us and Sir R. Routh the plan of the approaching campaign'.

[42] See, for example the response the chairman received from Trevelyan over his suggestion to proceed in Ireland by Royal Proclamation, MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 98 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 8 Sept. 1846. Within two weeks Trevelyan had come around to Jones' way of thinking on this subject: Ibid., Trevelyan to Jones, 21 Sept. 1846.

[43] *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, I (764): Jones to Trevelyan, 6 Sept. 1846. Mulvany was absent from the meeting in which this division of duties was devised, due to illness and it is interesting to note that he was not given the charge of the government funds for drainage.

[44] See NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Redington to Labouchere, 15, 18 Aug. 1846. Redington, no doubt acting on the advice of his predecessor, was desperate to ensure that the relief measures were to be

the opinions expressed by the chairman in his letters to Trevelyan, on the question of Bessborough's recommencement of the Public Works that had been closed under the old system, to see that there can be no doubt as to Jones' loyalties and the extent of his influence at the Treasury.[45] Nevertheless these loyalties were soon to be tested and the Treasury was to be left wondering quite for whom 'their' men in Dublin were working.

In a letter to the Prime Minister written on 12 September, Wood sheepishly explained that a minute issued by the Treasury on 31 August not only postdated the new act, but that it had also been drawn up in Russell's absence by Labouchere, Trevelyan and himself.[46] This minute prohibited the execution of any further works under the act 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 1 and indicated that the new act, 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 107, was the only acceptable means for making presentments. It dictated that no person was to be employed on the relief works that could obtain employment on other Public Works, or in farming, or other private operations within the neighbourhood; that the wages to be given on those works were to be at least 2 d. a day less than the average rate of wages in the district and that the persons employed on the relief works should, to the greatest possible extent, be paid in proportion to the work actually done by them.[47] Bessborough, who had

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conducted by a distinct department that would be capable of keeping the management of the public works in the hands of the executive as opposed to those of its appointees.

[45] *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, l (764): Jones to Trevelyan, 7, 9 Sept. 1846. The phraseology Jones employed in his letter of 7 Sept. might well have been used by Trevelyan: 'If I had been consulted, I should have endeavoured to have put off the evil day, for an evil day it will be if we are obliged to recommence before a new system can be introduced, and a very different one from the last season must be established.' Jones also took Labouchere to task over the question of who was to be considered as the 'labouring poor', in order that their numbers could be assessed and adequate relief could be provided. The language he used in his letter to the Chief Secretary would again have won the approval of the Treasury: 'Some guard must be taken to prevent every man in the country who wishes for employment being forced upon the works', see *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, l (764): Jones to Labouchere, 6 Sept. 1846.

[46] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Wood to Russell, 12 Sept. 1846.

[47] *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, l (764): Treasury Minute, 31 Aug. 1846. The minute also attempted to protect the interests of the merchants and small dealers in Ireland, to set down guidelines as to where the commissariat would not operate in Ireland and to demarcate the areas where the act 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 109 would come into operation. Finally the minute drew the activities of the Scarcity Commission to a

not been party to any of the discussions of this minute, was angered by its restrictive provisions and wrote on 8 September to inform the Prime Minister as much.[48] Wood's letter of 12 September can therefore be seen as his first response to an inquiry made by Russell, on the Lord Lieutenant's behalf.[49] And although Russell had already informed Bessborough to proceed with his order to continue various works, Wood's response to this enquiry[50] soon won the Prime Minister over to the Treasury's way of thinking.[51]

Wood moved to allay the First Lord's fears by flagging up the fact that, as he saw it, the minute simply repeated the provisions of a Cabinet approved minute that the Treasury had issued on 21 July 1846. Moreover, as he pointed out, the minute had already been seen by Bessborough and Labouchere. However, Wood's representation of this minute was not quite accurate; for it specified that 'every practicable precaution' should be taken to bring the relief works to an early end 'as soon as the people of the distressed districts can properly be left to their usual resources' and contained the proviso that:

> at the same time, the utmost care must be taken that the measures intended to prevent the abuse of the means provided by Parliament for the relief of the people in the distressed districts, do not interfere with the substantial and well-regulated administration of that relief during the short period which remains before the new harvest and the employment connected with it will render further precautions unnecessary.[52]

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close and arranged for the transfer of their duties to Routh, who was to act with the authority of the Lord Lieutenant and of the Treasury.

[48] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 8 Sept. 1846. The Lord Lieutenant informed the First Lord that he thought it important that he was able to authorise unapproved works.

[49] It seems probable that the Prime Minister was still at Woburn at this time, see PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 11 Sept. 1846. Wood had been at Woburn as recently as 9 Sept. 1846, see PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Wood to Bessborough, 9 Sept. 1846.

[50] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 11 Sept. 1846.

[51] Although Russell ordered Bessborough to continue to proceed with public works where the distress would not stand a delay, he added the proviso that: 'we can afterwards incur the expense, if not by presentment, by act of Parliament levying votes on the district.' He also went on to praise Wood's letter to Bessborough on the subject, see PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 15 Sept. 1846.

[52] *Parliamentary Papers* 1846, xxxvii (735): Treasury Minute, 21 July 1846.

In effect, Bessborough's interpretation of this minute was perfectly sound, for in many districts in Ireland great distress was still being experienced[53] and as a result Public Works could legitimately be continued. Nevertheless, Wood viewed matters differently and in his explanation to Russell, he demonstrated why this was the case:

> The truth is, it is only a question of money. The Lord Lieutenant has at all times ordered works in anticipation of presentments and the only question is whether the provinces are to present for half or all.[54]

The Chancellor obviously left out any inkling of his uneasiness over the fact that the Lord Lieutenant was proceeding to initiate relief operations long before he felt such measures to be necessary and instead focused on what he took to be the indisputable fact that the government had introduced a new principle into its relief operations. That principle had been endorsed by the Cabinet, accepted by Parliament and was now a legislative reality.[55] As such, he expected the Irish executive to get on and implement the relief measures in line with this new principle and thus the only problem, in Wood's eyes, was that Bessborough was now pursuing a policy that was not only out of date, but one that was also no longer acceptable. In addition to this and what particularly stuck in Wood's craw, was the fact that it was not as if this line of thinking had not been cleared with the Castle's own Cabinet representative, Labouchere. Indeed Labouchere, despite his misgivings about the minute, had sought and received explanations on its provisions from

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[53] 'On market-day, September 12, 1846, in Skibbereen, County Cork, an agricultural centre, there was not a single loaf of bread or pound of meal to be had in the town.... By September 25 the people at Clashmore, County Wexford, were living on blackberries, and at Rathcormack, County Cork, on cabbage leaves'. See Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger,* pp. 124-5 for further details of the distress being experienced 'on the ground' in Ireland at this time.

[54] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Wood to Russell, 12 Sept. 1846.

[55] The principle of proceeding with loans as opposed to proceeding by half grants and loans.

Trevelyan by 28 August[56] and had attended a conference with Wood on Irish relief before the minute was issued.[57]

Bessborough, realising that he was in a potentially awkward situation as the Chancellor had the ear of the Prime Minister, chose this moment to direct the government's attention to the thorny issue of state support for non-Public Works. 'There are many situations where the presentments at Baronial sessions', he hastened to inform Russell, 'will not answer unless we can make some arrangement under the act, by which other works than those which could be strictly called Public Works can be proceeded in.' To demonstrate that he intended to maintain the policy initiative at the Castle, he then went on to inform Russell that he had sent the matter to the Irish law officers for their consideration.[58] This was a subject upon which Wood was clear that there could be no compromise. For the recommendations contained in paragraph two of page four of Trevelyan's 1 August Cabinet memorandum on Irish relief works had already been dropped.[59] A 'wide latitude' had already been granted as to the description of works that might be undertaken by the presenting parties [60] and in Wood's view that was the end of the matter. 'The words of the act', Wood informed Bessborough on 16 September, 'are imperative. The works must be public and they can only be of such a nature as are public'.[61] Yet the Prime Minister's initial reaction was different and the Lord Lieutenant was fortunate in this instance that Russell was in attendance upon the Queen at Osborne,

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[56] It is clear that Labouchere also made alterations to the minute, see MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Labouchere, 26, 28 Aug. 1846.
[57] J/19/8/12 (Morpeth Diary): 19 Aug. 1846. It appears as if Russell was at Osborne while these negotiations were going on: see Royal Archives, Queen Victoria's Journal: 27 Aug., 1 Sept. 1846.
[58] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 13 Sept. 1846.
[59] See MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Foster, 31 Aug. 1846. This paragraph proposed that 'the works so applied for are to be of the general description of those adverted to in the fifth section of the 9 Victoria cap. 2'.
[60] Ibid., Trevelyan to Spring Rice, 2 Sept. 1846.
[61] A4/186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Bessborough, 16 Sept. 1846.

and thus out of Wood's orbit of influence. In his response Russell made two important statements. In the first he informed Bessborough that 'Treasury Minutes are not like the laws of the Indies and Prussians, and do change'. Thus if the Lord Lieutenant felt any alteration to be necessary in these communications he was ordered to 'suggest the very words' that he required.[62] Russell's second Osborne letter allowed the Lord Lieutenant a degree of interpretative leeway on the tricky subject of state funded non-Public Works, and, although Russell did make the point that money 'given or advanced for Public Works' should not be applied to 'private jobs', Bessborough was told that if the Board's officers reported that the specific work was of a 'public advantage', then the Prime Minister was of the opinion that 'the private benefit' should not 'deter' the Board from sanctioning it.'[63]

Earlier in his letter, Russell had informed Bessborough of the importance that he attached to the written views of 'Sir R Routh, Colonel Jones and the other principal advisers' that Bessborough consulted at the Castle[64] and Russell was to receive the views of these men in Bessborough's next letter from Dublin. This letter, written by Bessborough on 18 September, is extremely revealing for it provides some clues as to the influences which lay behind Bessborough's actions. 'After consulting Colonel Jones and Griffith I am of opinion that under the act as originally passed we never shall be able to meet the distress that is coming upon us on every side.'[65] It is difficult to discern here whether Bessborough had gone to these two officials and asked if the act was adequate as it stood, or whether they had taken the initiative and informed him, during the course of

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[62] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 16 Sept. 1846.
[63] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 17 Sept. 1846.
[64] Ibid.
[65] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 18 Sept. 1846.

their near daily consultations, that the present act was inadequate to relieve the mounting distress in Ireland. The letter is not so opaque on the question of where the impetus came from for the actual plan that Bessborough was to push:

> I sent over to Labouchere this morning a paper I had drawn up in conformity to what appears the general wish about things through the country, for not limiting the presentments to Roads and Bridges and Redington has been out to Jones who has sent it back with his and Griffith's assent.[66]

The discernible influence here is that of the numerous 'country' landowners that the Lord Lieutenant would have come into contact with, through written and personal deputations, and it appears as if Bessborough himself, rather than his advisors, had initially pushed for this proposal.[67] But Russell had asked to see more of the opinions of Bessborough's Castle advisors and in his next two letters to the Prime Minister, the Lord Lieutenant was careful to emphasize the concurrence of Griffith, Jones and Redington in his plan.[68] Unfortunately for Bessborough these letters did not quite convince and Russell decided to explore all of his options before capitulating. The matter was therefore sent to the Lord Chancellor and a legal opinion on what actually constituted a 'Public Work' was requested. The answer that came back supported Russell's own interpretation and Bessborough was duly informed that the Chancellor was of the opinion that if a work was

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Montague also believed that Bessborough was directly responding to various communications from Irish landlords, see R.J. Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction in Ireland 1845-1849 A Study Of Public Policy During The Great Famine' (Oxford Univ. D. Phil. thesis, 1976), pp. 109, 118. Montague does not, however, make full use of Bessborough's letter to Russell written on 19 Sept., see PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 19 Sept. 1846. Later Bessborough was to fiercely deny that he was fighting on behalf of the Irish landlords, see PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 28 Sept. 1846.

[68] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 19, 20 Sept. 1846.

of 'Public utility' it was a Public Work, even if it was also of an 'advantage to private persons'.[69]

Although the Lord Lieutenant initially accepted this opinion with good grace,[70] Bessborough's formulation and dissemination of a memorandum containing specific policy proposals[71] meant that the matter could no longer be ignored, or casually deflected. In his response Russell made it clear that he still did not think that he could consent to a policy of making 'advances of Public money to improve private estates, only excepting ploughing and sowing' and he advised the Lord Lieutenant that he had resolved to send the matter to Wood for his opinion.[72] Wood, despite having recently indicated to the Chief Secretary that he could be persuaded of the merits of aiding private individuals,[73] nevertheless informed Russell that he thought the proposal to be quite inadmissible.[74] But what really appears to have piqued Wood was the attitude that both Jones and Griffith had adopted towards Bessborough's plan.[75] The Chancellor, removed from London and therefore out of touch with the continual Castle correspondence that flowed through Trevelyan's hands in Downing Street, must have felt uneasy about the

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[69] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 18 Sept. 1846.
[70] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 20 Sept. 1846.
[71] A memorandum was sent to Russell on the subject on 19 Sept., see PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 19 Sept. 1846. On 20 Sept. Bessborough, fearing that Russell had misunderstood him, again outlined his proposal. His plan was that money raised in the barony should be expended, as the barony directed, in profitable instead of useless works and that the money was to be raised by compelling presentments, see PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): 20 Sept. 1846.
[72] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 20 Sept. 1846.
[73] A.4.186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Labouchere, 21 Sept. 1846: 'if you are disposed to begin by aiding private individuals (not that you can do it under our act, but I am speaking prospectively) then I think the yielding upon a determination, deliberately come to, will be ... (?) examples for our future course. I know the worse of giving up this point, it is so many thousand pounds and no more. It cannot recur. Therefore if it furthers my ultimate view, I will yield'. Wood was discussing a letter sent by Labouchere on 15 Sept, relating to a minute that he wished to issue to the Board of Works on the subject of advances, by way of loans, to private individuals, see A4.186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Labouchere, 22 Sept. 1846 and A4.186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Russell, 22 Sept. 1846.
[74] See, A4/56/1 (Hickleton Papers): Russell to Wood, 20 Sept. 1846 and PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Wood to Russell, 21 Sept. 1846.
[75] Ibid., 'I dare say that Jones and Griffith see no practical difficulty in executing one work more than another ... it is ... a very different thing whether we advance money for public objects, or private'.

alliance that Bessborough had apparently forged with men who, he had assumed, were of one mind with the Treasury on such subjects.

In fact Wood's worries were unwarranted and if one reexamines the actual language of Bessborough's letter, one can see why:

> After consulting Colonel Jones and Griffiths I am of opinion that under the act as originally passed we never shall be able to meet the distress that is coming upon us on every side ... Redington has been out to Jones who has sent it back with his and Griffiths assent.[76]

The language employed by Bessborough here does not convey any particular enthusiasm on the part of either Jones or Griffith for this proposal and there is no evidence to indicate that either man had conceived this policy or viewed it as the best method of proceeding. It could be argued that if the two Commissioners had disagreed with the Lord Lieutenant on the basic principle of the proposal, then they would have told him so. But the attitude displayed by Jones, in particular, towards Irish landowners up to this date,[77] would tend to suggest that this was not a plan that the chairman would automatically warm to. Instead it appears more likely that Jones was willing to go along with the Lord Lieutenant on this, for the sake of maintaining harmonious relations with the Castle, until the proposal was either quashed at the Treasury, or in the Cabinet. In the meantime his rather detached attitude towards the measure bought him time to discover the lie of the land at the Treasury and to consult Trevelyan. As it happened, Jones did not have to wait long

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[76] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 18 Sept. 1846. See also, PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 20 Sept. 1846: 'he [Redington] agrees with me and so does Colonel Jones that if the plan I submitted to you can be carried into effect ... that we shall be able to find employment for the people and that such works may be superintended without difficulty' and also the language employed by Jones, as quoted by Bessborough in his letter to Russell on 24 Sept., in PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 24 Sept. 1846.

[77] Griffith's attitude towards the Irish landowners is more difficult to discern at this point. Although his later involvement in writing the Board's 'circular 38' would suggest that he thought a balance ought to be struck between land improvement and public works. While his 30 July memorandum on the 'Employment of the People In Ireland' suggested that the drainage bill was the best device the government could deploy to encourage the cultivation of farmland in Ireland, see PRO T64/366C/1 (Treasury Papers): Griffith memorandum, 30 July 1846.

before he was to receive the Assistant Secretary's opinion on the subject.[78] And thereafter he lost no time in writing to Trevelyan to inform him that while the 'one million pounds act' did require amendment, the Board was proceeding with implementing the act and that the Board was 'better prepared to recommence work' than during the last season of distress.[79]

Russell was still not sure of the best way to proceed and although he did make one last attempt to persuade the Lord Lieutenant to make full use of Lord Chancellor Cottenham's, liberal interpretation of what constituted a Public Work,[80] his interview in London with a deputation from Mayo on 22 September appears to have finally swayed his thinking on the matter. Later that day he wrote to inform Bessborough that he had called a Cabinet meeting on the subject for the following Friday,[81] remarking that while Wood was 'as I was, against them', he hoped that he would be able 'to comply with the spirit' of Bessborough's application.[82] The Lord Lieutenant was overjoyed with this news[83] for he had rapidly been losing his patience with Russell and this had started to show in the tone and language of his letters.[84] Nevertheless he had not let up in his campaign to convince the First Lord of the necessity of his proposal, and the day before he responded to the good news of a Cabinet on the matter, he forwarded a letter from

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[78] See MSS Film. 1186-1192, Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 21 Sept. 1846: 'They (the Irish proprietors) even do worse than nothing, they avail themselves of the danger and distress of the people and the embarrassing situation of government to press upon the Lord Lieutenant schemes for relieving themselves from their encumbrances out of the consolidated fund. ... But all have the same end in view to shirk making any sacrifices and to reap a rich harvest from the public calamities.'

[79] See *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, I (764): Jones to Trevelyan, 22 Sept. 1846. It is interesting to note here that although Jones admitted that the drainage act required amendment, he did not endorse Bessborough's proposed policy as an obvious alternative to the act.

[80] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 21 Sept. 1846.

[81] Friday 25 Sept. 1846.

[82] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 22 Sept. 1846.

[83] See PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 24 Sept. 1846.

[84] See, for example, PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 23 Sept. 1846.

Labouchere in which the Chief Secretary demonstrated that he had been persuaded of the merits of Bessborough's case.[85]

It is difficult to gauge how the Prime Minister intended to play the matter in the forthcoming Cabinet, for although he had come around to Bessborough's line of thinking, he was acutely aware that Wood and the Home Secretary, Sir George Grey had not.[86] A clue to Russell's intentions can perhaps be discerned in a letter he sent to the First Lord of the Admiralty at this time. Russell was not a careless or casual correspondent; he did not flatter people or ask to be thrown flowers and his letters invariably left the recipient in little doubt as to what he intended. So, when he concluded his letter to Auckland with the passage that follows below, the First Lord of the Admiralty would have been in little doubt as to what Russell really thought or desired:

> I have summoned a Cabinet for Friday on the directions to be given to Lord Bessborough for applying the relief act. If you have no pressing engagement you may as well come, but it is not indispensable.[87]

As it happened Auckland did attend the Cabinet,[88]despite the short notice, but the impression given by Russell here is that his presence was not required or, in fact, desired.

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[85] See PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 24 Sept. 1846. In his letter to Russell, Labouchere emphasized that he did not support the Lord Lieutenant's proposal as a permanent measure and that Parliament would have to be called to sanction any alterations required by the proposal. Later he advised Russell to amend the Poor Employment Bill 'in the manner that I have suggested', in addition to the drainage bill and he suggested that the government could introduce a wastelands bill. Thus while Bessborough was correct in informing Russell that Labouchere had come around to the principle of state subsidies for private works, what he did not tell the Prime Minister was that they differed in their approach as to how this policy might be implemented. This difference was to cause a great deal of confusion later.

[86] See PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 22 Sept. 1846 and Sir G. Grey to Russell, 23 Sept. 1846. Gray's account of this particular period does not delve into great detail about the Cabinet meeting. See Gray, *Famine ,Land and Politics*, pp. 241-2.

[87] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Auckland, 23 Sept. 1846.

[88] Add. MS 43749 (Hobhouse Diary, Broughton Papers), 24, 25 Sept. 1846. The Cabinet ministers present were: Auckland, Clarendon, Cottenham, G. Grey, Hobhouse, Macaulay, Minto, Morpeth, Palmerston, Russell and Wood. Clanricarde was in Havre, see PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Clanricarde to Russell,

Indeed one can not help but wonder if the First Lord was hoping to secure a small, but select meeting of his colleagues, by ensuring that the Cabinet summons were issued at the last minute and thereafter by down playing the importance of the meeting. Earl Grey, Colonial Secretary 1846-52, certainly thought that Russell would have a 'very thin attendance'[89] in London and it is highly likely that this is exactly what Russell was hoping for.[90] In the event, ten other ministers were able to attend – 'a great muster for September'[91] – and the Prime Minister, despite making a strong but balanced case for Bessborough's Private Works proposal,[92] was unable to win the initiative and press the measure on his colleagues. As a result, Russell was forced to fall back upon fulfilling the Lord Lieutenant's earlier plea for a 'more defined statement' from Cottenham on what constituted a Public Work.[93]

Bessborough's own request was now to come back and haunt him and he was told, in no uncertain terms, that the Cabinet had come to a decision, 'upon the authority of the Lord Chancellor' that the Irish Attorney General was 'mistaken' in thinking that the words 'Public Works' in the act 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 107, were 'limited' by the provisions of the Grand Jury Acts. Bessborough was told that while the government was

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24 Sept. 1846. Earl Grey was at Howick, see GRE/V/C3/13 (Grey Journal): 29 Sept. 1846. Labouchere and Bessborough were in Ireland, Campbell was on his estate in Roxburghshire, see M. S. Hardcastle (ed.), *Life Of John, Lord Campbell* (2 Vols., London, 1881), ii, 214 and Lansdowne was away from London. There is no evidence that Russell wanted Auckland, who was a Cabinet moderate, to lend him his support at the meeting.

[89] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Earl Grey to Russell, 24 Sept. 1846.

[90] Russell certainly attempted to keep pre and post Cabinet discussions to a minimum, see GRE/B105 (Grey Papers): Wood to Grey, 27 Sept. 1846.

[91] J/19/8/10 (Morpeth Diary): 25 Sept. 1846. Morpeth only recorded ten ministers being present, compared to Hobhouse's eleven.

[92] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell Memorandum, 24 Sept. 1846.

[93] The day before the Lord Lieutenant had discovered that Russell had called a Cabinet to discuss the policy proposal, he had assured the Prime Minister that, although the Attorney General thought that the introduction of the word 'Public' into the act, carried 'a meaning which must be referred to the Grand Jury act', if he and Lord Cottenham could provide him with 'a definition' that would enable him to use 'a little discretion in the construction of the act', he would be satisfied. See PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers), Bessborough to Russell, 23 Sept. 1846.

willing 'to give the most liberal construction to the term 'Public Works'', they would insist that the works had a public utility 'beyond and independent of the advantage devised by the public from the improvement of personal property'.

On the separate subject of the Townlands, Bessborough was informed that provision had already been made, under article 23 of the act 1 and 2 William IV cap. 33, for counties 'to present sums for different divisions and to set forth in such presentment what part thereof shall be raised upon any Barony, half-Barony or Parish '. And although the government was willing to go to the House of Commons for an 'alteration' in the act to allow Barony sessions to raise part of the sum to be levied in particular Parishes or Electoral districts, for works in such Parishes, they would not be prepared to do this for the Townland divisions.[94]

Although Bessborough did not do as well as some of his Cabinet colleagues believed,[95] the compromise forced upon the Castle by Russell did not fall far short of what the Lord Lieutenant had requested. Indeed with the exception of the promise of a legislative alteration to favor the Irish Townlands, the Prime Minister had managed, rather creatively, to find a way of complying with the 'spirit' of Bessborough's proposal, without the recourse of an immediate meeting of Parliament. If the Castle was itself now suitably flexible, Russell told Bessborough, he would 'be able to proceed'.[96] Nor did Russell close off all hope of meeting Bessborough's wishes, in the future, on the Townland question, and in the days following the meeting of the Cabinet the Prime

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[94] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 25 Sept. 1846 and Cabinet memorandum, 25 Sept. 1846. The Cabinet were also willing to make matching grants to the contributions for relief works made by the relief committees. While Bessborough was also informed that in 'some cases' he would be able to 'summon two or three parishes instead of a Barony'.

[95] Hobhouse, for example, was under the impression that Bessborough's proposal had been accepted, see Add. MS43749 (Hobhouse Diary, Broughton Papers), 24, 25 Sept. 1846.

[96] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 25 Sept. 1846.

Minister's resolve did begin to waver. Thus on 26 September he informed the Lord Lieutenant that if he was not 'satisfied' with the Cabinet's proposition, then he was still willing to listen to any observations that the Lord Lieutenant might have to make.[97] As will be seen, this indecision on the part of the Prime Minister was to be exploited by the Treasury.

Bessborough's nerve did not waver and on the receipt of the Cabinet's deliberations he lost no time in calling Brady,[98] Labouchere, Moore[99] and Redington into conference at the Vice Regal Lodge. The absence of Griffith and Jones at this conference is noteworthy and it is interesting that the Lord Lieutenant, despite what he knew about Russell's soft spot for reports from the horse's mouth, chose to limit the conference to his legal and political advisors, as opposed to the actual operators of the proposed new policy. It is possible that Bessborough may have simply wished to restrict the meeting to those of his advisors that had actually contributed to the proposal – Moore and Redington – as opposed to the officials who had merely given the measure their 'assent', which is perhaps why Griffith and Jones were excluded. The outcome of the meeting was a jointly signed memorandum[100] that was sent over to London with the man most implicated in the new proposal, Redington. The memorandum did not pull its punches:

> We feel it incumbent upon us to submit it as our opinion ... that in the present circumstances of Ireland we entertain the strongest apprehensions that unless modifications of the nature which were suggested by the Lord Lieutenant are

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[97] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 26 Sept. 1846. Russell, however, was adamant that the relief works should contain a public element and later that day he wrote to inform Bessborough that: 'George Grey says very truly that if Parliament were assembled and told that the private interests of Irish landlords were to be served by loans of public money no Government could withstand the shock' and he reminded the Lord Lieutenant that they were not yet out of the woods on this subject, as 'the Cabinet did not exactly, though in spirit, adopt my suggestion', see PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 26 Sept. 1846.

[98] The Lord Chancellor of Ireland.

[99] The Irish Attorney General.

[100] The memorandum was not signed by Redington.

> made without delay with regard to it, the most serious evils will ensue. ... We are satisfied that ... so vast an expenditure on works of a comparatively useless and unprofitable nature would be most prejudicial to its future and permanent interests. This opinion appears to us to be universally entertained by all persons here of intelligence and station.[101]

Bessborough, Brady, Labouchere and More not only censured the government here, they in effect issued a challenge, the consequences of such a rebellion at the Castle were potentially far more serious for the government than the subtly alluded to 'evils', that the Castle authorities prophesised would follow from the act 9 and 10 Victoria cap.107. Yet the most extraordinary revelation was still to come.

Bessborough's desire for 'a definition' that would enable him 'to use a little discretion in the construction of the act'[102] had been met by Russell; Moore's objections had been sidelined; and the Lord Lieutenant had been told to get on with it. However it appears as if Bessborough himself had not been playing it straight all along, for the Castle memorandum concluded with a striking admission:

> We think it right to add that it seems to us that there is no real difference of opinion between the Lord Chancellor of England and the Attorney General for Ireland upon the meaning of the term 'Public Works' – nor is the Attorney General aware that he ever entertained or expressed an opinion that the meaning of 'Public Works' under the 10 Victoria c. 107 was strictly confined to those enumerated in the Grand Jury Act.[103]

In signing this memorandum Bessborough effectively signaled to the Prime Minister that he had either deliberately misrepresented the advice of the Attorney General, or that he had simply misunderstood it. Either way, it was a striking admission to make and it

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[101] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough, Brady, Labouchere and Moore memorandum, 27 Sept. 1846.
[102] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 23 Sept. 1846.
[103] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough, Brady, Labouchere and Moore memorandum, 27 Sept. 1846.

certainly left the Lord Lieutenant in a weakened position.[104] Russell did not take long to pick up on this admission and three days later informed Bessborough that he had clearly 'mis-understood' the Attorney General and that, as a result, he had been reported as sending deputations seeking his advice on this issue away under an incorrect impression.[105] But if Russell was rather restrained in his rebuke, the Chief Secretary was somewhat more stringent in his condemnation of the Lord Lieutenant and his comments on the matter are certainly revelatory of how Bessborough had presented the subject at the conference.

'I am not surprised at the mistake you made about our Attorney General's opinion', Labouchere told Russell on 1 October for, as he went on to say, having read the newspaper reports 'of Lord Bessborough's answer to the agricultural society of Dublin', he believed that the Lord Lieutenant had spoken 'without sufficient warrant'.[106] What Bessborough had clearly not done during the conference was to inform Moore, Brady, Redington and Labouchere that the reason why the Cabinet had made a mistake about the Attorney General's opinion was that Bessborough had informed Russell that Moore's opinion was a principal impediment to his progress.[107] And so, in the Autumn of 1846 the government found itself in a situation where its executive officers in Ireland either did not

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[104] It certainly calls into question the 'assent' Bessborough reported Jones and Griffith to give to the proposal.
[105] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 30 Sept. 1846.
[106] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 1 Oct. 1846. Although Labouchere did generously concede that the Lord Lieutenant could have been 'misreported.'
[107] Bessborough did produce an explanation, of sorts, see PRO 30/22/5G (Russell Papers) f. 226: Bessborough to Russell, undated: 'There has been some mistake as to what the attorney general said, and what I said in consequence to the agricultural deputation. He never gave an opinion on the question but in conversation with me and Labouchere in speaking of some works, he left us under the impression that such was his opinion. It has however been all cleared up.'

fully understand each other, or else were pursuing a deliberate policy of concealed antagonism.[108]

Redington was dispatched to London to seek a resolution of the matter. On Monday 28 September, the Under-Secretary arrived into a capital where Cabinet ministers were scarce. Wood had returned to Hickleton, Russell was dining and discussing potatoes with Peel and Morpeth at Windsor[109] and so Sir George Grey was left to receive Redington without the assistance of his Cabinet colleagues. Fortunately the Home Secretary could rely upon Trevelyan to back him up and the Assistant Secretary gave Redington 'a great deal of sound political economy'[110] before the Under-Secretary was allowed to make his proposal. Grey did not see how 'such a proposal could be made to Parliament' but, in order to ensure that the Cabinet was clear about what it was the Castle proposed to do, he advised that a draft of the amended bill should be drawn up in Dublin.[111] The Home Secretary then pushed Redington to provide further details as to the nature of the works that the Castle envisaged sanctioning, but all the Under-Secretary could now come up with was that the works were to be limited to those associated with drainage.[112]

Redington had to wait until 29 September to see the Prime Minister who, because of engagements at Windsor Castle,[113] was not able to devote much time to the Irish envoy when he arrived in London. As a result, he was obliged to send him away 'without

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[108] It is also worth remembering that, after this date, Labouchere was not averse to spreading damaging gossip about the Lord Lieutenant when he was in England. See, for example, Morpeth's account of the domestic arrangements at the Vice-Regal court: J/19/8/13 (Morpeth Diary), 28 Oct. 1846.
[109] J/19/8/13 (Morpeth Diary): 28 Sept. 1846.
[110] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): G. Grey to Russell, 28 Sept. 1846.
[111] Ibid.
[112] A4.58 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): G. Grey to Wood, 30 Sept. 1846. Grey incorrectly refers to the Redington conference occurring on a Sunday in this letter.
[113] RA, Queen Victoria's Journal: 29 Sept. 1846 and J/19/8/13 (Morpeth Diary, Castle Howard Papers): 29 Sept. 1846.

instructions'[114] but he did promise the Lord Lieutenant that he would hold a Cabinet upon the subject on Thursday 1 October and until then, he advised the Lord Lieutenant to consider Redington's 'own proposition' upon the subject, which he considered to be 'a great improvement'.[115] Whether Redington had been in possession of this new proposal when he met with the Home Secretary but had omitted to divulge its exact details, or whether the Under-Secretary had pulled it together on the basis of his conference with Grey and Trevelyan, remains unclear. However, it is interesting to note that the views of Griffith, Larcom and Jones on the subject were, again, nowhere to be seen and the Prime Minister identified this proposal as being very much Redington's own.[116]

Russell's promise of a last minute Cabinet on the matter demands attention. For the Prime Minister, by acting in such a high handed way, effectively barred many of his colleagues from attending what promised to be a crucial meeting in terms of the government's future Irish relief policy. Again, the Prime Minister's actions here appear far from incidental. Thus Wood acknowledged the receipt of Redington's paper in a letter sent to the Chief Secretary on Wednesday 30 September,[117] on the same day that he was to receive Russell's note informing him of a Cabinet meeting on 1 October.[118] The Chancellor appeared perplexed by the last minute nature of the Cabinet meeting and expressed some surprise that 'no summons for a Cabinet' had been issued before.[119] Nevertheless he promised Russell that he would put himself on the next train down to

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[114] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 29 Sept. 1846.
[115] Ibid.
[116] It was certainly in Redington's hand. See A4.186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Labouchere, 30 Sept. 1846.
[117] A4.186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Labouchere, 30 Sept. 1846.
[118] A4.186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Russell, 30 Sept. 1846.
[119] Ibid.

London in order to attend the meeting;[120] although he felt compelled to inform Russell that it would 'not be right to come to a decision on such a point without ample notice to the members of the Cabinet.'[121]

Wood clearly felt that Russell was forcing the pace of events in order to achieve an outcome that would be acceptable to Dublin Castle and in many respects this would not be an unfair diagnosis of the Prime Minister's actions. In the event, if this was what Russell had been hoping for, he was to be disappointed. For the Cabinet was attended by as many as eight of his colleagues and the Chancellor came close to complicating matters by having his own way on the subject of a more extensive meeting.[122] Fortunately for the First Lord, Morpeth intervened at a critical moment in the meeting and saved Russell from falling foul of Wood's desire for further, fuller, meetings of the Cabinet[123] and the ministers present resolved to come to a decision upon the subject at the next day's meeting.

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[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid. Wood's real feelings were expressed more openly in a letter to his brother-in-law, written on 30 Sept: 'I cannot entirely acquiesce in a decision of Cabinet adverse to my own opinion without a full meeting being given': Wood to Grey, 30 Sept. 1846.

[122] Morpeth thought that there were 'about 10' ministers present, see J19/8/13 (Morpeth Diary): 1 Oct, 1845. According to Wood there were 'only 9', see GRE/B105/4/62-69 (Grey Papers): Wood to Grey, 4 Oct. 1846. In his letter to the Earl Grey Wood indicated that, aside from Russell and himself, Auckland, Cottenham, Macaulay, Morpeth and Palmerston were present. His letter to G. Grey, dated 4 October indicates that G. Grey was not present at the meeting, see A4.186 (Hickleton Papers microfilm): Wood to G. Grey, 4 Oct. 1846. While Hobhouse missed both meetings, see Add. MS 43749 (Hobhouse Diary, Broughton Papers), 2 Oct. 1846 and Clanricarde could not attend, see PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Clanricarde to Russell, 2 Oct. 1846. Campbell was still on his estate in Roxburghshire, see Hardcastle (ed.), *Life Of John, Lord Campbell*, ii, 214 -15 and the Earl Grey was still at Howick, see Earl Grey Diary (Grey Papers): 2, 4, 5 Oct. 1846. Lord Clarendon was at Woburn and then the Grove and complained that 'the notices did not reach me in time', see PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Clarendon to Russell, 2 Oct. 1846. Lansdowne and Minto remain unaccounted for.

[123] Wood put Morpeth's intervention down to the fact that he knew 'in part Bessborough's feelings on the subject'. See GRE/B105/4/62-69 (Grey Papers): Wood to Grey 4 Oct. 1846 and while Morpeth certainly could be classed as an ally of Labouchere and Redington, see J/19/8/12 (Morpeth Diary): 30 June and 3 July 1846, it appears as if his close contact with the Prime Minister in the days prior to the Cabinet and his natural loyalty to Russell provided the principal impetus for his intervention. See J/19/8/13 (Morpeth Diary): 28, 29 Sept. 1846 and Add. MS 43749 (Hobhouse Diary, Broughton Papers), 11 Nov. 1846: 'I asked Morpeth whether he approved of bringing forward such a bill now [the Irish Franchise bill] ... he said "no – but don't oppose it here, Lord John is for it." '

Although Wood was not to win this particular battle, he worked hard to win the initiative from Russell by presenting his Cabinet colleagues with another policy option. This proposal had come from the Board Of Works and made provision for the one million pounds that had been allocated to Ireland, under the latest British drainage act, to be advanced under the terms of the old Irish drainage act.[124] The proposal had been sanctioned by Labouchere[125] and had been approved by Trevelyan on his return from visiting the Irish Chief Secretary's Somerset estate on 30 September.[126] It was immediately attractive to Wood because, as he saw it, the departure it involved from the law was 'trifling'.[127] Although the Board of Works may have not intended to present the government with a policy to rival that being pursued by Bessborough, Labouchere's endorsement of the measure certainly ensured that the Lord Lieutenant's policy, which supposedly had the 'assent' of Griffith and Jones, had to compete in the cabinet with a rival measure which came direct from the Board of Works and had the advantage of being endorsed by the Treasury. If the Board's loyalties to the Lord Lieutenant were not in question here, Labouchere's certainly were.

Russell managed to maintain the initiative in his Cabinet by startling his colleagues with the 'formidable announcement' that the government could not expect the Lord Lieutenant to remain in office if they did not accede to his wishes upon this matter. He also told them that if Bessborough went he could not see how he could continue to hold

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[124] The proposal also maintained the favourable terms of repayment offered by the government under the new British act. See GRE/B105/4/62-69 (Grey Papers): Wood to Grey, 4 Oct. 1846. See *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, I (764), p.146: Jones to Trevelyan, 21 Oct. 1846 for a reference by Jones to the proposal.
[125] GRE/B105/4/62-69 (Grey Papers): Wood to Grey, 4 Oct. 1846.
[126] MSS Film 1186-1192 Dep. 98 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Labouchere, 30 Sept. 1846.
[127] GRE/B105/4/62-69 (Grey Papers): Wood to Grey, 4 Oct. 1846.

the seals of state.[128] Unsurprisingly the Cabinet fell quickly into line and Bessborough, who had refused to send over a skeleton of an act containing the requisite amendments (as he merely desired the word 'public' to be removed from the act)[129] was asked to accept an amended version of Redington's proposal[130] and Wood had to content himself with tabling those amendments. The details of the amendments were worked out with Thomas Macaulay, Paymaster General 1846-48, and Russell in Wood's rooms after the first Cabinet and the Chancellor was soon willing to concede his requirement of a fuller meeting of the Cabinet. He did so on the proviso that the Irish executive agreed that all that would be done was to 'apply in any way, under any act, to drainage only and under certain limitations, the £1000 000 voted for drainage'.[131]

At the next meeting of the Cabinet, the Prime Minister was persuaded not to send Bessborough a paper he had drawn up on the subject;[132] but instead was persuaded that he should inform the Lord Lieutenant of the restrictions which the Cabinet felt necessary to include in the proposal and to ask Bessborough to 'send over his mode of carrying out his scheme'.[133] These restrictions, which comprised limiting the non-Public Works to those of drainage; restricting the sums to be advanced for such works to the one million pounds voted under the recent British drainage act and setting the cut-off date for works sanctioned under the act 9 and 10 Victoria cap.107 to 15 August 1847, were

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[128] Ibid.
[129] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 30 Sept. 1846.
[130] However Russell was still keen to ensure that Redington's proposal was acceptable to the Lord Lieutenant, which it was. See, PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): 1, 3 Oct. 1846.
[131] GRE/B105/4/62-69 (Grey Papers): Wood to Grey, 4 Oct. 1846.
[132] Ibid. This paper is likely to be the paper enclosed in Russell's first letter to the Lord Lieutenant dated 2 October, 1846, see PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 2 Oct. 1846.
[133] GRE/B105/4/62-69 (Grey Papers): Wood to Grey, 4 Oct. 1846.

communicated to Bessborough in a letter from Russell that day.[134] The Lord Lieutenant was then told in no uncertain terms to 'proceed now without further references to us'.[135]

In effect, as Wood was to inform the Chief Secretary,[136] what the government had done was to split the difference between the Board of Works' proposal and Reddington's scheme. They had done this by borrowing sections from each proposal to allow the Irish executive to employ the Townland division; to utilise the one million pounds allocated to Ireland for drainage works; and by ensuring that an undertaking was received from the presenting landowners to ensure that the drainage works would be 'a first charge upon the land improved'.[137]

While Gray does not believe this was the case with regard to the Townland division the second article of the restrictions drawn up by Russell for Bessborough, that Gray quotes in support of his argument, clearly states: 'The parish or electoral division may not form a good district, and therefore you may adopt Townlands if you think best' and Wood certainly informed Bessborough on 3 October that he had suggested the 'reinsertion of the word Townland.' In the event the Townland division was not adopted by the Irish government and the claims on the Castle executive to adopt this division were rejected. [138]

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[134] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 2 Oct. 1846.
[135] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 2 Oct. 1846.
[136] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Wood to Labouchere, 2 Oct. 1846. Although Wood did mention that he would have preferred to implement Labouchere and the Board's scheme in its entirety.
[137] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Russell's approved memorandum on Redington's proposal, Oct. 1846.
[138] See Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 242; PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 2 Oct. 1846; A4.186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Bessborough, 3 Oct. 1846; PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 17 Oct. 1846. For an explanation of why the Townland division was not adopted, see PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 1 Jan. 1847. The Commissioners of the Board of Works were certainly opposed to the adoption of the Townland division at this time. See *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, l (764), 146: Jones to Trevelyan, 21 Oct. 1846 and Mulvany's 'Poor Employment' memoranda, pp. 264-8.

The Labouchere Letter and the Townland question

On 3 October following a meeting with Bessborough, Moore and Redington, Labouchere dispatched an outline of their proposed alterations to the Poor Employment Act to the Prime Minister.[139] In a separate letter, Bessborough added the proviso that if the alterations were not understood, the government was not to 'pronounce an opinion upon it', without having an explanation from the Castle's Law advisers. [140] In the event this was exactly what Russell desired and Bessborough was informed that he should refer the matter to the Irish Chancellor, the Irish Attorney General and Redington.[141]

Wood, however, was not so easily satisfied and in a long letter directed Russell's attention to the fact that certain of the Castle's phrases such as 'Useful' and 'Reclamation of land' were pregnant with danger. Although he admitted that parts of the proposal amounted to 'nothing more, in practice, than an application from a proprietor under the existing drainage acts, excluding 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 101', he could not escape the conclusion that government would 'depart altogether' from its 'course', if it did not 'adhere to the presentment of works'.[142]

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[139] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 3 Oct. 1846.
[140] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 3 Oct. 1846. Russell was informed that 'may appear rather complicated'.
[141] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 4 Oct, 1846. Bessborough's next letter must have concerned the Prime Minister, for although the Lord Lieutenant had assured him that there could be 'no difficulty in applotting the rate upon a single proprietor in any electoral division under the drainage act 5. 6. Victoria ... and then making all proprietors and parties, subject to the provisions of the 9 and 10 Victoria', he nevertheless informed Russell that he fully intended, if Jones gave the go ahead, to 'screw' in a work, proposed by Fitzwilliam, into his scheme 'making him pay a large proportion' for that work. Unfortunately Bessborough did not specify what the work actually consisted of, but his reference to an attempt to 'screw' the work under the new proposal and the very fact that the case had been sent to Jones for his opinion could not have left Russell in a state of absolute security that his Lord Lieutenant was not about to upset the public/private work apple cart again. See PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 4 Oct. 1846. See also PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 7 Oct. 1846.
[142] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Wood to Russell, 7 Oct. 1846.

Wood's anxieties came to a head when the government received Bessborough's letter of 6 October[143] containing a copy of what was to become known as the Labouchere letter. This letter was sent by the Chief Secretary to Jones on 5 October and instructed the Commissioners to:

> Direct the officers acting under them in the respective counties to consider and report upon such works of a reproductive and permanent utility as may be presented in the manner hereinafter mentioned ...[144]

Following a conference with George Grey and Russell, Wood wrote to Bessborough and to Labouchere on 9 October, to inform them that the words issued to Jones, in Labouchere's name, were 'open to the construction that presentments may be made for works of private utility, repayment being charged on the electoral division'.[145] He went on to state that while the government was willing 'to give a large extension to public utility', the Treasury could not 'go beyond that'.[146]

Wood's fears were not unwarranted. For the *Labouchere letter*, despite calling for written undertakings for the repayment of individual drainage works,[147] made liberal use of phrases that were difficult to define precisely and as such, could only cause further upset. Thus works that were of a 'reproductive character', or that would prove to be 'profitable' or 'useful', were apparently encouraged by the Chief Secretary in this

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[143] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 6 Oct. 1846.
[144] See *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, 1 (764): Labouchere to Jones, 5 Oct. 1846.Four conditions were specified in the Letter, although only one related specifically to works of drainage.
[145] A4.186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Labouchere, 9 Oct. 1846.
[146] A4.186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Bessborough, 9 Oct. 1846. For the Labouchere letter's subsequent lack of success, see, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 243 and, 'Relief and Reconstruction', p. 116-7. For further information on the Treasury's deliberate policy of undermining the Chief Secretary's initiative see, MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 99 and 100 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 24 Oct., 3, 7 Dec. 1846 and B. 340 (Bessborough Papers): Wood to Labouchere, 5, 7 Dec. 1846 and Labouchere to Wood, 7 Dec. 1846. For the text of the Treasury Minute which 'sabotaged' the Labouchere Letter, see PRO T 64/362/B (Treasury Papers): Trevelyan to Board of Works, 1 Dec. 1846.
[147] The Labouchere Letter, article 4.

letter.[148] And it must have felt, at least to Wood, that the government were back in the position that they had found themselves in with the Castle in early September. Bessborough was able to move quickly to assuage some of the Chancellor's fears[149] But this stable state of affairs was not destined to last and on 19 October relations between the Treasury and the Castle were back to their former strained condition. The point of contention was a letter that Labouchere had written to the Primate (unfortunately this letter has not been traced) in which the Chief Secretary gave the impression that private drainage and subsoiling works, referred to in the fourth article of the Labouchere Letter, were 'to be presented for and levied by cess upon the lands drained without reference to the drainage acts'. Wood took this to mean that no written undertakings of repayment were to be obtained from the landowners who made presentments for specific works of drainage under the amended act and he told Bessborough that he thought that the letter promised something which was 'totally illegal'. Instead Bessborough was informed that if the Castle managed its 'private public works discreetly' and levied the rates accordingly, the only 'serious illegality' that would remain would be 'the presentment by baronial sessions for districts less than baronies'. Yet despite his plea for an answer – 'Pray let me hear from you on these points. ... I have never got an answer yet to any question which I have asked ... since you went to Ireland'– the Chancellor appears to have been disappointed, for no answer was forthcoming and he had to wait until the Cabinet met before he could tackle Labouchere on the subject.[150]

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[148] Ibid., article 3.

[149] See A4.186. (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Bessborough, 14 Oct. 1846. See also Wood's comments on Bessborough's 'Public Private Works' paper, A4.186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Bessborough, 16 Oct. 1846 and his comments to Grey: GRE/B105(Grey Papers): Wood to Grey, 15 Oct. 1846.

[150] See A4.186. (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Bessborough, 19 Oct. 1846.

The lack of communication between the Treasury and the Commissioners of the Board of Works on the subject is interesting. It is possible that as the Board had already presented the Treasury with an alternative proposal which the Treasury believed could be make to work, neither Trevelyan nor Wood saw any reason to associate the Commissioners with the policies emanating from members of the Castle executive. After all, separate policies had emanated from both bodies before. Wood also appears to have been happy with the Board at this time and took the trouble of writing to Jones on 24 November to inform him that he had 'entirely approved' of 'every step' the Commissioner had taken and to remind him that: "the main check upon the folly and weakness of too many of the Irish proprietors must be found in the discretion and firmness of the Commissioners of the Board of Works."[151]

Trevelyan certainly did not reprimand Jones for the actions of his superiors, but informed Jones that he intended to prepare a minute sanctioning the Board's plan for 'making the Irish mill grind up the Drainage million,' and invited Jones to give him 'without reserve' his views on the question and on 'other similar points,' including whether the responsibility of the proprietors to maintain their poor should be changed from electoral divisions to Townlands.[152]

Russell's autumn meetings of Cabinet[153] were primarily concerned with constitutional matters such as when a meeting of Parliament should be called and whether the ports should be opened by an Order in Council.[154] Nevertheless a sufficient level of Irish business was got through to warrant Hobhouse (President of the Board of Control,

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[151] A4.1846 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Jones, 24 Oct. 1846.
[152] MSS Film 1186-1192 Dep. 99 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 24 Oct. 1846.
[153] The Cabinet held meetings on 28, 29, 31, October and 2, 4, 7, 11, 16, 18, 21 November 1846, see Add. MS 43749 (Hobhouse Diary, Broughton Papers), and J/19/8/13 (Morpeth Diary).
[154] Add. MS 43749 (Hobhouse Diary, Broughton Papers), 28, 29 Oct. 1846.

1846-52), Auckland and Campbell (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1846-50) crying away from the fourth meeting of the Cabinet early, as they were 'heartily tired' with Irish matters.[155] The Irish business in question mostly concerned the reading of three heads of bills concerning the Irish wastelands, the enlargement of the parliamentary franchise and the regulation of the Irish corporations.[156] But it soon became apparent to the Cabinet that, on the question of Irish relief, Labouchere and Wood were at cross purposes. As a result and after lengthy discussion, they were granted the authority to resolve the matter privately and this probably provided a good forum for the Chancellor to clear up some of his concerns over the Labouchere letter.[157] But if the Chief Secretary returned to Ireland in full agreement with Wood,[158] he was soon to discover that the Lord Lieutenant had different views altogether.

On 9 November the Lord Lieutenant wrote to Russell from Bessborough lamenting the fact that despite returning to his estate for a little rest, he found that he could expect '18 or 20 every day at dinner for the next fortnight' and that, even as he wrote, Richard Monkton Milnes (MP for Pontefract, 1837-1863), Henry Warburton (MP for Kendal, 1843-1847) and Sir Lucius O'Brien (MP for County Clare, 1847-1852) were in residence and a visit from his cousin the fifth Eral Fitzwilliam was in the offing. O'Brien's visit, in particular, appears to have been of significance. Although Bessborough informed the Prime Minister, in his next letter, that he was 'bothered to death ... by this Townland and Electoral division agitation';[159] and although he confided in Labouchere that he could not see how the Townland presentments could 'in any way be made comformable to the

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[155] Ibid., 2 Nov. 1846.
[156] Ibid., 31 Oct. 1846, see also J/19/8/13 (Morpeth Diary): 31 Oct. 1846. In addition Morpeth recorded that the 'Colleges' question was discussed at the Cabinet.
[157] Add. MS 43749 (Hobhouse Diary, Broughton Papers), 31 Oct. 1846.
[158] Labouchere was back in Dublin by 6 Nov., see PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): 6 Nov. 1846.
[159] PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 14 Nov. 1846.

provisions under the 9th and 10th Victoria'; he still felt compelled to state and summarise O'Brien's particular grievances with the Electoral division for Labouchere's benefit and concluded his letter by highlighting the principal defects of the government's system.[160]

Bessborough, like Labouchere, had resisted the selection of the Townland division for presentments up to this point.[161] But his views on the matter had started to thaw and if O'Brien provided something of an impetus for this alteration, then the Prime Minister unwittingly provided a further prod. In a letter written on 13 November Russell informed Bessborough, in no uncertain terms, that he was to 'seriously consider in what form the Labour Rate Act, or whatever else it may be called, should be put when Parliament meets'.[162]

Thereafter Russell did not let up in his attempt to force a policy proposal for the relief of the Irish poor out of his Lord Lieutenant and in a letter dated 17 November he returned to the question in a more strident fashion. Bessborough was told that the Cabinet was about to consider 'what should be the system to replace that which will terminate in August next' and that they would be 'glad of any assistance from you' on the subject. Besssborough was then rather casually informed that Wood had prepared a paper on the subject and that although the Prime Minister had not yet looked at the paper, he found

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[160] Ibid., Bessborough to Labouchere, 14 Nov. 1846.

[161] It should be remembered that the Cabinet gave the Irish executive the opportunity to employ the smaller Townland division in the first week of Oct., but they deliberately decided not to employ this unit. The Castle probably acted on the advice of Jones here, but if not, the Lord Lieutenant and the Chairman were certainly in agreement that the measure would 'multiply [the] business enormously' and increase the Board's labours 'beyond calculation', see *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, l (764): Jones to Trevelyan, 21 Oct. 1846 and PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 14 Nov. 1846.

[162] PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 13 Nov. 1846. This letter followed the Prime Minister's request for Bessborough's views on 'the general measures to be proposed for Ireland'. In an incomplete and unsent letter, dated 6 Nov., Russell had gone further by informing Bessborough that: 'there will be no disposition in Parliament to sanction large advances for public works beyond the month of Aug. next. I am not disposed to dispute the justice of such a decision, or to attempt to revive for next year the present Poor Employment Act 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 107', see PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 11 and 6 Nov. 1846.

himself agreeing with Wood's 'general views', as expressed in a recent letter to Labouchere.[163]

Bessborough drafted his proposal two days later. The proprietors were to be compelled to hold a Barony court or session that would ascertain the level of destitution in the relevant locality and would then establish a rate, for one year, to fund the relief of that destitution 'much as a Parish in England would do'.[164] But the Lord Lieutenant's letter reached London too late and the Prime Minister was not able to consider Bessborough's proposal until after the Cabinet had dispersed, by which time the ground had shifted and the extension of the Irish Poor Law was back on the agenda.[165]

This question had first been raised in July 1846 during the first weeks of Russell's ministry and immediately proved divisive for the Cabinet. Lord Lansdowne (Lord President of the Council, 1846-1852) had persuaded the editor of *The Edinburgh Review,* Macvey Napier, to include an article to be written by the eminent political economist, Nassau Senior, on the Irish Poor Law. By 5 August, Senior had written that article and had sent it to Lansdowne and Monteagle (Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1835-1839), for their opinion, but he lost no time in informing Napier that 'an anarchical current is telling against the Irish landlords' and in revealing that 'the Cabinet is not unanimous.' Indeed Senior described how Lansdowne and Monteagle were in 'the utmost anxiety' on the subject and how he thought that Sir Charles Buller (MP for Liskeard, 1832-1848, Judge Advocate General, 1846-1847 and Chief Poor Law Commissioner for England, 1847-1848) 'spoke the opinions of some members of the Cabinet when he asked for out door

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[163] PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 17 Nov. 1846.
[164] PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 19 Nov. 1846.
[165] Ibid.: Russell to Bessborough, 22 Nov. 1846. The Cabinet met on 21 Nov. and according to the Earl Grey, there was 'a good deal of discussion upon Wood's paper as to the measures which should be adopted for Ireland', see GRE/V/C3/13 (Grey Journal): 21 Nov. 1846 and also J19/8/13 (Morpeth Diary): 21 Nov. 1846.

relief.' By 14 August, the political economist was in a state of some agitation for, as he informed Napier, he had had a long talk with Macaulay on the subject and had found him quite opposed to his own views. Yet, what truly worried Senior was that Lansdowne and Monteagle reported that Macaulay was not alone in holding these views and that if the matter came to a head and the 'attempt to extend the Irish poor law' was made, Senior was certain that '3 at least of the members of the present Cabinet will retire.' By 22 August, Senior's worries had subsided, for despite believing Macaulay and Grey to be in favour of such an extension he did not believe that 'there is any difference of opinion between Lord John, Lord Lansdowne and Lord Clarendon ...except that Lord John is not perhaps, as eager to stop that measure as I think he ought to be.' Lord John gave his opinion on the article in early September – he believed that, with some alterations, the article was 'well calculated' to cure 'the blindness which would induce Parliament to introduce all the toads and vipers of the English poor law into Ireland' – and the article appeared in the October edition of *The Edinburgh Review.*[166]

Wood obviously now thought that the time was right to reintroduce the matter and he chose to do so at a meeting of Cabinet from which the Irish executive was conspicuously absent. This is not to say that Bessborough was unaware of the fact that the subject was on the horizon. Indeed he had admitted to Russell in the first week of November that 'something like the Poor Law of England' would eventually be established in Ireland,[167] but the Lord Lieutenant was determined to put that day off for as long as possible. He therefore lost no time in writing to Labouchere to ask him to request

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[166] [166] See British Library, Add. Ms. 34626 (Macvey Napier papers): Lansdowne to Napier, 3 Jul. 1846; Senior to Napier, 5 Aug., 14 Aug., 22 Aug. 1846; Russell to Napier, 8 Sep. 1846 and 'Letters to the Right Honorable Lord John Russell, on the Expediency of Enlarging the Irish Poor-Law, to the full extent of the Poor-Law of England. By G. Poulett Scrope, Esq. M.P.', *The Edinburgh Review*, October 1846, CLXX, pp. 267-314.

[167] PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 3 Nov. 1846.

Larcom and Griffith to mature his Baronial court plan as the 'only way of relieving us from a new Poor Law', adding - almost as a postscript - that the tax raised 'might be allocated to the different Townlands'.[168]

This proposal must have come as a shock to Labouchere who had been persuaded of the serious dangers associated with adopting the Townland unit after reading a paper that had been drawn up by Mulvany[169] which he later offered to forward to Russell on 13 November.[170] Initially Labouchere was more than content to keep out of the matter and simply congratulated Russell on the fact that he and Bessborough were considering 'that most difficult subject',[171] but he soon found that he could not maintain a policy of non-intervention on this question for long. Indeed, once he had found that Larcom was of the opinion that although the division was 'inapplicable to the present Poor Employment Bill', it was nevertheless still 'applicable to an improved system',[172] he lost no time in forwarding a copy of another memorandum, presumably reiterating the dangers of adopting the Townland division, to the Prime Minister.[173]

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[168] B 336 (Bessborough Papers): Bessborough to Labouchere, 23 Nov. 1846.

[169] Although Mulvany's paper, entitled 'Memoranda on Proposition to Reduce the Unit of Taxation to Townlands' was dated 22 Oct., Labouchere did not get wind of it until the second week of November. See *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, l (764), pp. 263-4: Jones to Trevelyan, 15 Nov. 1846. To some extent Mulvany was preaching to the converted, for as early as 17 October the Chief Secretary had informed Russell that he was 'inclined to resistance' on the Townland question. See PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 17 Oct. 1846.

[170] PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 13 Nov. 1846. Mulvany, in a third memorandum on the question written on 12 November, outlined the existing ways in which presentments could be made for drainage by individual proprietors or farmers for their own estates, see *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, l (764), p. 267: 'Memoranda Number 3 Poor Employment Townland Question', 12 Nov. 1846. For further information on Mulvany's background and for a brief outline of his work at the Board of Works, see O. Schmidt-Rutsch, 'William Thomas Mulvany Ein irischer Pragmatiker und Visionar im Ruhrgebiet 1806-1885' (Ruhr-Universitat Bochum, Ph.D. thesis 2001), pp. 23–110.

[171] PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 28 Nov. 1846.

[172] MS 7745 (Larcom Papers): Labouchere to Larcom, 30 Nov. 1846.

[173] PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 1 Dec. 1846. This memorandum had been drawn up by Labouchere's private secretary 'in conjunction with one of the members of the Board of Works'. The author has been unable to trace the paper.

Larcom's opinion on the viability of theTownland division and Bessborough's belief that he could rely upon Griffith and Larcom to mature his proposals is noteworthy. Jones had expressed clear opinions against the Townland division and the Lord Lieutenant was perhaps understandably reluctant to approach him on this subject.[174] Mulvany, who was known to be hostile to the adoption of the division, also appears to have been increasingly at odds with the way the wind was blowing at the Board. In a memorandum on 'Poor Employment' he revealed himself to be an advocate of the 'Labouchere Letter' at a time when his fellow Commissioners had their doubts as to the workings of the Letter.[175] In another memorandum he demonstrated an antipathy towards fostering a dependence of landlords and tenants upon the government for the 'laying out, and execution of their petty farm works' which would suggest that Griffith's subsequent circular addressing this issue[176] would not have met with his approval.[177] However while Mulvany's views held sway with Labouchere, Larcom's and Griffith's views clearly carried more weight with Bessborough and the Lord Lieutenant obviously had cause to believe that the two Commissioners would be receptive to his proposals. There were clearly significant differences at the Board on this question.

Despite having put Labouchere at his ease by informing him that they were both of the same mind on this question,[178] by 2 December Russell appeared to be more sympathetic on aspects of Bessborough's plan.[179] Nevertheless he still requested that the

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[174] See, *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, I (764), 146: Jones to Trevelyan, 21 Oct. 1846.
[175] See Commissioners of the Board of Works to Labouchere, 23 Oct. 1846 quoted in Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction', p. 117, FN 2.
[176] Circular 38.
[177] See *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, I (764), 264: 'Memoranda On Proposition to Reduce the Unit of Taxation to Townlands', article 25.
[178] PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 2 Dec. 1846.
[179] The Lord Lieutenant had forwarded further details of his proposal from Bessborough, on 1 Dec. These included allowing the proprietor of each Townland to relieve himself from the cess or tax by providing

Lord Lieutenant delay coming to any decision on the various proposals until Bessborough had spoken with Clanricarde, who was due to arrive in Ireland in the following week and who knew Russell's mind on these matters.[180] But just as Bessborough was beginning to gain the support of Russell for his proposals Wood seized back the initiative. The Chancellor had realised that in order to convince the Cabinet on the question of the Irish Poor Law, he would need to concentrate his energies on certain members of the government who had traditionally opposed any meddling with the Poor Law in that land. One such member was Lord Lansdowne and the Chancellor set off for Bowood on 8 December with this end in mind.[181]

Wood's strategy appears to have been successful and two days later he was able to inform Russell that he thought that he was 'doing so much good in talking matters over with Lord Lansdowne'.[182] Thereafter the Chancellor lost no time in writing to Bessborough to inform him that while they had been able to accede to three existing Irish

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employment within his own Townland; and the Barony court making provision to employ the destitute, in the different Townlands, that had not been employed by various proprietors, 'in reduction of the tax proposed to be placed upon the Townlands of the barony'. Despite initially informing Bessborough that he had not sufficiently thought through his plan, the Prime Minister was soon able to inform the Lord Lieutenant that: 'it might be possible to provide for the labourers on the estates of the solvent by such a tax as you mention, and for the remainder by a public and national tax'. Although he warned that this would be 'most difficult to work out'. See PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 1 Dec. 1846 and Russell to Bessborough, 3 Dec. 1846 and postscript.

[180] PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 3 Dec. 1846.

[181] Wood was certainly expecting to discuss Irish matters while at Bowood with Lord Devon. Ibid., Wood to Russell, 7 Dec. 1846.

[182] Nevertheless he revealed that he was worried that the imminent arrival of Clanricarde at Bowood might hinder his progress. Ibid., Wood to Russell, 10 Dec. 1846. Wood informed Russell that he thought that it would be advisable for him to sit in on Lord Lansdowne's meeting with Clanricarde. The Chancellor was more forthright in a letter to Lord Grey and wrote to inform him that Lord Lansdowne was 'getting very right on Irish matters' but that he feared that 'his principles and his pocket' might be 'considerably at variance', see GRE/B105 (Grey Papers): Wood to Grey, 10 Dec. 1846. Clarendon, Devon, Lansdowne and Wood all attended the meeting at Bowood and although Wood feared the repercussions of Clanricarde's visit, in the event the Postmaster General did not make it to Bowood, see PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Clanricarde to Russell, 17 Dec. 1846.

policy proposals,[183] the ministers present at Bowood had decided that they would not be able to:

> accede to the request that Townlands shall support their own poor only or that a proprietor engaging to employ his own poor on improving his own estate ... [might] exempt himself from rating for the maintenance or rather the employment of destitute persons within the district

Bessborough was also told that in addition to encouraging the sale of the encumbered estates in Ireland, facilitating emigration and making a provision for the warden of each Electoral district to provide immediate relief for the distressed in their area, the ministers gathered at Bowood had also decided that:

> in order to prevent imposition by ablebodied labourers, the persons employing them on relief works ought to have some test of destitution, which test is obviously an offer of being received in to the workhouse.[184]

The Prime Minister also took the opportunity at this time to spell out to Bessborough exactly what was required from him and he was duly reminded that he had failed to answer several queries relating to his proposed bill and that, until he had done so, Russell would not be 'disposed to admit the exemption from rate to those who take care of labourers in their own Townlands'. Russell then moved swiftly on to a discussion of various Poor Law matters and ended his harangue by sketching out the bare bones of the government's proposals for the Lord Lieutenant to give his comments.

Stated simply, Russell's general philosophy was to introduce measures 'distinguishing poor relief from measures of improvement and again dividing those into measures of Public and Private improvement'. As such, he intended to submit bills providing for an 'extension of the Poor Law to the relief, whether in or out of the

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[183] State advances for estate improvement, drainage (under the supervision of the Board of Works) and the reclamation of the wastelands

[184] A4.186 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Wood to Bessborough, 10 Dec. 1846.

workhouse, of the sick and infirm and poor;'[185] for the public drainage of large districts and the consolidation of the drainage and improvement acts; for the reclamation of Irish wastelands; the improvement of the fisheries; for emigration and finally to introduce 'measures to enable Barony sessions to employ at their own discretion the able bodied labourers in their districts', in a manner that would be agreed upon when Bessborough's bill 'for the purpose' had been drawn up.[186] The Viceroy interpreted this letter as an instruction to have 'an indemnity bill' drawn up as a 'temporary measure' [187] and a bill 'for appointing Barony courts with the power to levy rates for the employment of the destitute without aid from England' as a permanent measure[188] and set to work on these bills with Clanricarde, Labouchere, Redington, Jones and Griffith on 15 December.[189]

Jones made the following report to Trevelyan within a week of this meeting:

> Mr. Griffith and myself attended and discussed the several Heads of a Paper which His Excellency had prepared, this was handed to Mr. Griffith who was put into communication with Mr. Redington and the Attorney General, the bill is now preparing: I must state that two bills are contemplated one to carry out the relief until August next the other to be a permanent measure. This latter if properly prepared ought to meet the difficulties during the period over which the act c. 107 is to extend: Tomorrow we shall I hope bring our ideas to maturity so as to be able to send you what we consider best. It is a very difficult subject and it was only this morning that I was aware that Out Door relief would be allowed as such.[190]

The impression Jones's letter gives here is that he and Griffith were feeling their way forward at this time and that Bessborough was driving the policy. This letter can

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[185] Significantly the word 'helpless' which had appeared before the word 'poor' was deleted.
[186] PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 8 Dec. 1846.
[187] That would also carry on the present relief bill with the amendments and some slight necessary modifications to 15 Aug. 1847
[188] Ibid., Bessborough to Russell, 15 Dec. 1846.
[189] Ibid. In his letter to Russell written the next day, the Lord Lieutenant revealed how the various ministers and policy advisors, assembled by Bessborough, had warmly endorsed Griffith's proposal that meetings under the temporary act; 'should be called in electoral divisions if parties chose for the reproductive works only [and] in the barony sessions for the unproductive works', in order to ensure greater cooperation between landlords and proprietors, see PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 16 Dec. 1846.
[190] PRO T64/362/B (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 21 Dec. 1846.

therefore be seen as something of a warning for Trevelyan that a new policy proposal was about to be issued and can also be viewed as a tacit request for an indemnity if things went badly wrong. The following day Jones informed Trevelyan that while a decision had not yet been made on the matter,[191] his own mind was made up:

> My own opinion is strongly in favour of the employment of the guardians of the Poor Law Unions, with members to be associated with them by appointment from the Lord Lieutenant. The works to be executed under the directions of the County Surveyor, this functionary should be placed on a different footing. He should be an Officer of the Board of Works, with local assistants ... As to the assessment part of the plan, that must come after not before at any rate the Chancellor must make up his mind to be called upon for advances until time twelvemonths ... [192]

That view was different from the plan that Griffith was maturing for the Lord Lieutenant. Indeed Bessborough deeply distrusted the Poor Law guardians and Jones' own view of the matter demonstrates why Jones was at one remove from the policy making process that Griffith was involved with. What is also interesting is that the proposal indicates that Jones was advocating a system of relief in late December 1846 which would result in more, not less, involvement for the Board in future Irish relief efforts. The significance of this proposition will be apparent later, but in December 1846 it was lost on Trevelyan, for by this time the Assistant Secretary's attention was keenly focused on a circular issued by the Board of Works – Circular 38.

Circular 38 was an internal communication designed to inform officers on the ground that 'each labourer' would be allowed to ' till his own farm ... and at the same time to earn the support of his family through employment on drainage works'. It did so by sanctioning the involvement of a labourer's family in the completion of his allotted task of work and thereafter allowing for the labourer to cultivate his own land at the

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[191] This was now seventeen days after the first meeting.
[192] PRO T64/362/B (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 22 Dec. 1846.

government's expense.[193] The circular, which was written by Griffith,[194] was quashed by the Treasury in a minute issued on 15 December[195] and despite being widely publicised in the Irish press,[196] was quickly withdrawn by the Board of Works. Bessborough did his best to defend the circular in a letter to the Prime Minister dated 19 December,[197] but as he had not been in Dublin when the circular had been drawn up his pleas sounded hollow and the Cabinet stood by its decision, reached at a meeting on 16 December, not to allow the circular to stand unaltered.[198]

What the circular again demonstrates is that Griffith was firmly in the driving seat as far as policy formulation at the Board was concerned. It also illustrates that his commitment to the cultivation of the land was as strong in December 1846 as it was when he wrote his 'Notes relative to the employment of the poor in Ireland' in July 1846.[199] At this point two of the three strands that were to form the very basis of the Commissioners' future refrain to the Treasury were in place. [200] The final element, Larcom's adaptation of

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[193] PRO T64/362/B (Treasury Papers): Handwritten copy of Board of Works Circular 38, signed by Walker, 9 Dec. 1846.
[194] PRO T64/362/B (Treasury Papers): Griffith to Jones, 19 Dec. 1846.
[195] PRO T64/362/B (Treasury Papers): Treasury Minute, 15 Dec. 1846.
[196] PRO T64/362/B (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 19 Dec. 1846.
[197] PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 19 Dec. 1846: 'The Printed Circular is merely an explanation of Mr. Labouchere's letter given to very ignorant people, who could not understand the mode of adopting reproductive works without some such explanation'
[198] See B 340 (Bessborough Papers): Wood to Labouchere, 16 Dec. 1846 and PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 17 Dec. 1846. The circular was replaced by a Treasury Minute issued on 21 Dec., see PRO T64/362B (Treasury Papers): Trevelyan to Commissioners of Public Works, 21 Dec. 1846 and Trevelyan to Jones, 22 Dec. 1846. The Cabinet decision to disallow the general cultivation of farmland at the public's expense probably explains what Hobhouse meant when he recorded in his journal that the Cabinet 'resolved to stop relief works' at its meeting on 16 Dec., Add. MS 43749 (Hobhouse Journal, Broughton Papers), 16 Dec. 1846. Lord Grey, who hosted the Cabinet dinner, recorded in his own journal that he would 'not be surprised' if the suppression of the circular led to the Chief Secretary's resignation, see GRE/V/C3/13 (Grey Journal): 16 Dec. 1846.
[199] PRO T64/366/C/1 (Treasury Papers): Griffith, 30 July 1846.
[200] The commitment evinced by Griffith for the improved cultivation of the land and Jones' desire for the continued involvement of the Board of Works in the Irish relief effort.

Russell's own refrain concerning the importance of 'distinguishing poor relief from measures of improvement'[201] was soon to fall into place.

Permanent or Temporary measures?

A comparison of the printed memorandum prepared by Wood[202] for the 16 December Cabinet meeting, with Russell's digest of the policies actually sanctioned at the meeting,[203] quickly reveals that Wood dominated the proceedings on 16 December.[204] Following the meeting Bessborough was informed that the ministers had sanctioned an amended relief act 'very much on the principle' of his proposal and that he was simply required to send over matured plans for the Poor Employment act which allowed for a labour rate and 'alleviation' in the rates for those who employed their due proportion of destitute labourers. In case he was in any doubt, the Lord Lieutenant was also warned not to send over a proposal that made any provision for individual Townlands to take care of their own poor.[205]

Although Russell's views had been thawing on the issue of the Townlands, this last proviso should not really have come as a shock to the Lord Lieutenant. The Prime Minister had made his feelings on the subject clear in a letter written to Bessborough on 14 December in which he cited a paper drawn up by Mulvany and Labouchere's private

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[201] PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 8 Dec. 1846.
[202] See PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Wood to Russell, 14 Dec. 1846 for the background to this printed memorandum. For a copy of this memorandum, see The Royal Archives, RA/VIC/D16/2 (Queen Victoria's Papers, Irish Papers): 'Outline of the measures to be discussed by the Cabinet prepared by Mr. C Wood', 12 Dec. 1846.
[203] See PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 16 Dec. 1846. This digest was prepared for the Lord Lieutenant's benefit.
[204] This was certainly the impression given by Hobhouse in his journal, see Add. MS 43749 (Hobhouse Journal, Broughton Papers), 16 Dec. 1846.
[205] PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 16 Dec. 1846.

secretary, as providing conclusive proof against the adoption of the Townland measure.[206] Nevertheless Bessborough duly acknowledged Wood's proposals on 18 December[207] and despite some confusion as to what the workhouse test encompassed, [208] and a brief hiccup caused by the Chancellor's bid to bring forward the payments for the relief works by making the sessions levy a rate 'at once', [209] the Castle and the Cabinet finally appeared to be in accord as to what was required by way of relief measures. This accord did not last for long.

On the morning of 27 December Bessborough spent four hours in a meeting with Labouchere, Brady and the other law and policy advisors finalising the Irish measures for Parliament. On the agenda that day was a discussion of the details of the Franchise, Wastelands, Poor Law amendment and Temporary Poor Employment bills.[210] Following the meeting Labouchere lost no time in informing the Prime Minister that the Castle executive had decided not to adopt the Townland scheme for the Temporary Employment bill. [211] Russell, in turn, responded to the Irish executive's calls for further information on various subjects in a letter written on 31 December. On the subject of the continuation of the Poor Employment act, i.e. the Temporary measure, the Castle was instructed to give

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[206] Ibid., Russell to Bessborough, 14 Dec 1846.
[207] Ibid., Bessborough to Russell, 18 Dec. 1846.
[208] Wood cleared this matter up in a letter to Bessborough written on 21 Dec.1846. See PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Wood to Bessborough, 21 Dec. 1846; 'There are notoriously many persons now on the works who ought not to be there. Suppose such a person presents himself for a ticket, or for employment on the works – you refuse – he says I am starving and can not maintain myself, you answer "we don't believe you, but nevertheless as it is possible that you may speak the truth, although we will not employ you on the works we will provide against your actually starving by taking you into the workhouse". ... If you believe that the man is really destitute, you will employ him on the works.'
[209] Ibid. Russell also took up this refrain and was no doubt influenced by his meeting with Lord Lucan on 9 Dec. See PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 9 Dec. 1846. Bessborough deflected the proposal on 22 Dec. and it was dropped by Russell on 28 Dec. The Chancellor fell into line the next day, see PRO 30/22/5G (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 22 Dec 1846; Russell to Bessborough, 28 Dec. 1846 and Wood to Russell, 29 Dec. 1846.
[210] Ibid., ff. 229-30: Labouchere to Russell, 'Sunday night' (27 Dec.), and Bessborough to Russell, 28 Dec. 1846.
[211] Ibid. Labouchere, along with Bessborough, also warned Russell against tinkering with the poor law in Ireland and advised him to seek the advice of Twisleton and Power on the subject.

'every encouragement to employment on farms': an injunction which demonstrated the extent to which Griffith's views had taken hold with the Prime Minister. Russell also informed Bessborough that he was content with the Lord Lieutenant's proposed outline for his Permanent measure and that he would agree to it, with the proviso that the Irish executive would adopt some 'means' of 'ascertaining' that a man was 'destitute', through the workhouse or through emigration or by a combination of both measures - a proviso which demonstrated the extent to which the Prime Minister had been influenced by Wood's own views of the matter. Thereafter Russell concluded that as both men were 'agreed in all the great principles of the measures', there would be no further use in 'discussing them over and over again'.[212]

Bessborough decided not to discuss the details of the Permanent measure with Labouchere until January 1847. [213] Labouchere had recognised the need for more permanent measures to mitigate the distress back in November,[214] however he appears to have been content to leave the matter to the Lord Lieutenant and Russell and thereafter simply buried his head in the sand.[215] Bessborough was certainly still complaining to Russell about the lawyers' dilatoriness in preparing the bills on 2 January and paused only briefly to inform the Prime Minister that he was not entirely sure that 'others'

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[212] Ibid., Russell to Bessborough, 31 Dec. 1846.

[213] It should be remembered that the Chief Secretary had been concentrating his energies on the temporary measure.

[214] See PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 23, 28 Nov. 1846.

[215] Labouchere's removal from the policy formulation process had perhaps been compounded by the fact that the Lord Lieutenant had initially developed his ideas, for this measure, during his stay in Bessborough, a fact that made it more difficult for Labouchere to be privy to his thinking on the subject. See PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 28 Nov. 1846. It is also likely that the Lord Lieutenant had not been in a position himself to divulge the details of the proposal at the meeting on 27 Dec. as it is highly likely that he was still waiting on Moore to produce a first legislative draft of the proposal. Bessborough was finally able to provide Russell with some good news on the progress of the permanent measure on 26 Dec., see PRO 30/22/5G (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 26 Dec. 1846.

understood the 'principle upon which a County court should be framed'.[216] But matters did not truly begin to degenerate until Russell made a series of confusing interjections which brought to a head the issues that had for some months been bubbling under the surface.

On 27 December Labouchere, as has been seen, wrote to inform the Prime Minister that the Townland unit had not been selected by the Castle executive for use in the Temporary measure. This letter must have crossed a letter from Russell, sent via the Lord Lieutenant, explaining his and the Chancellor's views on the Employment bill, by which it seems Russell meant the Temporary Employment bill[217] but, as will be demonstrated, this was not be the last time that the Prime Minister failed to specify which bill he was referring to. Russell did not touch upon the measure in his following letter dated 1 January, except to recommend to the Lord Lieutenant a paper written on the Temporary measure by Mulvany[218] and it was not until he had received the Lord Lieutenant's letter on the subject, written on 1 January, that a noticeable shift occurred in his own thinking on the matter.

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[216] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 2 Jan. 1847. This apparent lack of understanding obviously concerned the Lord Lieutenant as he returned to the subject later in the letter, to plead with Russell that he would discuss Irish matters with Somerville, who would then be able 'to assist Labouchere on questions which no person perhaps can understand who has not served on Grand Juries and accustomed himself to county work here'. The implication here was that the Chief Secretary was having difficulty grasping the details of Bessborough's measure.

[217] PRO 30/22/5G (Russell Papers): Russell to Labouchere, 28 Dec. 1846. Russell sketched out the plan of assigning the unemployed able-bodied labourers in each electoral division to each proprietor, according to the poor law apportionment and then allowing each proprietor to be relieved from any further proportion of assessment, if he agreed to employ the number assigned to him.

[218] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 1 Jan. 1847. Given what we know about Mulvany's previous attitude to the Townland unit, this paper most probably argued against its incorporation into the temporary measure. Unfortunately the author has not been able to locate a copy of this paper. There is a possibility that the paper was simply being recycled by Russell and was in fact the paper originally sent to Russell, by Labouchere, some weeks previously. If this was a new and different paper it would suggest that Mulvany had been at work, lobbying the government again.

Bessborough had been prompted to write this letter after receiving reports that Lord Lincoln (who was considered as being under the tutelage of Pennefather), had taken up the subject and was intending to cause some trouble along with John Evelyn Dension (MP for Malton, 1841-57) and Milnes (MP for Pontefract, 1837-1863) on the matter in the forthcoming session.[219] In it, he attempted to set out the reasons why he had not adopted the Townland division when the Labouchere Letter had first been issued and to explain why it was that he now felt it necessary to recommend the adoption of that unit in the Permanent Poor Employment act. The result was that the Prime Minister, who was nervous of his wobbly parliamentary majority at the best of times and obviously did not relish the prospect of a hitherto quiescent opposition turning nasty, quickly conceded. The Lord Lieutenant was therefore informed that if the government superintendence was given up for all but Public Works; and if the proprietors pledged their property when borrowing money from the state and were obliged to employ 'their share of the destitute of an Electoral division'; then 'all objections' would be removed to the use of the Townland division in the Temporary act.[220]

However the Chief Secretary had a different impression of Russell's views on the matter. For in a letter written to Labouchere the previous day, Russell had informed Labouchere that while the proprietors who employed 'their proportion of the destitute of the Electoral division either on roads or improvements or on the ordinary cultivation of

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[219] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 1 Jan. 1847. Bessborough also requested information on the government's stance on the arms and coercion bills.

[220] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 3 Jan. 1847. Russell even went as far as to say that such clauses were 'absolutely essential' to the temporary act. It should also be noted that while Russell would have received Labouchere's letter of 27 Dec. informing him that the Townland unit would not be employed in the temporary measure, there is a probability that he would not yet have received Bessborough's confirmation of this decision, as it was not sent until 2 Jan. and the Lord Lieutenant's 1 Jan. letter only explained why the Irish administration had not adopted the Townland division previously under the Labouchere letter.

the soil' were to be exempted from 'present and future charge', Russell had not actually specified whether such a system was to be funded with 'Public money advanced for the purpose', or by funds advanced by the interested parties. Labouchere was quick to state that, if Russell meant the latter - 'a mere labour rate' - then the measure was 'at all events practicable'. Nevertheless he made it clear that if the system was meant to apply to the State-funded Temporary measure, then the Board of Works, in its supervisory capacity, would have to be involved. The problem, as Labouchere saw it, was that if the Board was involved, it would eventually fold under the pressure of the work.[221]

Russell anticipated many of his Chief Secretary's comments in his letter written on 3 January letter. He specified that he was discussing the Temporary measure and made it clear that the Board of Works were only to supervise Public Works and that any money borrowed from the State would have to be borrowed with ample securities. But it appears that this letter did not arrive until after the Chief Secretary had sent his own letter, calling for greater clarification, on Monday 4 January.[222] In the event, the Lord Lieutenant thought that Russell had simply confused the measures and that he meant 'the Permanent bill and not the Temporary bill until the 15 August'. However, he instructed Labouchere to chide the Premier for his carelessness in not specifying which measure he was referring to and he asked Labouchere to let Russell know that he approved of the news

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[221] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers), ff. 34-5: Labouchere to Russell, 'Sunday Night' (3 Jan. 1847). The Chief Secretary referred to a letter written by Russell and dated 2 Jan. 1847. Labouchere saw this matter as principally one of a discussion of the merits of the Townland question and informed Russell again that the Irish executive had decided not to employ this division in the temporary act. He did, however, inform Russell that Moore had drawn up several Townland clauses that the Irish executive had rejected and he promised to have them sent to the Prime Minister, so that 'if the Cabinet determine on that course, they can yet be inserted in the bill'.

[222] Simply marked 'Dublin Castle Monday', this letter appears to have been sent with the letter that had been written the night before, as it runs straight into the main text without any salutation. It is likely that because Labouchere had not been able to send his first letter the evening before, having missed the last post, he delayed sending both letters until he had had the opportunity of showing the Lord Lieutenant Russell's letter.

'as applicable to the Permanent measure when the money will not be advanced by the state'; but that he was in agreement with Labouchere in 'objecting' to the proposals if they were intended to relate to the Temporary measure.[223]

This confusion would probably not have arisen if Bessborough had been in receipt of Russell's 3 January letter. That letter had obviously arrived by the time Bessborough came to address the subject, in his reply to the Prime Minister, for the Lord Lieutenant did not query which of the measures Russell was referring to. Instead he informed Russell that while he had 'no real objection' to the insertion of the clauses that he proposed in the Temporary bill, he did foresee 'a difficulty' concerning the superintendence of the Public funded works which he had managed to overcome in his Permanent bill, but not in his Temporary bill. Nevertheless he promised to send Moore's proposed clauses for Russell to think over and he assured the Prime Minister that he would 'certainly make no objection' if Russell could 'satisfy' himself that it would be 'safe and conformable to the spirit in which the Relief Act was passed'.[224] Unfortunately by the time Russell had changed his mind on the Townland question, the damage had been done and a consensus could no longer be salvaged.[225]

On 6 January Bessborough wrote to inform Russell that there were 'great difficulties in the way of ... the Permanent bill'. The principal difficulty was that Labouchere had found an 'insuperable objection' to what Bessborough admitted was

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[223] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers), f. 36: Labouchere to Russell, Monday [4 Jan. 1847].
[224] Ibid., Bessborough to Russell, 4 Jan. 1847. Contrary to what Labouchere had recently informed Russell, Bessborough did not neglect to inform the Prime Minister that while his Chief Secretary was averse to the insertion of these clauses into the temporary bill, he was far more relaxed about the matter. Although he did remark that their insertion would be a 'sort of acknowledgement that we were wrong in positively declining to concede the Townland question'. In effect Bessborough was washing his hands of this measure and throwing the responsibility onto Russell for, as he was to state, the true crux of the problem really lay with what interpretation the government was willing to give to the original relief act.
[225] Ibid.,Russell to Bessborough, 5 Jan. 1847. Somerville appears to have been instrumental in this change.

'after all a sort of Labour Rate'.[226] This statement directly contradicted the Chief Secretary's own remark, made on 3 January, that 'if it is to be done by the money of the parties themselves it becomes a mere labour rate and is at all events practicable'.[227] Labouchere justified this change of heart on the grounds that the bill would not only carry the 'objections of a labour rate' but that it would also interfere with the operation of the Poor Law and Grand Jury bill and perhaps most importantly, with his own Temporary Employment Bill. As a result Bessborough reported that Labouchere thought that 'it would be better to bring only a Temporary bill into Parliament and to leave 'the further consideration' of what was to follow until they could see 'how the other acts.'[228] Two days later, on 8 January, the Chief Secretary put his own pen to paper and wrote to inform the Prime Minister that matters were 'too obscure' at that time to 'justify' such a measure as a 'Labour Rate' and that 'any Permanent measure' should 'separate Relief from Industry'.[229] Montague, as we have seen, believed that Labouchere's employment of this concept[230] in his letter to Russell was 'not perhaps accidental'. And he went on to argue that 'considering the medley of forces within the Irish government', it could 'reasonably be surmised that Larcom's influence was one of the principal factors' acting on the Chief Secretary.[231]

According to Montague, it would be 'reasonable' to 'assume' that a memorandum written by Larcom and sent to Trevelyan on or around I January 1847 'brought one train of thought to a halt and set another in motion' in government circles.[232] Yet given the fact

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[226] Ibid., Bessborough to Russell, 6 Jan. 1847.
[227] Ibid., ff. 34-5: Labouchere to Russell, 'Sunday Night' 3 Jan. 1847.
[228] Ibid., Bessborough to Russell, 6 Jan. 1847.
[229] Ibid., Labouchere to Russell, 8 Jan. 1847.
[230] The separation of relief from industry.
[231] Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction in Ireland', p. 123.
[232] Ibid., p. 81, footnote 2 and p. 124.

that Larcom did not date his memorandum and that little evidence survives to indicate that it was ever sent to the Chief Secretary, Montague was perhaps right to proceed cautiously in this matter.[233] Nevertheless the similarity between Larcom's phrase: 'My object is to separate Labour - as such - from relief - as such'[234] and Labouchere's stated desire that any Permanent measure should 'separate Relief from Industry'[235] justifies attention.

Despite listing the Trevelyan papers in Oxford as one of the manuscript collections consulted during his doctoral research, Montague neglected to include in his thesis a series of letters from Trevelyan that would have provided a more accurate chronological context for the Larcom memorandum.[236] In dating the memorandum to circa 1 January 1847 Montague was perhaps not far off the mark of its formulation date. But given the centrality of this memorandum to his thesis it is surprising that he did not take greater pains to chart, more accurately, the chronology of the memorandum's dissemination. Thus, no account was taken of Trevelyan's request, made to Stewart on 19 December 1846, to 'ascertain the views of the different members of the Board in regard to the Poor Employment act', or of any of Trevelyan's subsequent letters calling for Griffith's and Larcom's papers on the amendments to the act.[237]

Montague also neglected to include in his account a letter from Jones to Trevelyan, dated 21 December 1846, in which the chairman of the Board explained that Bessborough had specifically asked Jones, when he mentioned the subject a few days

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[233] Ibid., p. 124.
[234] MSS 7745 (Larcom Papers), number 8.
[235] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 8 Jan. 1847.
[236] Montague was also at a disadvantage as he had not been able to consult the invaluable T64 series of the Treasury Papers at the Public Record Office.
[237] MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 100 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Stewart, 19 Dec. 1846; Trevelyan to Jones, 30 Dec. 1846 and MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 101 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 2 Jan. 1847.

previously, not to consider the subject at the Board's meetings until he had had time to seek advice on the matter himself. Jones went on in this letter to inform Trevelyan that he and Griffith had not heard anything on the subject until 'Friday last' [18 December] when Griffith had been given the heads of a bill to prepare in conjunction with Redington and Moore.[238] And the fact that Trevelyan had clearly received both Griffith's and Larcom's papers on the subject, by 6 January, also appears not to have been noted by Montague.[239]

At the beginning of an undated letter to Trevelyan, Larcom stated that his paper had begun its life as an informal letter to Jones and that he had sent it to Trevelyan not as a finished article, but as a 'familiar' and 'colloquial' document requiring amendment.[240] It is difficult to say precisely when this letter to Jones was written, but a copy of the memorandum had still not reached Trevelyan by 2 January[241] and the letter that Trevelyan replied to, on 6 January, would have had to have been dispatched by Larcom in Dublin by 5 January to make the post to London. Larcom referred in this letter to the copy of the memorandum that he had sent to Trevelyan 'yesterday', which appears to date the dispatch of the actual memorandum at the latest to 4 January.[242] Thereafter it is impossible to say when the letter to Jones, upon which the memorandum was based, was written. But, in a sense, what is of greater importance is when the letter began to be disseminated by Jones or, indeed, by Larcom.

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[238] PRO T64/ 362/B (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 21 Dec. 1847. Jones had clearly been told about the potential bill prior to 19 Dec. 1846.
[239] See A4. 185. 1 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Trevelyan to Wood, 6 Jan. 1847. Trevelyan also wrote directly to Larcom on 6 Jan. to inform him that he entirely agreed with his principle 'that labour and relief ought to be kept Septarate'. See MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 101 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Larcom, 6 Jan. 1847.
[240] MS 7745 (Larcom Papers) number 8: Larcom to Trevelyan, undated letter. The distinction between Larcom's letter to Trevelyan about the memorandum, and the memorandum itself, should be observed.
[241] MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 101 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 2 Jan. 1847.
[242] MS 7745 (Larcom Papers) number 8: Larcom to Trevelyan, undated letter.

Labouchere, as has been demonstrated, believed 'a mere labour rate' to be 'practicable' on 3 January[243] and not to be so by 6 January.[244] Clearly any change that occurred in his outlook occurred between 3 and 6 January, at the very moment when the Larcom memorandum was available for dissemination. When Labouchere finally did put pen to paper to inform Russell of this alteration, it seems more than a mere coincidence that he chose to use a phrase that replicated Larcom's own summary of his relief principles.[245] But were Larcom's proposals really instrumental in bringing 'one train of thought to a halt' as Montague argues, and did they really act as 'a great concession to the campaign for the assumption of local responsibility towards the unemployed'?[246]

The end of relief by Public Works?

Labouchere's departure for London on 10 January elicited the following response from the Lord Lieutenant:

> Labouchere went this morning in a great fuss I think about Irish affairs as we hear all sorts of reports as to attacks that are to be made about particular subjects many of which worry him much.[247]

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[243] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers), ff. 34-5: Labouchere to Russell, 'Sunday Night' [3 Jan. 1847].
[244] Ibid., Bessborough to Russell, 6 Jan. 1847.
[245] Ibid., Labouchere to Russell, 8 Jan. 1847. The possibility exists that Larcom merely reproduced the views of his superior in his memorandum. However, if Larcom was influenced by anything, it is more likely that he was influenced by Russell's views of the necessity of 'distinguishing poor relief from the measures of improvement'. See PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 8 Dec. 1846. Although some caution is necessary here, as no evidence exists to suggest that these views were communicated by Bessborough to members of the Board of Works. Yet, given the proximity of the arrival date of the letter to Bessborough's 15 Dec. conference with Jones and Griffith the possibility of Bessborough communicating Russell's views exists.
[246] Montague also believed that the Larcom memorandum was responsible for setting another train of thought 'in motion' in Jan.1847. See Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction in Ireland', pp. 81, 124.
[247] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 10 Jan. 1847.

The element of panic about Labouchere which Bessborough chronicled is significant. For although the Lord Lieutenant appears to have quickly dismissed his subordinate's fears, Labouchere's anxieties were not wholly incomprehensible given the unconstitutional nature of some of the administration's activities and the unpredictable nature of the forthcoming Parliamentary session.[248] Labouchere also found himself in the invidious position of being asked, by his superior, to defend a measure that he had not helped to draft and, it is more than likely, he little understood. It is no surprise that the Chief Secretary was more interested in the measures that he knew he would have to defend in Parliament and as a result just two days before Labouchere took his leave of Bessborough, the Lord Lieutenant informed Russell that they had 'passed the whole of the last two or three days in trying to alter and complete our temporary measure which forms part of the indemnity bill'.[249] Here then was a man gripped by panic and through that panic by a desire to pare down his legislative responsibilities and to simplify his prospective Parliamentary battles. Larcom memorandum or not, it seems improbable that Labouchere would willingly have defended a measure in Parliament that those of his Cabinet colleagues that were better versed in Irish affairs than him thought to be totally misconceived.[250]

But Montague went one step further than this in his thesis and suggested that Larcom's memorandum not only convinced Labouchere, and thereafter the Cabinet, that

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[248] According to Mr. Charles Carey, Senior Research Counsel at the Parliamentary Counsel Office in London, the act 10 and 11 Victoria, Cap. X (the act employed by the Whig administration retrospectively to indemnify their actions in issuing the Labouchere Letter) was a 'very unusual' and 'thoroughly retrospective act'.

[249] Ibid., Bessborough to Russell, 8 Jan. 1847.

[250] See, for example, PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Clanricarde to Russell, 8 Jan. 1847.

the labour rate was wrong;[251] he also claims that it was responsible for driving them along the road of conversion to the 'administrative orthodoxy' of 'an effective Poor Law for the immediate relief of distress'.[252] Unfortunately historians are not in a position to judge whether Larcom's memorandum argued against a labour rate and for the 'adoption of an effective Poor Law to cope with those labourers who could not find gainful employment on reproductive works'[253] as a copy of the memorandum has not survived.[254] Instead what clues remain of the contents of this memorandum are contained in a copy of a letter, about the memorandum, sent by Larcom to Trevelyan, circa 5 January. In this letter Larcom argued that 'non Public Labour' really should be such and that 'the relief Labour' should be 'administered by the Counties'. For, as he saw it:

> We then really administer Relief – in the best possible way as Commissioners of Works i.e. employment and my impression is that Relief as such will gradually cease and be absorbed into employment which is the consummation so much to be desired – Whereas if we continue to call Labour Relief it will never cease – but be a premium on continuing the present state of things.[255]

Nor did Larcom specify whether or not he agreed with Jones' previous proposal that the County Surveyors should be employees of the Board of Works. Trevelyan appears to

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[251] Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction', p. 123-4. Montagues argues that it tipped the balance against Bessborough. He does not name which of Bessborough's 'subordinates', other than Labouchere, formed 'a pressure group against rather than for a labour rate' but he implies that that Larcom was one of them.
[252] Albeit via the detour of temporary gratuitous food relief. Ibid., p. 125. This scheme, according to Gray: 'would facilitate the transition to an extended Poor Law, not least by forcing proprietors to confront the reality of paying directly for outdoor relief when no private employment was offered': Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 263.
[253] Ibid., p. 82.
[254] The only memorandum that Montague is able to cite is one entitled 'Food (O'Brien)', see MS 7745, 'Number 10' (Larcom Papers) and Montague, p. 81. This memorandum is not in Larcom's hand and while the possibility exists that this is a copy of his original memorandum, it seems more likely that the memorandum was drawn up by O'Brien, hence the attribution at the top of the paper. Gray also appears to have had some difficulty with the source material, as he cites a letter from Larcom to Trevelyan to support his observation that: 'By early Jan. senior administrators were pushing for the abandonment of public works relief, and a strict Separation of relief from the labour market in the future', which does exist. See Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 263, footnote 208. If, by senior administrators, Gray meant Trevelyan then his source is correct, if reversed. Thus, the citation should read MS 7745 (Larcom Papers): Trevelyan to Larcom, 6 Jan. 1847. However, Gray's views on Trevelyan's position are not always clear.
[255] MS 7745 'Number 8' (Larcom Papers),: Larcom to Trevelyan, undated letter.

have thought that Larcom was advocating the employment of as many people as could gainfully be employed in useful works, coupled with the encouragement of real 'non Public Labour', in other words, private employment. And he wrote to inform Larcom that he was 'gratified' to see that he had approached the subject in the same manner as he had:

> first of all considering in what degree the surplus labour of the country might be legitimately disposed of by stimulating and assisting the landed proprietors to improve their estates, and by carrying on really useful Public Works by the direct agency of the government and after making these deductions, to finish by discussing what is the least injurious mode of employing the remainder on the principle of relief.[256]

What Trevelyan did not mention is what Larcom had actually proposed as the 'least injurious mode' of employing 'the remainder' on the 'principle of relief'. Montague suggests that Larcom 'unhesitatingly recommended the adoption of an effective Poor Law to cope with those labourers who could not find gainful employment on reproductive works'.[257] However the letter from Larcom to Trevelyan that Montague cites to support this assumption, is the same one as has been cited above and as Trevelyan's 6 January letter demonstrates, Larcom did not explicitly pursue this proposal.

Larcom did later inform the Assistant Secretary that he would 'be quite prepared' for the fact that he was in entire agreement in the 'general reading of the measures'[258] that Trevelyan had sketched out in a letter to Jones on 14 January. [259] But his surprise at the manner in which Trevelyan had dealt with the subject of 'works' in this letter and his subsequent examination of the potential benefits of such works suggests that he placed

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[256] MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 101 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Larcom, 6 Jan. 1847.
[257] Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction', p. 82.
[258] MS 7745 'Number 12' (Larcom Papers): Larcom to Trevelyan, 20 Jan. 1847.
[259] See MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 101 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 14 Jan. 1847.

more importance on these works than Trevelyan had intimated and certainly than Montague gives him credit for.[260]

In his 2 January letter Trevelyan once again prompted Jones to ask Griffith and Larcom to send their papers on the poor relief act. When these papers eventually did arrive Trevelyan was more impressed by Larcom's efforts[261] and as a result Griffith's paper and ideas about the way the Irish relief effort should develop appear to have fallen by the wayside. Trevelyan's and later Montague's emphasis on the importance of the Larcom memorandum to the Cabinet's decision to drop relief by employment is unfortunate as it has led historians to overlook the influence of the other relief officials on relief policy developments in January 1847. Correcting this imbalance is not an easy task for, as Montague has explained, the Board's 'inter-departmental correspondence' has been destroyed. Montague himself believed that the material had been destroyed in 1922, however Professor Louis Cullen claims to have been informed by an official from the Office of Public Works in the late 1980s that 'he had seen famine material destroyed' and has also received reports that part of the Board's famine archive was destroyed in the late 1960's to make way for a cafeteria.[262] Students of the Famine are therefore left with little alternative other than to concentrate their attentions, as Montague and to a certain extent Gray have done, on the 'influential' and 'gifted manipulator of internal alignments and squabbles within a department' – Thomas Larcom.[263]

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[260] In this regard, Larcom could be said to be in agreement with Jones.
[261] A4. 59 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Trevelyan to Wood, 6 Jan. 1847: 'I think Larcom has taken the clearest and justest view of all'.
[262] Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction', p. 42. See also L.M. Cullen to N.R. Dunn (unpublished private letter): 30 Oct. 2002.
[263] Ibid., p. 41. Reference may be being made here to his activities in Ireland under Lincoln, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Nevertheless evidence does exist that suggests that Larcom's memorandum was not the only document produced by the Board's officials to influence the Cabinet in its decision to abandon Public Works as the principal form of relief in Ireland. Indeed, as Gray has observed, the Prime Minister 'cited the authority of Col. Jones as to the expediency of abandoning the existing system' when he announced his 'comprehensive scheme' of Irish measures to Parliament on 25 January 1847.[264]

Montague neglected to mention the fact that the letter that Trevelyan sent to Wood on 6 January, containing Larcom's and Griffith's papers, was primarily intended to convey 'a new edition of the remarks of the Commissioners of Public Works on the subject of poor relief'.[265] This 'new edition' contained statistics both for the numbers employed and the sums expended on the relief works up to 2 January 1847. It therefore seems probable that the letter was printed in the period between 2 and 5 January – the likely date of its dispatch to London. As such this jointly signed official report from the Commissioners of the Board of Works appears to have been prepared contemporaneously with Larcom's paper, and while Larcom's memorandum does not survive, the Board's December report does. It demonstrates that the Commissioners of Public Works were no longer pulling their punches:

> In bringing to a conclusion our monthly Report, for the termination of the year 1846, we cannot refrain from expressing the conviction ... that in many localities no system of Public Works, however zealously or anxiously conducted, no expenditure of money in public employment, however lavish or uncontrolled, can prevent the fatalities that are daily occurring, and that are still most likely to occur, during our approach to the crisis of this heavy calamity.

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[264] See Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 264, n. 214. However, the letter from Jones to Trevelyan dated 19 Jan. 1847, was written after the Cabinet decision had been taken to abandon public works for food relief. The distinction between abandoning the present system and removing the Board completely from the relief picture should also be noted. Jones certainly did not advocate the latter course. See, for example, PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Clanricarde to Russell, 17 Dec. 1846.

[265] A4.185.1 (Hickleton Papers Microfilm): Trevelyan to Wood, 6 Jan. 1847.

> The palpable evil in these localities is the absolute want of cheap food, and the prospective want of food itself....[266]

The Commissioners went on to state that although the 'Labour Rate Act' had performed its part in providing 'temporary relief to a very large number' and had thus bought the administration more time, it was their collective view that 'some suitable measures' were now needed to tackle the oncoming 'crisis'.[267] Unfortunately the Commissioners did not elaborate on what those measures might be. Their statement that 'the palpable evil' in the distressed districts was the 'absolute want of cheap food' could of course be taken to imply that they were in favour of the distribution of food, but this does not mean that they thought that such food should be given gratuitously. For, as they were to go on to argue, the money that those in distress had been able to earn on the works, however useless those works might have been, was still free from the 'reproach' which could 'justly' be attached to the 'only alternative, gratuitous alms'.[268]

Montague's hypothesis that it would be 'reasonable to assume that his [Larcom's] memorandum brought one train of thought to a halt and set another in motion' during the 'first three weeks of January'[269] therefore stands in need of alteration. But the question still remains: was 'the growing criticism of the Public Works system' by Gray's more cautiously described 'senior Irish administrators', really 'more important' an 'element' in the 'decision to abandon Public Works for soup kitchens'?[270]

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[266] *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, l (764), p. 495: Commissioners of Public Works to the Lords of the Treasury, Jan. 1847.
[267] Ibid.
[268] Ibid. In advocating the non-gratuitous distribution of food, the Commissioners were in alignment with the views of the Lord Lieutenant, who had recently stated to Russell that 'What we wish to encourage in these Soup Kitchens is to sell at a very small price', as he had found that 'it is better to make the Poor pay something however small'. See PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 2 Jan. 1847.
[269] Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction', p. 124.
[270] Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 262. The other 'elements' listed by Gray are: the convictions held both by Morpeth and Russell and endorsed by Clanricarde and 'the Irish government', that 'the most

On the 8 January the Lord Lieutenant wrote to inform Russell that the Castle team had spent 'the whole of the last two or three days in trying to alter and complete' the Temporary measure, which formed part of the 'indemnity bill'.[271] On the face of it, this bill should not have required such efforts. However, a letter dated 4 January from Bessborough to Russell[272] indicates that the Castle had obviously taken seriously the Prime Minister's request, made on 31 December, for the Temporary measure to give 'every encouragement to employment on farms', seriously.[273] In this letter Bessborough described how he had been obliged to send back a proposal of Griffith's, concerning the cultivation of farms under ten acres, as he had not approved of the proposed measure. However the Viceroy did go on to state that Griffith was reconsidering the matter.[274] By 8 January Griffith had obviously made some progress with the proposal, for Labouchere informed Russell that the Irish administration had also 'prepared the heads of another measure' as a 'substitute' for the Temporary measure, which offered 'advances' to the proprietors on the condition that they expend the advances on 'employing the destitute ... pretty much as they please, except that they must only apply it to the ordinary cultivation of the soil for holdings under ten pounds'.[275]

Although Labouchere appeared to be confident of his ground in Dublin, by the time he came to present this measure to the Cabinet his confidence had crumbled. Once in London he made a last ditch attempt to save his skin by having Mulvany summoned over

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pressing matter' was to 'keep the people alive' and that this could best be done through the medium of the soup kitchens; a 'shift in public opinion' which 'opened the door to a more interventionist and direct relief policy' and 'Orthodox objections to Bessborough's proposed labour rate', which forced minds to focus on 'viable alternatives'.

[271] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 8 Jan. 1847.

[272] Ibid.,Bessborough to Russell, 4 Jan. 1847.

[273] PRO 30/22/5G (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 31 Dec. 1846.

[274] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 4 Jan. 1847.

[275] Ibid., Labouchere to Russell, 8 Jan. 1847. See also Ibid., Clanricarde to Russell, 8 Jan. 1847 and Bessborough to Russell, 10 Jan. 1847. Here, again, was Griffith's commitment to the cultivation of the soil.

from Ireland to help him out,[276] but this request was not granted and Labouchere was ultimately forced to face the meeting of the Cabinet on 13 January 1847 alone and in a less prepared fashion than he could have wished. Morpeth, not a hostile witness where Labouchere was concerned, recorded in his journal that the Chief Secretary 'appeared very unprepared and at sea'[277] and Hobhouse noted that 'a good deal of dissatisfaction' was expressed amongst members of the Cabinet 'privately', at the proceedings of the 'Irish government'.[278] Fortunately for Labouchere, Russell and Wood were able to deflect some of the attention away from the Chief Secretary by bringing other weighty issues to the Cabinet's notice,[279] but Labouchere's Temporary bill could not be put off and when the Cabinet did get their teeth into the measure, it did not take them long to demolish it. The principal problem, as Hobhouse saw it, was that the measure had been 'most improperly mixed up with another bill - instead of being made a single bill to which no one could object'. Thus, after Cottenham and Campbell had registered their objections, it was soon agreed that 'a single bill should be prepared'.[280] Nevertheless the Cabinet was still faced with the question of what it should do with Labouchere's other measure and it was decided that the Cabinet should meet the next day to resolve this issue. No official resolution of the measure could be reached the next day and having run through Russell's draft of the Queen's speech, it was decided that a committee of the Cabinet should be

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[276] See MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 101 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 12 Jan. 1847. Labouchere had arrived in London by 12 Jan. 1847. See J19/8/14 (Morpeth Diary): 12 Jan. 1847. Note the Chief Secretary's call for Mulvany, not the author of the paper. The influence that Mulvany exerted over the Chief Secretary can again be seen here.

[277] J19/8/14 (Morpeth Diary): 13 Jan. 1847.

[278] Add. MS 43749 (Broughton Papers, Hobhouse Diary), 13 Jan. 1847.

[279] Thus the suspension of the corn law; a resolution 'to allow sugar to be used in public breweries' and 'Wood's measure for increasing [the] general supply of food' were all on the agenda that day. See Add. MS 43749 (Broughton Papers, Hobhouse Diary), and J19/8/14 (Morpeth Diary), 13 Jan. 1847.

[280] Add. MS 43749 (Broughton Papers, Hobhouse Diary), 13 Jan. 1847.

appointed to put Irish affairs in order.[281] That committee was duly appointed and it held its first meeting at 11.30 am on Friday 15 January.

It is difficult to say which ministers actually attended these committee meetings. A close reading of the third Earl Grey's journal suggests that the Colonial Secretary was one member of the committee,[282] while Hobhouse's journal indicates that the President of the Board of Control was not a member. Morpeth certainly did attend the committee's meetings[283] and it would be reasonable to assume that Russell, Wood and Labouchere were also on the committee while Russell could have turned to either Clanricarde, Sir George Grey, Macaulay or Lansdowne for assistance.

The actual business of the committee is also shrouded in mystery and the little that can be discerned on this subject comes straight from the pages of Hobhouse's and Morpeth's journals. In short, this is that the committee met on 15 January and that at its next meeting, on 16 January, it was decided 'to abandon presentments for labour and only give food to the destitute'.[284] We are then told that this decision was confirmed, without adverse comment, at the meeting of the Cabinet at three o'clock when Russell read out a sketch of the Irish measures that had been approved by the members of the committee.[285]

However a confidential Cabinet paper dated 15 January demonstrates that the decision to substitute 'gratuitous distribution of rations of food through Relief Committees' for 'Relief by employment', had at least been floated, if not actually

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[281] Ibid., 14 Jan. 1847 and J19/8/14 (Morpeth Diary): 14 Jan. 1847.
[282] GRE/V/C3/13 (Grey Journal): 11, 13 Jan. 1847. Grey confused the dates of these meetings in his journal.
[283] Unfortunately his journal reveals little more than the dates on which the committee assembled. See, for example, J19/8/14 (Morpeth Diary): 15, 21 Jan. 1847.
[284] J/19/8/14 (Morpeth Diary): 16 Jan. 1847.
[285] Add. MS 43749 (Broughton Papers, Hobhouse Diary), 16 Jan. 1847.

confirmed, by the committee on its first day of business.[286] It is also significant that on the day before this committee met Trevelyan wrote to both Routh and Jones to poor scorn on the notion that the government 'should lend money to the small holders to cultivate their land' when the one 'redeeming feature' of the 'calamity' was that the class of 'small holder' in question, would soon have to 'give way' and yield to 'a higher class possessed of more capital, with larger farms, a tenure more practically secure, and a great stake in the country'.[287]

Jones evidently lost no time in forwarding Trevelyan's letter to his colleagues in the relief department with the result that the day before he and Griffith were informed by the Castle that Public Works were to be called to a halt,[288] Larcom had been able to dispatch a series of comments on Trevelyan's 14 January letter outlining the proposed relief measures.[289] Larcom, as has been seen, informed Trevelyan that the Assistant Secretary would be quite prepared for the fact that he was in entire agreement in his general reading of the government's measures. However because Trevelyan had disposed of 'works' in 'one short paragraph' and because it was not entirely clear to him whether the matter had been settled, he felt compelled to comment on the subject. Trevelyan was told that the government needed to strive to 'attach the Lords of the people to the land' and although Larcom was 'by no means certain that in improving the land they would improve the people, or even materially better their condition'; loans for improvement would

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[286] University of Southampton Library, CAB/46A (Palmerston Papers): Confidential Cabinet memorandum, 15 Jan. 1847. A copy of the 12 Dec. 1846 Cabinet memorandum, to which this memorandum refers, can be found in The Royal Archives, RA/VIC/D16/2 (Irish Papers): Confidential Cabinet memorandum, 12 Dec. 1846.

[287] Later in this letter Trevelyan also requested the 'confidential opinion' of the relief officials on whether the time had arrived 'for having recourse ... to ... the outdoor relief of every destitute person'. See MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 101 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones and Routh, 14 Jan. 1847.

[288] PRO T64/363/D (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 21 Jan. 1847.

[289] MS 7745 'Number 12' (Larcom Papers): Larcom to Trevelyan, 20 Dec. 1847.

'doubtless ... to a great extent' effect the desired end of arresting the famine and diminishing 'the probability of its recurrence for the future'.[290]

Given the views expressed in Trevelyan's 14 January letter, it is questionable whether the Temporary measure would ever have received an impartial hearing by the Cabinet committee[291] and yet an impartial hearing is what Griffith, Larcom and Jones earnestly desired for the measure. Four days before penning his reply to Trevelyan, Larcom had put his name to a jointly signed Board memorandum informing the Lord Lieutenant that while 'other modes of relief' had become 'indispensable'[292] as long as 'steps' could be taken to 'support the People' in the 'interval' that was likely to occur before the 'great addition' to the Board's 'powers',[293] the Board would be well placed to handle what the future had to throw at them.[294] In short, the Commissioners were asking the government to find a solution to the immediate problem of the vast numbers that were swamping the works; to remove from the equation those that were unable to work because they were too ill; and to allow them to get on with the task of relieving the able-bodied by productive employment which would be beneficial for the land, increase food

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[290] Ibid.

[291] The Treasury's mind, at least, appeared to be made up on the matter.

[292] The memorandum argued that the provision of labour within the Board's present control could not 'meet for more than a month or two, if so long' the wants of the Board's 'present Labour roll' and that 'some more direct source than labour' would have to be exploited to provide relief for 'a great number of unemployed, infirm and destitute families'. It was signed by Jones, Griffith and Radcliff. See PRO T64/363/D (Treasury Papers): Select Commissioners of the Board of Works to Bessborough, 16 Jan. 1847.

[293] Ibid. These increased 'powers' refer to the government's proposals to develop the Board's jurisdiction in the spheres of 'Drainage', 'tillage and reclamation' and 'the general control of roads'. When it came to the subject of the cultivation of the land, the Commissioners again endorsed the philosophy that lay at the heart of the Temporary measure. This was that agricultural labourers should be paid to cultivate farmland rather than be paid to perform task work on the Public Works. It could be argued that the Commissioners even went beyond what had been suggested in the Temporary measure, arguing that 'even if no security could be had of repayment from the crop, as from whatever source repayment may be assessed, food for another year would result to the Country'.

[294] Ibid. Interestingly the Commissioners did not feel compelled to comment on what the measures that might tide the distressed people of Ireland over, during this interval, might actually be: 'the question of supplying food gratuitously, or in any other way, by the agency of Government, is one on which we need not enter'.

stocks and ultimately stymie the prospects of a future famine. If the Commissioners' wishes do not come through in the historical accounts of the Famine, it is because Larcom's letter/memorandum has been allowed to cloud the bigger picture of what the Commissioners were actually trying to achieve in January 1847.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that Bessborough experienced some difficulty in getting the details of his permanent proposal before the Cabinet[295] and that Labouchere was not the best advocate for the Castle's temporary proposals.[296] The fact that the Castle presented the Cabinet with so many different policy permutations, particularly temporary relief proposals, and that the Castle itself was divided as to which proposal would best meet Ireland's needs, could not have helped matters. And while it would also be correct to conclude that the 'growing criticism of the Public Works system by senior Irish administrators' was an 'important' 'element' in the 'decision to abandon Public Works for soup kitchens', it would be incorrect to leave an analysis of the Board's influence there.[297]

For, as their memorandum of the 16 January demonstrates, the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland had not given up on the principle of the provision of public

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[295] Despite informing Russell on 6 Jan. that the heads of the permanent bill had been arranged and that he was going to go ahead and have the measure prepared, Bessborough's permanent proposal was not amongst the bills listed by the Lord Lieutenant when he informed Russell of the bills that Labouchere was bringing over to London with him on 10 Jan. On 14 Jan. the Lord Lieutenant finally sent the heads of the permanent employment bill to London but, in all likelihood, certain members of the committee of the Cabinet had come to a conclusion on the future course even before the heads of the bill could have arrived. Even if this had not been so, the Cabinet were never given the opportunity to discuss the proposal for Russell made the executive decision not to 'bring it under consideration'. He thought that the 'danger' of 'fixing in the localities all of the distressed poor' was too great and that it would be 'better to see the effect of other measures', before the government had recourse to it. See PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 6, 10, 14, Jan. 1847 and B. 153 (Bessborough Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 16 Jan. 1847.

[296] Earl Grey, admittedly a hostile witness where Labouchere was concerned, recorded that at the Cabinet on Irish affairs held on 23 Jan. the Chief Secretary 'strongly displayed' his 'utter incompetence and ignorance of his own business' and that 'to make the exhibition complete he went off after the Cabinet with his wife to Brighton leaving C. Wood to settle his bills for him with the lawyers which are to be brought in on Monday'. See GRE/V/C3/13 (Grey Journal): 23 Jan. 1847. Morpeth, as has been stated, recorded that Labouchere was 'at sea' with regard to his proposals.

[297] Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 262.

employment as a palliative for Ireland's woes. Ireland needed two relief efforts at this point: one that would cater to the needs of those that could not work because they were too frail or ill; and another to cater to the bulk of the people who still could and needed to work to earn money to buy food to survive and who would not therefore be demoralized by the evil of unnecessary gratuitous relief from the government. The Commissioners were effectively asking the government to take some of the heat off them and they were to return to this refrain time and time again. Nowhere are their intentions so clearly expressed as in the concluding remarks of their January report to the Lords of the Treasury:

> In conclusion, we can only say that we shall hail with joy any change in the system of relief which may prove satisfactory to the Country, and restore us to our legitimate capacity, as Commissioners of Public Works, and therefore large employers of labour, in which we shall endeavor to devise and create as many really useful works as can be found to afford occupation, until the people can again be absorbed into their natural channels, but unembarrassed by the necessity of employing the weak and infirm, and destitute, merely for employment's sake, with very little reference to the work they do.[298]

Such grand pretensions made the Treasury nervous and Jones was told, in no uncertain terms, not to mix the management of the Land Improvement act with any of the relief business.[299] But when it came to the contentious subject of encouraging the cultivation of the land in Ireland, the Treasury appeared to turn a blind eye to the Board's activities.[300] Thus what had appeared controversial back in December, when Griffith had first proposed that those employed on task work might be allowed to cultivate the land when

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[298] *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, lii (797): Commissioners of Public Works to Treasury Lords, Feb. 1847.
[299] See PRO T64/363/A (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 20 Feb. 1847 and Trevelyan to Jones, 27 Feb. 1847
[300] Various members of the Board were extremely taken with this subject. See T64/363/ D (Treasury Papers): Griffith to Jones, 29 Jan. 1847; T64/363/A (Treasury Papers): Mulvany to Trevelyan, 25 Feb. 1847 and T64/363/C (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 3 Mar. 1847.

they had completed their allotted piece of work,[301] seemed to be more acceptable in March and the Treasury does not appear to have pursued the Board over the matter.[302] This gradual thawing in the attitude of the Treasury and the Cabinet to the various proposals of the Board did not end there and it seems as if the Board's policy of reiterating to London that they had a serious part to play in the relief effort was successful.[303] Thus by 8 April, having informed Burgoyne only on 30 March that bona fide Public Works were not appropriate for Ireland at that time,[304] Trevelyan was to admit to the chairman of the Board that his superiors had changed their minds:

> There appears to be a general concurrence of opinion that after the present system of relief works is completely brought to a close, a limited number of really useful Public Works should be selected and carried through, on the principle of employing the best labourers and adapting the system of payment best adapted to stimulate their exertions by which means some assistance will be given in absorbing the present fearful amount of surplus labour and the Country will benefit by the works without the abuses connected with the present system.[305]

It has been said that the Cabinet's decision of 16 January to abandon relief by Public Works and to replace it with gratuitous food relief saw 'the destinies of the moralists [Wood, Earl Grey and Trevelyan] and the administrators [Griffith and Larcom] which had run parallel to one another in so strange a fashion and for so many months ... for a

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[301] This proposal was made in the Board of Works Circular 38.
[302] See *Parliamentary Papers* 1847, lii (797): Commissioners of Public Works to Treasury Lords, 4 Mar. 1847: 'where each individual has a weekly task allotted to him, and he is allowed to execute it, if he pleases, with the assistance of his children, we find good earnings and satisfactory results; as by this arrangement, if the labourer completes his task in four days, he has two which he can devote to the cultivation of his own small tenement. This system has been successfully introduced in many places.' It should be noted that the system appears only to have been applied to works of drainage.
[303] The Board would return to this refrain again in Aug. 1848, see PRO T64/366/ B (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 23 Aug. 1848 and the enclosed undated memorandum, written by Jones, on employment in Ireland.
[304] MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 103 (Trevelyan Private Letter Book): Trevelyan to Burgoyne, 30 Mar. 1847.
[305] Ibid., Trevelyan to Jones, 8 Apr. 1847. For the details of how the works were to be funded and managed see, MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 104 (Trevelyan Private Letter Book): Trevelyan to Jones, 13 Apr. 1847 and Trevelyan to Griffith, 19 Apr. 1847. This development worried Bessborough. See B. 336 (Bessborough Papers): Bessborough to Labouchere, 19 Apr. 1847.

moment suddenly ... converge'.[306] The implication of this interpretation is that these two forces were to find a temporary *modus vivendi* over the policy of abandoning public works in Ireland and introducing soup kitchens. It also implies that thereafter they were to return to their own parallel and ultimately separate courses. Yet, this interpretation is erroneous. For if anything, the decision taken by the Cabinet in January 1847 not to pursue the Castle's temporary proposals further[307] marked a point of departure for the Board and the Treasury.[308] Up to that date, despite various ups and downs, the relationship between the Board[309] and the Treasury had not only been strong, it had also been highly effective and the 'destinies' of the two groups had not so much run in 'parallel' but hand in hand. However, in January 1847, after hitching their wagon to the extension of the Poor Law in Ireland as the best proposal to meet the Irish distress,[310] the Treasury stopped listening to all that the Board had to say, since they no longer deemed it necessary to do so. By selectively presenting the information that worked for them, the Treasury was able to demonstrate to the Cabinet that their own relief officials at the Board could no longer cope and that the policy of relief by Public Works was no longer a viable option. Admittedly Labouchere's move on the Labour rate did not help the Commissioners, but the fact that Russell never put this proposal before the Cabinet should not be forgotten. As a result, what was really at stake in the January meetings of the Cabinet were the Commissioners' various temporary proposals. Yet, as Trevelyan's

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[306] Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction', p. 124.
[307] Russell was to inform Bessborough on 17 Jan. that the Cabinet 'thought the cultivation by the state of private farms, even those under ten acres, would lead to inevitable confusion and endless difficulty' and that the ministers had decides to adopt the soup kitchen and 'ration plan', in its place. See PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 17 Jan. 1847.
[308] The beginning of this point of departure was the Board's unauthorized production of Circular 38.
[309] During the Peel administration Griffith and Larcom may be considered to be outside of the fold of the 'Board proper'.
[310] The Cabinet was willing to countenance the poor law extension in Dec. 1846 / Jan.1847. In July 1846, the Cabinet was not willing to countenance such a policy.

letter of 14 January so clearly demonstrates, the probability that these proposals would ever have received a fair and impartial hearing in the Cabinet is slim, even if Labouchere had been a better advocate for them.

Thus the paths of the two organisations diverged; the increasingly cumbersome structure of Public Works was dismantled; state-sponsored soup kitchens were set up; and relief plans involving a Poor Law extension were made afresh. But the refrain that emanated from the Commissioners in Dublin did not change. Unauthorised policies were surreptitiously pursued[311] and the same policy apparatchiks were persistently lobbied to see things the Board's way. In the event the Board was not successful in its attempts to re-secure its influence in this area.[312] Nevertheless, the Commissioners' failure in this regard should not be allowed to obscure their ultimate objective: to maintain an influential role in the Irish relief effort. That the Treasury reported otherwise is a different matter.

[311] For example, the proposals contained within the Board's Circular 38 were implemented.
[312] For example, the Wasteland reclamation measure that the Board had been banking on to re-secure its influence was abandoned at the end of April in suspicious circumstances, see Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 162.

Chapter Five

Twisleton and the Irish Poor Law

Edward Twisleton's principled resignation over the introduction of the Rate-in-Aid into Ireland in March 1849 has ensured his status as one of the heroes in the 'story' of the Irish Famine.[1] Twisleton has also received a good press outside Irish Famine studies on account of a minority report which he submitted with the Royal Commission report on the Poor Law in Scotland in 1844.[2] In both instances, historians have warmed to the man for the same reasons: he was prepared to go against the grain and stick his neck out in support of the poor man. In 1844 Twisleton 'alone', we are told, perceived that his fellow Commissioners' continued endorsement of the unemployed man's non-entitlement to relief, in the face of so much hardship, 'was so much cant'. He, alone, 'wished to allow local authorities the discretionary power to assess the inhabitants for the relief of the unemployed in periods of depression of trade.'[3] He believed that powers should be put into place to compel 'the managers of the poor to provide medical help' and to ensure that the doctors attending the sick should work to a fixed scale of fees.[4] In 1849 it was Twisleton who provided the 'most vehement opposition' to the Rate-in-Aid bill because he felt it was 'the duty of the state and the national Treasury to provide for the areas still suffering from the Famine' and for Britain 'to spare itself the deep disgrace of permitting any of our miserable fellow subjects in the Distressed Unions to die of starvation.'[5]

But the distressed people of Paisley in June 1842 did not think that Edward

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[1] Kinealy is the principal proponent of Twisleton's heroe status in the story of the Famine, see C. Kinealy, *A Death-Dealing Famine: The Great Hunger in Ireland* (London, 1997), pp. 144-5. Twisleton also receives high praise indeed from Gray, see Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 315.
[2] *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law (Scotland)*, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1844 20 lxvi.
[3] I. Levitt and C. Smout, *The State of the Scottish Working Class in 1843* (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 153.
[4] Ibid., pp. 223-4.
[5] Kinealy, *A Death-Dealing Famine*, p. 145.

Twisleton was on the side of the angels. Instead the House of Commons were informed, via a petition, that Commissioner Twisleton 'had declared before the Relief Committee that it was necessary to render the condition of the operatives as disagreeable as possible, in order to compel them to locate themselves in other parts of the country'. He had done this, they complained, by ensuring that no married man should receive an allowance of more than six shillings per week. Twisleton did not deny this fact and although he informed his immediate political superior that he had never said that it was 'necessary to render the condition of the operatives as disagreeable as possible', he did make clear that it had been stated 'that considering the low wages of some of the hand loom weavers in Paisley and the vicinity, it would be an error in principle to grant allowances to able bodied men higher than the wages of the lowest class of hand loom weavers'.[6]

This principle of relief was to become something of a shibboleth for the Commissioner, for as a member of the Scarcity Commission in Ireland he had no qualms about adding his name to a resolution on the desirability of keeping the rate of remuneration 'below the market rate of labour at the respective time and place' of the Public Relief Works.[7] But while Twisleton was not always prone to go easy on the rate payers - some days before advocating below market rate relief wages, he and his fellow Commissioners had advised the government to insist upon collecting 'one moiety' of the cost of all Public Works 'by a rate upon the locality'[8] – his consistent

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[6] PRO, HO 45/345 (Home Office Papers): Twisleton to Graham, 18 June 1842 enclosing a copy of a petition of the inhabitants of Paisley 'in public meeting assembled', chaired by David McNair with marginal comments by Twisleton, dated 18 June1842. He went on to add that although other facts in the petition relating to himself were 'inaccurately worded', they were 'not substantially incorrect'.

[7] National Archives of Ireland, RLFC 1/1 (01): Kennedy to Pennefather, 2 Feb. 1846 enclosing the Scarcity Commission minute, 2 Feb. 1846.

[8] RLFC 1/1: Scarcity Commission Minute, 27 Jan. 1846. The argument that Twisleton and the other Commissioners ran was that by making the rate-payers invest some of their own funds in the works, they would share the burden of responsibility with the government for tackling fraud. In the event, it took the Home Secretary to tell them that a degree of fraud had to be lived with and that, in the last

concern was to keep the rates down.[9]

Edward Twisleton became a Poor Law Commissioner because the profession involved dealing with subjects which 'peculiarly' interested him; because the Poor Law was 'independent of Party' – 'a pretty figure I should cut in soliciting promotion in other departments from Tories' – and perhaps most importantly of all to the ninth and youngest son of an archdeacon,[10] because the Poor Law held out to him, as a profession, 'better prospects than any other'.[11] The evidence of a burning desire to ameliorate the lot of the working man is thin and although it would be fair to say that in certain areas he adopted a more balanced approach to the question of the relief of the poor than many of his contemporaries,[12] it should be remembered that Twisleton was seen by his political superiors as a man that could be trusted to oversee the relief of distress and he would not have been so if he held views that were too far ahead of his time.

In July 1842 after the Poor Law Commissioner had returned from Paisley, the Home Secretary wrote to inform him of 'his entire satisfaction with the prudence which marked his conduct in the discharge of a very difficult and painful duty.'[13] Graham did not forget what Twisleton had done in Paisley and nor did he overlook

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resort, relief had to be freely given, see Nottingham University Library, NeC 9230 / 1 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 6 Feb. 1846.

[9] See, for example, Twisleton's reaction to the rates to be levied on the rate-payers under the provisions of the new Scottish Poor Law Bill, National Archives of Wales, C/2503 (Harpton Court Papers): Twisleton to Lewis, 3 June 1845: 'I read the Lord Advocate's speech introducing into Parliament the new Scotch Poor Law Bill. I am afraid that in granting the proposed Commission the proposed powers respecting individual allowances of paupers, the very powers have been given which ought to have been studiously withheld. The ultimate, although not the immediate effect of the measure will be to increase the poor rates far more than my own scheme would have done.'

[10] Twisleton's father, Thomas James, was the Archdeacon of Colombo. Only two of Twisleton's elder brothers survived beyond infancy.

[11] Broughton Castle, Oxfordshire, Twisleton Papers: Edward Twisleton to his mother, 5 June 1844.

[12] For example, the provision of medical relief.

[13] PRO HO 45/345 (Home Office Papers): Twisleton to Graham, 4 July 1842 with Graham's recorded response.

his earlier work on the Stockport Commission.[14] Indeed he was to draw Heytesbury's attention to Twisleton's work in both of these towns in December 1845 when he was defending the government's relief plan in the face of Lucas' proposed policy alterations.[15] Earlier that month, Graham had informed Twisleton of how much he valued his 'clear perception and accurate discernment'; assuring the Commissioner that he relied 'with great confidence' on his 'prudence, moderation and firmness'.[16] Over two weeks later Graham was still praising Twisleton's 'prudence and abilities', informing him that he had been 'gratified' by the 'terms of approbation' which Lord John Russell had 'bestowed' upon his appointment.[17] And when there was a question in the House of Lords over Twisleton's appointment as the fourth Poor Law Commissioner in Ireland, Wellington was told, in no uncertain terms, that Graham had advised the Crown to promote and send to Ireland in the 'present emergency' the assistant Poor Law Commissioner whom he 'considered best qualified for the service'. Twisleton, Wellington was told, had had his 'prudence and abilities ...tested in Scotland in 1842, when he superintended the relief given to the poor in Paisley'.[18] The government had needed an official that could be relied upon to administer relief in an economical manner and just as Twisleton had not disappointed them then, [19] the Home Secretary knew that he would not disappoint in Ireland.

Twisleton was not, however, a natural Tory. Indeed he had been born into a Whig family and had joined a public department because it was 'independent of Party'. So the question arises, did the Commissioner sit easy with 'soliciting

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[14] Broughton Castle, Twisleton Papers: Twisleton to his mother, 17 Jan. 1842.
[15] NeC 9228/1 (Newcastle Papers): Graham to Heytesbury, 15 Dec. 1845.
[16] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Twisleton, 2 Dec. 1845.
[17] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Twisleton, 19 Dec. 1845.
[18] British Library (Graham Papers): Graham to Wellington, 15 Feb. 1846.
[19] PRO, HO 45/345 (Home Office Papers): Twisleton to H. Hyett and then forwarded on to Graham, 13 June 1842: 'I desire to add that the funds at present at the disposal of the relief committee in Paisley are administered with economy – and that I have incurred considerable odium on account of the supposed stringency of the present arrangements ....'.

promotion' from Tories? In 1841 when the Whigs were forced from office, he appears to have had mixed feelings:

> The star of my friends the Whigs has set ... I am afraid for a long time. ... Peace be with their ashes! Speak nothing but good of the dead! ... I daresay you may ask how the late changes are likely to affect me. I cannot speak positively ... I am however much pleased with the appointment of Sir James Graham to the Home Office, as he is one of the best Poor Law men in the Kingdom.[20]

Although Twisleton was not averse to the occasional criticism of his new political superior,[21] the fact remains that he very quickly came around to the belief that Britain and particularly the Irish were better off with Peel and Graham at the helm of the ship of state. This political shift can be explained on two grounds; the personal - the fact that he had worked well in the past under Graham and deeply respected his judgement; and the political - he believed in maintaining the integrity of the British Empire and thought that Peel and Graham were the best men to do this. Twisleton, like so many of his contemporaries, did not favour the repeal of the act of union; he gave it as his opinion in December 1845 that he dreaded the effects in Ireland of a dissolution, 'unless O'Connell can be induced to desist from making repeal the test of candidates,'[22] He was happy to assist in the process of making concessions of patronage within the Poor Law administration for political reasons[23] and he approved of the Charitable Bequests act and the Maynooth grant by way of wider government concessions to the Irish Catholics.[24]. However he did not think that those concessions should endanger the integrity of the union and ultimately the Empire, which he

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[20] Broughton Castle, Twisleton Papers: Edward Twisleton to his mother, 6 Sept. 1841
[21] Broughton Castle, Twisleton Papers: Edward Twisleton to his mother 10 Oct. 1841.
[22] C/2506 (Harpton Court Papers): Twisleton to Lewis, 13 Dec. 1845.
[23] C/2500: Twisleton to Lewis, Undated (Jan. 1846?) and BL (Graham Papers): Graham to Twisleton, 30 Mar. 1846.
[24] He was also disappointed with Peel's government for not pushing the endowment of the Roman Catholic priesthood in Ireland; see National Library of Wales, C/2507 (Harpton Court Papers): Twisleton to Lewis, 17 Dec. 1845 and British Library (Graham Papers): Twisleton to Graham, 9 July 1846.

believed needed safeguarding.[25] Given this commitment to the Empire, it is certainly possible to see why he thought the introduction of the Rate-in-Aid into Ireland presented such a betrayal and potential threat to the aims and integrity of the British Empire and ultimately why he resigned form his post. But it is important to note at this juncture that, despite his protestations, Twisleton did not appear to mind having to solicit patronage from the Tories, for he found that he worked extremely well with them and with Sir James Graham in particular.

When Peel was handed back the reins of power following Russell's failure to form an administration in December 1845, Twisleton was not shy about informing his Whig friend and superior, George Cornwall Lewis (Poor Law Commissioner for England and Wales, 1839-1847, MP for Herefordshire, 1847-1852, Secretary to the Board of Control, 1847-1848, Under-Secretary for the Home Office, 1848-1850, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1850-1852) of the joy that he felt in not losing Graham from the Home Office:

> I must say that I was uncommonly glad not to lose Sir J G from the Home Office. No new Home Secretary, even if he had equal abilities, would have had equal knowledge and experience in Poor Law matters. As for Corn Laws, there can be little doubt that there is a better chance of their being knocked on the head now, than if Lord John with all his good intentions, had come into office.[26]

Twisleton's comment on Corn Law repeal is revealing, for it demonstrates a further reason why the Commissioner may have favoured a Peel government and reveals where his political priorities then lay. He expressed his thoughts more clearly on this subject in an earlier letter to the same correspondent:

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[25] One explanation for this strongly held belief is that his family had directly benefited from Britain's overseas possessions (particularly his father in Colombo) and he himself had gained promotion in his own profession by travelling across the Irish Sea. For the Commissioner's views on India, see C/2509 (Harpton Court Papers): Twisleton to Lewis, 29 July1846.

[26] C/2508 (Harpton Court Papers): Twisleton to Lewis, 2 Jan. 1846.

> Irish questions are now of more importance to the Empire than merely English ones. I am apprehensive that we are returning to a melancholy period of weak administrations, which propose excellent measures which they are unable to carry, as a substitute for a strong administration, which if it did not propose so much, could at any rate carry all that it proposed.[27]

Put simply, Edward Twisleton might have been a Whig by birth but by 1845 he could see the benefits of a strong executive government and as a result was a strong adherent of Peel's government. Again, it is highly probable that he saw such government as the best safeguard of the union between England and Ireland and of the wider safety and integrity of the British Empire. As he made clear in his letter to Lewis of 17 December, he genuinely believed that 'Irish questions' were of 'more importance to the Empire than merely English ones'. If the Empire was to be kept together, then England's desires had now to play second fiddle to Ireland's. The following August he attempted to put into words what he thought this should mean for Ireland:

> I do not think there is any one measure in the power of the legislature to pass which could materially benefit the lower orders of the Irish. There evils are social and there is a radically vicious distribution of landed property over the greater part of the island. A series of measures is required and the good effect even of those measures would be slow. Of political measures the most important would be the endowment of the Roman Catholic clergy.[28]

It is interesting that the Poor Law Commissioner did not chose to elaborate upon what relief measures he thought could be devised to combat the next onslaught of distress, which as he told his cousin, was now almost guaranteed, given the 'more fatal' effects of the disease in the new crop of potatoes. The way the wind of public opinion had been blowing, it would not have come as a great surprise to Lord Leigh to be told by his relative that the extension of outdoor relief in Ireland could be firmly on the cards.

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[27] C/2507 (Harpton Court Papers): Twisleton to Lewis, 17 Dec. 1845.
[28] Broughton Castle, Twisleton Papers: Twisleton to his cousin, Lord Leigh, 11 Aug. 1846.

But Twisleton did not even hint at this. The only concession he made on the subject was that it would be 'a very difficult matter for government to decide on the steps which they ought to take.'[29] This problem, as he saw it, was for the executive to solve and it appears that when he informed Graham in February 1846 that it was 'quite foreign to the proper functions of a mere administrative Commission [the Scarcity Commission] to enter into the consideration of such a great question of state policy [the repayment of loans]' because this was a question 'to be decided exclusively by the government',[30] he did not just mean that the consideration of 'state policy' was off limits for this administrative Commission, but also for him, generally. As will be seen, time and time again Twisleton had to be coaxed into giving his opinion on such matters.

Despite being one of the three members of the thinned down Scarcity Commission and the member who, after Routh, attended the most meetings of the Commission,[31] Twisleton does not appear to have been consulted by Trevelyan when the Assistant Secretary was drawing up his proposals for the new Cabinet on the relief of the forecasted Irish distress. Indeed as we have seen in the previous chapter Jones, Routh and Kane were all consulted on the Cabinet memorandum before the paper was delivered to the ministers,[32] while Griffith and Larcom were also sent a copy of the proposals on 6 August.[33] This could be explained by the fact that by August 1846 Trevelyan had had little to do with the Poor Law Commissioner and also by the fact that the new blueprint for relief had little to do with the Poor Law in Ireland. But one

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[29] Ibid.
[30] British Library (Graham Papers): Twisleton to Graham, 12 Feb. 1846.
[31] Routh had the highest percentage attendance rate of the Commission's meetings (97.9 %), Twisleton was second (94.5 %) and McKenna (86.7 %) third.
[32] See, for example, MSS Film. 1186-92 Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 27 July 1846.
[33] Ibid., Trevelyan to Griffith, Larcom, Routh, Kane and Jones, 6 Aug. 1846. McGregor was sent a copy on the 7 Aug., 1846.

of the key proposals – that of basing the rate for the repayment of the advances for the continuation of the Public Relief Works on the Poor Law valuation, as opposed to the Grand Jury cess – did involve the Poor Law Commissioner and what is more, it was a proposal which Twisleton had vigorously opposed when it had first been mooted by his fellow Commissioners in February 1846.[34] It is also interesting to note that despite some talk of the extension of outdoor relief in Ireland in the August meetings of Cabinet,[35] no reference ever appears to have been made to Twisleton for his opinion on the matter. Instead Routh and Jones were summoned over to London to 'settle … the approaching campaign'[36] and while they waited on Trevelyan and Wood in Downing Street, Twisleton was on holiday visiting his relatives in Warwickshire and Gloucestershire. Indeed having wrapped up the affairs of the Scarcity Commission following its last meeting on Saturday 15 August, Twisleton had fled Ireland's shores within a week.[37] On 24 August he was at Stoneleigh Abbey, visiting his cousin[38] and from there he went to London, via his mother in Cheltenham, to try to catch Lewis. No further correspondence exists to corroborate a meeting between Lewis and Twisleton in the week commencing 30 August and Lewis's diary entries unfortunately only begin on 16 September 1846, by which time Twisleton was back in Ireland. We know this because on 11 October he informed his mother, from Enniskillen, that he had commenced a tour of inspection of the workhouses in Ireland sometime between 6 and 12 September and that he had been constantly on the move since then on a tour of inspection which had taken in Carlow, Kilkenny, Cashel,

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[34] National Archives of Ireland, RLFC 1/1 (01): Kennedy to Pennefather, 2 Feb. 1846.
[35] See footnote 161 of the previous chapter.
[36] MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 97 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 18 Aug. 1846.
[37] ING Barings, London NP5142 (Northcote Papers): Redington to Labouchere, 21, 22 Aug. 1846.
[38] Broughton Castle (Twisleton Papers): Twisleton to Leigh, 11 Aug. 1846.

Clonmel, Dungarvan, Cork, Bandon, Bantry, Glengariff, Killarney, Limerick, Galway, Clifden, Westport, Tuam, Roscommon, Ballina and Sligo.[39]

The Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary who had arrived in Dublin on 2 and 8 September, appeared to have little idea where the Poor Law Commissioner was and had certainly not set eyes on him since their arrival. On 17 September the Prime Minister informed Bessborough that he should consult Twisleton about the Poor Law Guardians.[40] But before Russell could write again to criticise the Lord Lieutenant for never mentioning Twisleton, whose opinion he considered to be very 'valuable' and which he now desired,[41] Bessborough had fobbed him off with a promise to see Twisleton, adding that he had the 'near permanent advice' at the Castle of Griffith and Jones - whom he would 'never' act without.[42] The implication of Bessborough's letter was that he had all of the advice that he needed. The Prime Minister did not agree and on 22 October he informed the Viceroy that if he did not want Twisleton's assistance, given that he never mentioned him, he should inform him and the Prime Minister would recall him to London.[43] The Lord Lieutenant replied nonchalantly that he had not yet been able to see the Commissioner because he had been away 'for a long time on his holidays or making a tour' but Alfred Power (Assistant Poor Law Commissioner in Ireland, 1847-1849, Chief Poor Law Commissioner in Ireland, 1849-1852) had assured him that he would return soon.[44] Again the impression left by Bessborough is that he did not particularly mind one way or another what Twisleton was up to. Coincidentally Twisleton arrived in Dublin the very next day, after completing his tour of the workhouses in Donegal, Gweedore, Londonderry, Omagh

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[39] Broughton Castle (Twisleton Papers): Twisleton to his mother, 11 Oct. 1846. Interestingly, there was no workhouse in Glengariff.
[40] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 17 Sept. 1846.
[41] PRO 30/22/5C (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 20 Sept. 1846.
[42] PRO 30/225C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 19 Sept. 1846.
[43] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 22 Oct. 1846.
[44] PRO 30/22/5D (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 23 Oct. 1846.

and Monaghan and following a meeting with Labouchere, held shortly after his arrival, sat down to dinner with the Lord Lieutenant on 29 October.[45] Yet two weeks after Twisleton's return to the Custom House, Russell still felt none the wiser for his re-emergence and in a letter to Wood, remarked that 'the Commissioner Twisleton was the most useful man possible in English and Scotch distress. But we hear nothing of him in Ireland.'[46]

That pattern was not to change. On 3 October Wood explained to Labouchere that if 'Parliament in the course of next session gave out door relief in Ireland' he would not hold himself bound to continue advances 'under the present sanction beyond the 15 of August, at the latest'. The Chancellor admitted that he was putting the case of outdoor relief '*exempli gratia*' here,[47] but it is significant that it was back on the agenda as a distinct possibility in Wood's mind. Six weeks later the Chancellor had drawn up plans to extend outdoor relief to Ireland and was ready to submit them to the Cabinet.[48] Russell wanted to know what Bessborough thought about the idea, as he explained to the Viceroy, granting outdoor relief to Ireland was a 'most important step' and unless it was to be 'very much guarded' he would be 'reluctant' to agree to it.[49] Interestingly, Twisleton's opinion on the matter was not sought at this point, perhaps because the Prime Minister now knew better than to ask his Lord Lieutenant what the chief Poor Law Commissioner in Ireland thought. And, true to form, Bessborough did not consult Twisleton on the subject but instead lost no time in reporting back to Russell that he had written to 'the proper persons', namely, Griffith and Larcom, to 'mature' plans of an alternative relief proposal which he wished to

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[45] Broughton Castle (Twisleton Papers): Twisleton to his mother, 2 Nov. 1846. Although Lord George Hill lived in Gweedore there was not a workhouse there. The nearest one was situated at Glengariff.
[46] W.A4/56/I (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Russell to Wood, 6 Nov. 1846.
[47] A4/185 I Letterbook (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Wood to Labouchere, 3 Oct. 1846.
[48] PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 17 Nov. 1846.
[49] PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 21 Nov. 1846.

submit to the Cabinet.[50] As we have seen in a previous chapter, Bessborough was not successful with his alternative proposals and on 16 December 1846 the Cabinet agreed to extend outdoor relief to the infirm and sick 'out of the workhouse' in Ireland.[51]

However, even if Twisleton had not been on his holiday and then on tour for ten weeks from late August, it is unlikely that he would have played his hand differently. Indeed the Commissioner was reluctant to express his opinions when it came to matters of policy in the period that Graham was at the Home Office, and Graham was a man whom he deeply respected and whom he worked well with. It should come as no surprise to learn that Twisleton was not more proactive in this area with his new Whig masters. But Russell was not to know this when he came into office and it appears as if his continued and lengthy absence from Dublin Castle, at a time when Russell was actively seeking his counsel, seriously weakened his credibility with members of the Cabinet and particularly with the Prime Minister. Indeed by the time Russell was ready to put the bill for the extension of the Poor Law in Ireland into a legislative form, he did not mind who came over from Dublin to arrange matters,[52] and that was primarily because he had found that he could turn to George Cornewall Lewis for advice on the Poor Law in Ireland. The fact that one of the Poor Law Commissioners was instrumental in guiding Poor Law policy through the Cabinet is not in itself unusual, but Lewis was not the Commissioner responsible for Ireland and it is significant that the first mention of Twisleton's objection to the measure came in a letter from the Chief Secretary to Russell, six days after the Cabinet had come to a

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[50] See B.336 (Bessborough Papers): Bessborough to Labouchere, 23 Nov. 1846 and PRO 30/22/5E (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 24 Nov. 1846.
[51] PRO 30/225F (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 17 Dec. 1846. Although Russell informed Bessborough on 3 Dec. that everyone appeared to be in agreement on the subject, see PRO 30/22/5F (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 3 Dec. 1846.
[52] PRO 30/22/5G (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 26 Dec. 1846.

decision on the matter: 'Mr. Twisleton is afraid of your Poor Law amendment bill. He says he will do his best to carry it out, if it is passed, but that he fears that the rates will break down under it.'[53]

The Cabinet had to wait until January for the chapter and verse edition:

> I am bound to say that I regard the bill with great apprehension; that I do not think that Ireland can bear the expense of it during the present year and that it appears to me inequitable to throw such a heavy burden upon the land of Ireland under existing circumstances. ... at present 90 out of 130 workhouses contain as many inmates as they were built to accommodate and the same will be the case with many more before the proposed bill becomes the law of the land. Hence under the bill, out door relief would be established over the greater part of Ireland.[54]

If Twisleton had delivered this commentary a few weeks earlier, it may well have bolstered opposition to the measure in the Cabinet and the outcome for Ireland might have been different. But, as has been seen, this was not the way the Commissioner worked and when Labouchere informed Russell that Twisleton would do his best to carry it out, he was not attempting to make light of a potential problem. Indeed Twisleton had assured Labouchere that the case was quite otherwise: 'if it is passed into a law I will do my best to carry it into execution energetically and conscientiously according to the intentions of the Legislature.'[55] Eight months later, after the bill had been passed, Twisleton's opposition to the measure clearly still weighed heavily on his mind, as the new Lord Lieutenant was to make clear to George Cornewall Lewis by giving it as his opinion that 'he [Twisleton] is

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[53] PRO 30/22/5G (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 23 Dec. 1846.
[54] C/2987 (Harpton Court Papers): Twisleton to Labouchere, 1 Jan. 1847. Twisleton drew further attention to the extent to which he was out of line with government thinking by going on to argue that 'the most favourable anticipation' was that the potato 'may again become a healthy plant and may after a while be cultivated nearly as extensively before.'
[55] Ibid.

desperately afraid of being thought deficient in zeal about carrying out the law because when in London he gave an opinion against it'.[56]

Of course Twisleton may have remained quiescent on this subject for so long because he did not know that outdoor relief was a serious consideration of the government's. If, for example, he learnt about this at about the same time as the other relief administrators - 21 December 1846[57] - the timing of his memorandum makes more sense. But it seems inconceivable to imagine that Lewis and Twisleton had not corresponded about the proposal before this date, even if that particular correspondence is no longer extant. The fact that Lewis had sent instructions for the Irish Poor Law bill to Twisleton on 19 December does also rather indicate that Twisleton knew what was on the table.[58]

What seems more likely is that the Chief Secretary may have deliberately played down the Commissioner's views on this subject in his presentation of them to the key members of the Cabinet, out of a desire to simplify matters for himself and to see the measure pass without a hitch.[59] Labouchere certainly appears to have been ambivalent about the measure:

> what between poverty and vagrancy I fear that you will have great difficulty in raising the vast amount of local taxation – this is Twisleton's view – at the same time I feel the impossibility of leaving a crowd of wretches to famish at the door of the workhouses as they are now doing, but I think it should be more carefully guarded.[60]

The opening sentence of Twisleton's memorandum also gives the impression that Labouchere had delayed passing on the Commissioner's views on the subject, as

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[56] C.532 (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Lewis, 8 Aug. 1847.
[57] PRO T64/362/B (Treasury Papers): Jones to Trevelyan, 21 Dec. 1846.
[58] National Library of Wales, MS 3566 (Harpton Court Papers): G.C. Lewis diary, 19 Dec. 1846.
[59] Although Twisleton remarked to his mother that the Chief Secretary was a 'very pure character, with a high sense of honour and a disinterested love of truth', he also remarked that he found Labouchere 'very fidgety and quick in feeling'. See Broughton Castle Papers: Twisleton to his mother, 19 Jan. 1847.
[60] PRO 30/22/5G (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 27 Dec. 1846.

Twisleton noted that he had only recently been requested to put pen to paper on the Poor Law proposal.[61] But Twisleton was also a reluctant dissenter and after dissenting, remained adamant in his self-presentation as a loyal servant of the government and a mere administrator that was content to implement and not to formulate policy: 'as I understand that the Cabinet has agreed to that bill, I feel extremely unwilling to offer any remarks upon it.'[62] As it happened Twisleton's colleague in Ireland, Alfred Power and his superior in England, George Cornewall Lewis, were to go some way in fulfilling that role.

In the first weeks of October, during Twisleton's absence, questions concerning the provision of breakfasts and the admittance of children in the workhouses arose. Labouchere lobbied the Home Secretary to give specific directions to the Poor Law Commissioners on the matter, but Sir George Grey instead chose to follow the line recommended by Twisleton's deputy, Power, who was resident in Dublin at the time:

> I have told Labouchere I thought Mr. Power took a very sensible view of it ... if ample accommodation existed in any districts where the distress was very severe I would not positively prohibit, especially as Power thinks that it was contemplated in the act that an emergency might arise to render this necessary.[63]

Wood consented to Grey's decision and on returning the forwarded letter from Power remarked that it was 'a very good one and one in which I very much agree.'[64] From this moment on, Power not only appears to have gained the confidence of his Poor Law superiors in Somerset House, but also of the executive. Thus after Twisleton's return to Dublin, when Lewis was discussing the appointment of an additional assistant Commissioner in Ireland, Lewis thought nothing of informing Twisleton that

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[61] C/2987 (Harpton Court Papers): Twisleton to Labouchere, 1 Jan. 1847.
[62] Ibid.
[63] A4/58 Part I (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): G.Grey to Wood, 16 Oct. 1846.
[64] A4/185 1 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Wood to G.Grey, 18 Oct. 1846.

he wished to 'consult' Power on the subject.[65] By 26 December the Prime Minister was also quite content to have Power in London to help draft the Poor Law extension bill, [66] a view which was supported by Labouchere, who informed Russell that he would find Power 'a very good adviser on these matters.'[67]

Whereas Power was capable of proposing specific and localised Poor Law options for Ireland, the executive turned to Lewis for advice on wider matters of policy.[68] Lewis was comfortable with the Cabinet, he socialised with them[69] and he thought nothing of lobbying his brother-in-law on Irish and Poor Law matters. Indeed on 26 September 1846 the Poor Law Commissioner sent a paper to Clarendon on the 'mode of dealing with the Irish questions at this moment' and instructed him that he was 'at full liberty to show the paper to Lord John.'[70] Interestingly Lewis used this paper and a further letter to Clarendon on 13 October to develop the argument as to why 'outdoor relief to certain classes of the poor' should not be extended in Ireland; and to put the case for substantial grants, and not loans, for a country which had suffered great 'evil' at the hands of England.[71] Clarendon gave Lewis' ideas short shrift[72] but it is interesting to note that these views did not alienate or prevent other members of the government from turning to Lewis for assistance in drawing up plans

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[65] GMS AM 1408 254 (Harvard Papers): Lewis to Twisleton, 17 Dec. 1846.
[66] PRO 30/22/5G (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 26 Dec. 1846.
[67] PRO 30/22/5G (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 27 Dec. 1846.
[68] As Peel and Graham had done before them, see for example 3283 (Harpton Court Papers): unsigned and undated (Jan. 1846?) memorandum by Lewis on the 'question of advancing loans of public money to Boards of Guardians for relief of temporary destitution' in response to Lucas' memorandum on the subject.
[69] For example, from 4th to 7th Sept. 1846 Lewis joined a party at The Grove (his brother-in-law, Clarendon's, country seat in Hertfordshire) which consisted of Russell, Grey, Macaulay, Wood and Clarendon.
[70] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 70 (Clarendon Papers): Lewis to Clarendon, 26 Sept. 1846.
[71] Ibid., Lewis memorandum on the state of Ireland, Sept. 1846 and MS Clar. Dep. C.531 (Clarendon Papers): Lewis to Clarendon, 13 Oct. 1846.
[72] MS Clar. Dep. C.532 (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Lewis, 1 Oct. 1846.

for the implementation of the very policy which he had opposed.[73] There is no evidence to suggest that Lewis had changed his mind on the matter by this time, but by informing Clarendon,[74] and then Wood[75] that Graham himself approved of the 'limited plan' that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was proposing, he removed a serious obstacle – that of the parliamentary opposition to the measure – in the ministers' minds and, in the process, weakened his own position. This was a major boon for Wood and it undoubtedly smoothed the proposal's passage through the Cabinet. But Lewis knew that serious problems lay ahead and as he began to make arrangements with Twisleton for Power to come over to London to draw up the bill, he took the opportunity to point out some of the more problematic aspects of the measure to the Irish Commissioner.[76]

Ironically, just as Twisleton's reputation and influence entered the doldrums, Bessborough embraced the Commissioner and began to lobby Russell to send for Twisleton and talk the matter over with him.[77] But the Commissioner was not as malleable as the Lord Lieutenant would have liked and the nearest he came to a confrontation with the executive in London, was correcting Sir George Grey over the 'erroneous ideas' that the Home Secretary had espoused in one of his letters, about the significance of the rise in deposits in savings banks in Ireland.[78] Thus, in a curious reversal of roles, Twisleton was left behind in Dublin to attend to the day to day

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[73] A4/121 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Lewis to Wood, 12 Dec. 1846. Wood called on Lewis to discuss the Irish poor law on 6 Dec., 1846. Lewis prepared his plan on the Irish poor laws on 8 Dec. but did not send it on to Wood until he had had an interview with Graham on 11 Dec., 1846. See 3566 (Harpton Court Papers): George Cornwall Lewis diary, 8, 11 and 12 Dec. 1846.
[74] MS Clar. Dep. C.531 (Clarendon Papers): Lewis to Clarendon, 12 Dec. 1846.
[75] A4/121 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Lewis to Wood, 12 Dec. 1846.
[76] For example, the question of whether outdoor relief should be given where the head of the family was sick. See GMS 1408, 253 (Harvard Papers): Lewis to Twisleton, 24 Dec. 1846.
[77] PRO 30/22/5G (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 28 Dec. 1846 and for the first time, the Lord Lieutenant made a virtue of including references to Twisleton's views in his letters to the Prime Minister. See, for example, PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 2 Jan. 1847.
[78] PRO HO 45 1080/B (Home Office Papers): Twisleton to G. Grey, 26 Dec. 1846.

business of the Poor Law Commission in Ireland [79] while Power went off to London to wait on the Home Secretary and Prime Minister in order to settle the bill for Parliament.[80]

Twisleton, from the very outset therefore, had little to do with the Poor Law extension bill. As we have seen, the instructions on which the bill were to be based were sent over by Lewis on 19 December[81] and Twisleton passed them directly onto Power.[82] Two weeks later, Lewis received the first draft of the bill from Power[83] who, on his arrival in London, was thrown straight into conference on the subject with Lewis at the Poor Law office and with the Home Secretary and Prime Minister in Downing Street.[84] A Cabinet committee was appointed to look into the Irish relief measures on 14 January[85] and two days later the Cabinet had signed off on its proposals.[86] But these proposals were mostly related to the Temporary relief bill and while they indicated that the Temporary relief measure was to be paid for out of the union rates, very few additional details about the Poor Law extension emerged.[87]

On the same day that the Cabinet committee was appointed, Trevelyan painted a comprehensive picture of the Temporary measure in a letter to Jones and invited the chairman's 'unreserved opinion' on the proposals.[88] It is difficult to say whether

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[79] For example, on 30 Dec. the Commissioners sought advice from the Home Office on a resolution put forward by the Board of Guardians of the Edenberry union as to legality of spending a proportion of the rates on establishing soup kitchens in various electoral divisions, see, HO 45 1706 (Home Office Papers): Poor Law Commission to Sir George Grey, 30 Dec. 1846.
[80] A4/58 Part I (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): G. Grey to Wood, 4 Jan. 1847.
[81] National Library of Wales, MS 3566 (Harpton Court Papers): G.C. Lewis diary, 19 Dec. 1846.
[82]GMS 1408, 253 (Harvard Papers):Lewis to Twisleton, 24 Dec. 1846: 'I received yesterday your letter saying that Power had received the instructions about the bill and was coming over to England.'
[83] Ibid., 3 Jan. 1847.
[84] Ibid., 4 Jan. 1847 and A4/58 Part I (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): G. Grey to Wood, 4 Jan. 1847. Power saw Sir George Grey and Russell on 5 Jan. 1847.
[85] J19/8/14 (Castle Howard Archives): Morpeth diary, 14 Jan. 1847.
[86] See B153 (Bessborough Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 16 Jan. 1847. Or, as Hobhouse recorded: 'at least no one said anything against them'. See Add. MS 43749 (Broughton Papers, Hobhouse Diary), 16 Jan. 1847.
[87] CAB/46A (Palmerston Papers): Printed Cabinet memorandum, 15 Jan. 1847
[88]MSS Film. 1186-1192 Dep. 101 (Trevelyan Private Letter Books): Trevelyan to Jones, 14 Jan. 1847.

Trevelyan or Wood had worked out the mechanics of this bill, but it is interesting to note that the Assistant Secretary approached Jones for his advice on the proposal and not Twisleton, whose department was to be directly involved with the relief scheme. But the Lord Lieutenant thought differently and informed Labouchere on 17 January that he thought the 'Poor bill', the title he confusingly allocated to the Temporary relief measure, could 'hardly be passed in its present form' and that he had summoned Twisleton to a meeting to get the Commissioner's advice on the matter.[89] Bessborough never disclosed the outcome of this meeting but it is perhaps significant that Twisleton did not attend a meeting called by the Viceroy with Routh, Jones and Griffith to devise the best mode of implementing the new measure.[90] This is not to say that Twisleton stood idle in these weeks, as the daily business of Poor Law administration in Ireland threw up enough difficulties to keep the Commissioner fully occupied.[91] But the lack of input from Twisleton on this measure is noteworthy and can only be explained by the fact that the worrying lack of funds in many of the unions in Ireland appears to have become a major preoccupation for the Commissioner.

In October, just a day after Twisleton had returned from his tour of inspection of the Irish workhouses, the Under-Secretary sent off a memorandum on the overcrowded state of workhouses throughout Ireland. The unions, Redington declared, were finding it increasingly difficult to collect a new rate and their funds

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[89] B336 (Bessborough Papers): Bessborough to Labouchere, Sunday (17 Jan. 1847).
[90] NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Redington to Labouchere, 21 Jan. 1847. Russell had told Bessborough to arrange for the 'change of system' with Redington, Routh and Jones. Bessborough added Griffith to this list, but not Twisleton. See PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 18 Jan. 1847.
[91] The question of the payment of interest on advances made by the Board of Guardians by the Treasurers of the unions was one such question. See, A4/58/Part I (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Sir George Grey to Wood, 30 Dec. 1846; HO 122/19 (Home Office Papers): G. Grey to Twisleton, 2 Jan. 1847; A4/59 Part I (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Trevelyan to Wood, 6 and 8 Jan. 1847; PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 19 Jan. 1847.

were exhausted.[92] A day later Twisleton asked the Home Secretary for advice on how the Irish Poor Law Commission should respond to the application made by three unions for a loan to defray the expenses of the workhouse. The answer that came back was predictably mealy-mouthed but the Home Office did offer the Commission a glimmer of light by insisting, 'it is of great importance that no departure from the ordinary course of proceeding should be sanctioned except under the pressure of the most urgent necessity'.[93] Twisleton could see such a necessity on the horizon and while he believed that a certain class of Irish ratepayer was shirking its fiscal responsibility by withholding their rents,[94] he knew, because he had seen it with his own eyes, that the majority of the unions with overcrowded workhouses would have great difficulty in defraying their expenses until the next harvest. This fear was also shared by Russell and the Prime Minister informed Wood that the government would have to consider the workhouse question. [95] But the Chancellor would not bend on the subject and Labouchere received letters from George Grey, Trevelyan and Wood on 11, 15 and 16 of December, respectively, informing him that the government would not sanction a contribution from public funds in aid of the rates.[96] Twisleton evidently thought that the matter was worth pressing and drew up a memorandum on the subject, which he forwarded to Labouchere, who in turn sent it onto Sir George Grey. However he was to be disappointed, as Sir George Grey simply toed the

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[92] RA/VIC/D15/61 (Royal Archives Irish Papers): Redington memorandum on the state of Ireland, 25 Oct. 1846.
[93] PRO HO 122/19 (Home Office Papers): Phillips to Twisleton, 28 Oct. 1846.
[94] C/2511 (Harpton Court Papers): Twisleton to Lewis, 19 Nov. 1846. Twisleton referred to tenants of above £20 to £30 rent.
[95] A4/56/1 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Russell to Wood, 6 Nov. 1846.
[96] PRO HO 79/9 (Home Office Papers): G. Grey to Labouchere, 11 Dec. 1846; 338 (Bessborough Papers): Trevelyan to Labouchere, 15 Dec. 1846; 340 (Bessborough Papers): Wood to Labouchere, 16 Dec. 1846.

Treasury line and the application for government grants in aid of the rates was denied.[97]

If Twisleton was disappointed about this decision, then the Chief Secretary certainly was not, for he commended Russell on the government's resolution not to come to 'the assistance of the Poor rates'.[98] Fortunately for Twisleton, the Lord Lieutenant was willing to champion the cause of his newfound favourite[99] and, despite the fact that the shortage of food in Ireland soon occupied the majority of his attention,[100] lobbied the government for further financial assistance on a repeated basis.[101] This approach yielded results and on 18 January the executive in London finally conceded that in cases where the Lord Lieutenant was convinced that the means of providing for the poor in a workhouse would soon fail, or had failed, as a result of the 'real pressure of circumstances' or due to the 'default of Boards of Guardians', and where the Lord Lieutenant also believed that an 'extreme emergency' was likely to arise as a result of this, Bessborough was authorised to take 'immediate measures' to supply food for the 'temporary maintenance' of the inmates. But a further condition was imposed which was that it was to be understood by the workhouse authorities that the 'price of the food' was to be considered as an advance on the future rates.'[102] Although this concession merely deferred the day of reckoning for the Irish ratepayers, Twisleton appears to have accepted it without comment and by the end of January the Viceroy was able to inform Labouchere that Twisleton was

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[97] PRO HO 122/19 (Home Office Papers): G. Grey to Twisleton, 21 Dec. 1846.
[98] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Labouchere to Russell, 1 Jan. 1847.
[99] PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 2 Jan. 1847.
[100] See PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 6 Jan. 1847.
[101] See, for example, PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 14 Jan. 1847 and B337 (Bessborough Papers): Redington to Labouchere, 19 Jan. 1847.
[102] PRO HO 122/19 (Home Office Papers): George Grey to Bessborough, 18 Jan. 1847.

'satisfactory' with respect to the Unions, if the government could only 'get over the present moment.'[103]

It is interesting to note that while Twisleton was attempting to extract further funds from the government to make the existing Poor Law in Ireland work, both Redington and Cornewall Lewis were attempting to change government policy over the proposed Irish Poor Law extension.[104] By this time the bill was before Parliament, so matters had become serious, but the Poor Law Commissioner would not revisit his opposition to the measure. Whether or not Twisleton's reluctance on this part extended as far as a refusal to get involved in the amendment of various clauses in the bill is difficult to say. For although Bessborough had asked the Commissioner to write to Power 'upon some great defects in framing the bill', no correspondence exists that indicates if Twisleton fulfilled the Lord Lieutenant's wishes and Bessborough himself did not sound altogether confident that Twisleton had written to Power on the subject.[105]

It seems that the Commissioner had other things on his mind at this time, not least of which was an uncertainty over his continued presence in Ireland. Twisleton had known since Christmas that the Poor Law Commission in England was due to be reformed[106] and by the end of January it was clear that there was to be a separate Poor Law Commissioner for Ireland. As a result, he must have felt that his future in Ireland

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[103] B336 (Bessborough Papers): Bessborough to Labouchere, 29 Jan. 1847.
[104] See B337 (Bessborough Papers): Redington to Labouchere, 20 Jan. 1847 and MS Clar. Dep. C.530 (Clarendon Papers): Lewis to Clarendon, 30 Jan. (1847). Redington based his opposition on surprising grounds: 'I shudder to think of the difficulties to be encountered in Sept. next, when we shall have to deal with these myriads of idle pensioners on state charity and whose condition will be in no way different then from what it is now. They will be an awful burthen on the land of Ireland, which although it should legitimately shoulder its own poor, may still reasonably complain of having them taught to be dependants on the community at large, without contributing in the least to produce the stock of food to which all must look for their support.'
[105] B336 (Bessborough Papers): Bessborough to Labouchere, 4 Feb. 1847.
[106] GMS 1408, 253 (Harvard Papers): Lewis to Twisleton, 24 Dec. 1846.

was by no means secure and on 10 February, he wrote to Lewis to sound the Commissioner out on the matter:

> If you have a favourable opportunity, either directly or indirectly, of ascertaining how my position here is to be affected I shall be much obliged to you if you will let me know the result. But I am not anxious in any way to push the question – as it is possible that Lord John Russell may not yet have made up his mind on the matter.[107]

As it happened Twisleton had good reason to worry, for Russell had it in mind to recall the Commissioner and offer him the job of permanent Secretary to the English Poor Law Commission, sending Sir Edmund Head (Poor Law Commissioner for England and Wales, 1841-1847, Governor of New Brunswick, 1848-1854) to Ireland in his place.[108] But Bessborough stepped in: 'I think him one of the best officers of the government I have ever seen and he does his business so temperately and quietly that he has never given offence to anyone'[109] and the Prime Minister relented.[110] Given this uncertainty about his career prospects, it is perhaps not surprising that Twisleton was not inclined to rock the boat about the Poor Law bill and between January and April he appears to have done little but go about his business 'temperately and quietly.'

10 Victoria Cap. 31: An Act to make further Provision for the Relief of the destitute Poor in Ireland

Although Wood commissioned Lewis to draw up a plan for the extension of the Irish Poor Law on 6 December 1846[111] the Commissioner did not send his plan to

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[107] C/2512 (Harpton Court Papers): Twisleton to Lewis, 10 Feb. 1847.
[108] PRO 30/22/6B (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 25 Feb. 1846.
[109] PRO 30/22/6B (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 27 Feb. 1847.
[110] PRO 30/22/6B (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 1 Mar. 1847.
[111] C.3566 (Harpton Court Papers): Lewis diary, 6 Dec. 1847.

Wood until 12 December.[112] On the same day, the Chancellor issued a printed memorandum on the proposed Relief Works for Ireland for the benefit of the Cabinet, which was due to meet to discuss the measures on 15 December. Lewis' memorandum on the subject is no longer extant, but we do know that the Commissioner prepared a plan which ran along the lines that Wood himself had suggested. It enumerated all of the classes of the poor whom it seemed 'safe to include', excluded 'the case of sickness in the family of an able bodied man', and allowed for the power of giving outdoor relief to be introduced 'partially and gradually' by the Poor Law Commissioners. Lewis concluded his letter to Wood by assuring him that such a proposal could be 'included in about twenty clauses or less', that the discussion in committee 'would not be very tedious' and that he had spoken to Graham on the measure and thought the statesman to be 'favourable to such a limited plan' as the Chancellor contemplated.[113] In the event Wood put a more pared-down proposal than this to the Cabinet:

> V. As there may be many attempts at imposing upon those who select persons for employment on the Relief Works, it is indispensable to have the power of applying, in such cases, some test of destitution. The obvious test is an offer of being removed into the workhouse. This, however, is only possible when there is room for the reception of able-bodied paupers; and in order to afford room in times of pressure, a power should be given to the Guardians to relieve out of the workhouse the aged and infirm who now occupy a large space in the building. By removing them, if necessary, the power would be acquired of admitting more able-bodied persons, at times when it was desirable to do so. ...
> VII ... To impose upon the wardens of each Electoral district the same duty as is imposed on the overseers of the poor in England, of relieving cases of urgent distress till the person can be received into the workhouse, or until the next meeting of the Board of Guardians. [114]

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[112] Ibid., 12 Dec. 1847.
[113] A4/121 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Lewis to Wood, 12 Dec. 1846.
[114] D16 (Royal Archives): Untitled printed Cabinet memorandum by Wood, 12 Dec. 1846.

Yet although Power had produced the first draft of the bill by 3 January[115] and Wood and Russell had given the assistant Commissioner further instructions for the measure by 5 January,[116] the committee of the Cabinet which had been appointed to look into the Irish relief measures on 14 January[117] do not appear to have examined even the first draft of this bill.[118] Nevertheless Russell was clear in his mind what the bill would entail and wrote to inform the Lord Lieutenant on 16 January that, as he saw it, while the bill would give relief to the 'old and infirm', the able-bodied would have to receive relief 'from our other measures'.[119] This view tallied with the impression of the measure held at Dublin Castle: 'One thing is certain, that Ireland must expect ... an extended Poor Law, requiring no test for those whose infirmities or helplessness is notorious'.[120] But despite raising repeated objections to the Temporary relief bill, the only time Dublin Castle commented on the Irish Poor Law before the extension bill was introduced into Parliament on 25 January, was on 25 January itself and even then the Castle's criticism was concerned with the Irish Poor Law execution bill.[121] Morpeth recorded in his diary that matters had got 'a little more into form' at the committee of the Cabinet on Ireland on 21 January and the Irish bills topped the order of business at the full meeting of the Cabinet on 23 January.[122] But there was still no sign that Dublin Castle was expecting the bill to look anything like the one which the government brought in on 25 January 1847.

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[115] C3566 (Harpton Court Papers): Cornewall Lewis diary, 3 Jan. 1847.
[116] A4/58 Part I (Hickleton Microfilm Papers):G.Grey to Wood, 4 Jan. 1847.
[117] J19/8/14 (Castle Howard Papers): Morpeth diary, 14 Jan. 1847.
[118] The printed Cabinet memorandum that the sub-committee produced for the Cabinet indicates that since the decision had been made in Dec. to extend outdoor relief to the aged and infirm out of the workhouse, the Cabinet had switched its attention to the temporary relief bill. See CAB/46A (Palmerston Papers): Confidential printed Cabinet memorandum, 15 Jan. 1847.
[119] B153 (Bessborough Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 16 Jan. 1847.
[120] D16 (Royal Archives): Memorandum on the state of Ireland, Dublin Castle, 9 Jan. 1847. Russell was aware that Bessborough thought that the extension bill should only be temporary. See PRO 30/22/6A (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 18 Jan. 1847.
[121] B336 (Bessborough Papers): Bessborough to Labouchere, 25 Jan. 1847.
[122] J19/8/14 (Castle Howard Papers): Morpeth Diary, 21, 23 Jan. 1847.

Under the provisions of this edition of the bill, the Guardians were to be empowered and required to relieve destitute persons permanently disabled by old age, infirmity or bodily or mental defect, either in or out of the workhouse, as they thought fit in each case. (Clause 1).They were authorized to give outdoor relief to destitute persons not permanently disabled (Clause 2) and on receiving such authority were required to make provision for giving relief accordingly, with the proviso that all outdoor relief to the able-bodied was to be given in food only (Clause 3). The Poor law Commissioners were to: regulate and determine the mode of application for all relief; the mode of inquiring into the circumstances of the applicants for relief; and the description of relief to be afforded out of the workhouse when not directly specified by the act (Clause 4). The Guardians were required to appoint as many relieving officers as the Commissioners deemed requisite and sufficient (Clause 5); were authorised and required to appoint medical officers for medical relief out of the workhouses, if it were deemed necessary and expedient (Clause 6); and the relieving officers were to give provisional relief until the next meeting of the Guardians (Clause 7).

All of the relief to be given under the act to a wife or child was to be considered as given to the persons who, under the provisions of the previous act, were to be liable to maintain such wife or child. And it would not be lawful for the Guardians to give relief under the provisions of the act to any wife or child unless it would be lawful to give relief to the husband or parent respectively, provided that nothing should prevent medical relief being afforded to the sick wife or child of any able-bodied poor person being destitute (Clause 8). All relief given out of the workhouse under the provisions of the act was to be charged upon the poor rates of the whole union; and no relief

given under the authority of the act was to be given from the poor-rates of any union to any persons not being within the union when so relieved (Clause 9).

The qualifications, duties, appointment, removal and salaries of officers were to be governed by the same provisions of the acts in force for the relief of the destitute poor in Ireland. The power to decide the proportion in which the salaries of these officers were to be charged to the electoral divisions of a union was also to remain the same as the Commissioners held at that time with respect to the paid officers (Clause 10).

The administration of relief under the act was to be subject to the direction and control of the Poor Law Commissioners (Clause 11). The guardians of every Union and their officers were to keep accounts in such forms as the Poor Law Commissioners prescribed (Clause 12) and finally the former acts and the proposed act were to become one act (Clause 13) which could be amended or repealed in the present session of Parliament (Clause 14).[123]

The second and third clauses of the proposed act represented a significant departure from the principle of outdoor relief for the sick and infirm, which had been sent to the Castle and agreed by the Cabinet. Admittedly on 8 January even Trevelyan was not sure what the Irish Poor Law extension bill would enact,[124] but Trevelyan was not the only crown servant to be confused by this. For at the meeting of the Cabinet on 30 January, Lansdowne began to cause some difficulty over the Irish Poor Law bill going 'too far in giving out of door relief'.[125] The implication of this was that he had not seen the proposal before. Now Lansdowne had certainly been at the Cabinet on 23

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[123] Bill to make further provision for the relief of the destitute poor in Ireland (House of Commons Parliamentary Papers), 1847, Bills, 10, III, 187, Microfiche number 51.17-18. This was the first printed edition of the bill and was ordered by the House to be printed on 25 Jan. 1847.
[124] A4/59 Part I (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Trevelyan to Wood, 8 Jan. 1847.
[125] Add. MS 43749 (Broughton Papers, Hobhouse Diary), 30 Jan. 1847. See also J19/8/14 Castle Howard Papers, (Morpeth Diary), 30 Jan. 1847.

January, as Hobhouse recorded in his diary that Wood had given him instructions during the meeting for his forthcoming speech.[126] So it would be natural to assume that even if he had not been at any of the other Cabinet meetings where the measure had been raised, prior to that date, he would have discovered what was proposed for outdoor relief on 23 January. It is possible that he could have known all along about the proposal and got cold feet about the measure after the bill's introduction into Parliament. But it seems more natural to assume that he would have demonstrated more concern about the measure – a measure which had occupied his attention for some time – before it had been introduced into Parliament, when to amend the proposal would not have had as many consequences. Yet the fact remains that there is not a single reference in the printed Cabinet memoranda or in the journals of three of the members of the Cabinet to this policy departure. Hobhouse did go so far as to say that great complaints had been made in the Cabinet meeting on 23 January about the Irish law officers who had drawn 'all' of the bills so badly that they were going to have to be drawn again.[127] It is therefore possible that the amendment to the bill was made on 23 and 24 January and was then introduced into Parliament on 25 January, before the full Cabinet could discuss it. Hobhouse was certainly to complain to Russell later on about the premier's penchant for the nineteenth century equivalent of a kitchen-cabinet style of government, where important business was not put before full meetings of the Cabinet[128] and it is possible to discern something along similar lines operating in this instance.

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[126] Add. MS (Broughton Papers, Hobhouse Diary), 23 Jan. 1847.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid., 15 Feb. 1847.

However, the fact that it took the Castle until 1 February to bring up the subject of the Poor Law bill, [129] demonstrates to what extent Twisleton and the Castle were kept out of the consultative process, and ten days later Redington confessed to Labouchere that he had been seriously thinking about handing in his resignation over the way the Castle had been kept in the dark about the future relief proposals.[130] The question arises, would it have made a difference if Dublin Castle had been consulted? For when the amended clauses were made public, Twisleton remained predictably silent on the question[131] and it was left to Lewis to lobby the government against imposing such an extended system of outdoor relief on Ireland.[132] And Bessborough, who by this point was already seriously ill, was more concerned about the Temporary Relief bill and the lack of funds in the workhouses, to trouble himself about the details of a bill which, to his mind, was not due to be read again for some time.[133] The task of shepherding the bill both in and out of Parliament was therefore left to Labouchere and on 27 February the Chief Secretary was able to lay a new batch of proposals before the Cabinet.

These proposals included: limiting the provision of outdoor relief to two calendar months (Amendment A to Clause 2); compelling the Poor Law Commissioners to furnish the clerk of each union with a register of residence for each applicant (Amendment B to Clause 9); charging all expenses beyond a sum of fifteen pence in the pound to the Union at large (Amendment C to become Clause 10);

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[129] Even then the Lord Lieutenant only raised the subject in connection with clauses in the temporary relief bill. See PRO 30/22/6B (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 1 Feb. 1847.
[130] NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Redington to Labouchere, Thursday Night (11 Feb. 1847). The letter is incorrectly dated, 21 Jan. 1847. Redington blamed the Treasury and particularly Trevelyan for this.
[131] Although the Commissioner was in communication with Graham at this time, see C673 (Harpton Court Papers): Graham to Lewis, 5 Feb. 1847.
[132] C.530 (Harpton Court Papers): Lewis to Clarendon, 30 Jan.1847.
[133] See, for example B336 (Bessborough Papers): Bessborough to Labouchere, 3 Feb. 1847 and NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Redington to Labouchere, 19 Feb. 1847. For details of Bessborough's illness, see D. Howell-Thomas, *Duncannon: Reformer & Reconciler 1781-1847* (Norwich, 1992), pp. 317-25.

ensuring that ex-officio Guardians did not exceed the number of elective Guardians (Amendment D to become Clause 11); and giving the Poor Law Commissioners the power to dissolve a Board of Guardians on default, without any intermediate elections (Amendment E to become Clause 12). With the exception of amendment A, which can be traced to a desire of Russell's to restrict outdoor relief[134] and amendment C, which appears to have been derived from a proposal made by the Marquess of Abercorn,[135] the amendments all appear to have emanated from Labouchere.

Russell did not appear overly concerned about what Bessborough or Twisleton had to say about these amendments, as they were introduced into Parliament just two days later, before Bessborough had had a chance to respond to a letter sent by the Prime Minister on 28 February, informing the Lord Lieutenant that the Cabinet had agreed to various amendments to the bill at their meeting on 27 February and that Labouchere would write with the details.[136] Even Redington appears to have admitted defeat by this stage and after wearily reemphasising the fact that he was 'opposed to all out door relief except to the "aged, infirm etc" and "provisionally when the workhouse is full in urgent cases" '; he failed to engage with any of the Chief Secretary's amendments and simply proposed 'some other suggestions' of his own.[137]

The amended bill, now containing seventeen clauses, was therefore introduced into the House of Commons on 1 March, before the Castle had had time to comment

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[134] Add. MS 43749 (Broughton Papers, Hobhouse Diary), 13 Feb.1847.
[135] PRO 30/22/6B (Russell Papers): Abercorn to Russell, 20 Feb. 1847.
[136] PRO 30/22/6B (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 28 Feb. 1847. The Lord Lieutenant lost no time in replying to Russell's letter, which would have arrived on 1 Mar., but the bill was before Parliament that day. See B336 (Bessborough Papers): Bessborough to Labouchere, 1 Mar. 1847.
[137] These were: '1. Allowing children under seven years of age to be reared out of the workhouse like "deserted children" under the Grand Jury law. 2. Apprenticing young children under fifteen years. 3. Taking land for cemetery and 4. Relieving electoral divisions of excess of rate above 5/ in the pound but not otherwise.' See NP5142 (Northbrook Papers): Redington to Labouchere, Sunday (28 Feb.), 1847.

on it or to suggest further amendments.[138] The Irish Poor Law Commissioners clearly also missed the boat, as the Home Office did not respond to their own proposed amendments until one week after the amended bill had been introduced into the House. Even then they were simply asked to prepare clauses for Sir George Grey's consideration in response to their suggestion of 'uniting two unions in Ireland for the maintenance of a district school'.[139]

By the time the bill had been read for a third time in the House of Commons on 16 April, the bill had been through two further editions[140] and had gained fourteen clauses.[141] Interestingly, of these fourteen additional clauses, only two can be linked back to the Irish Poor Law Commissioners: Clauses 24 and 25 of the fourth edition of the bill relating to the School for the North and South Dublin unions and for its management.[142] Clauses 9 (occupiers of a quarter of an acre were not to be deemed destitute) and 12 (rate assisted emigration was to be made available to occupiers giving up their land) were introduced successfully by William Gregory (the MP for Dublin City, 1842-47), on 29 March.[143] Frederick Shaw (the MP for Trinity College, Dublin 1832-48), was responsible for the successful introduction of Clauses 15 (the

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[138] House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Bills, 1847, 126, Vol. III, 193, Microfiche 51.18, 'Bill to make further provision for Relief of Destitute Poor in Ireland as amended by committee'. This was the second printed edition of the bill and was ordered to be printed on 1 Mar. 1847.

[139] PRO HO 122/19 (Home Office Papers): Somerville to Power, 8 Mar. 1847. Note that the letter was sent to Power and not to Twisleton. It is not clear if the Commissioners made any other suggestions but this is the only one that appears to have been taken up by the government.

[140] See House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Bills, 1847, 251, Vol. III, 201, Microfiche 51.18, 'Bill to make further provision for the Relief of Destitute Poor in Ireland as amended by committee, on re-commitment, and on report' for the third edition of the bill which was ordered to be printed on 31 Mar., 1847 and HL/PO/J0/10/8/1632, Item 533 (House of Lords Papers) for the fourth edition, printed on 19 Apr., 1847 entitled 'A bill intituled an act to make further provision for the relief of the destitute poor in Ireland.'

[141] In addition to the amendments which Labouchere had put before the Cabinet on 27 Feb. 1847. The bill was debated on 12 and 15 Mar. and clauses 1 and 2 with the government amendments were agreed to by a committee of the whole House of Commons on 19 Mar. Clauses 3 to 8 were agreed on 22 Mar., 9 and 10 on 23 Mar. and 11 to 17 on 25 Mar. See Hansard, third series, 1847, xc and xci and the House of Commons Journal, Vol. 102, (Part 1), 1847.

[142] Ibid: fourth edition. These were the clauses Somerville referred to in his letter of 8 Mar. 1847 to Power, see footnote 141 above.

[143] See Hansard, third Series, 1847, xci, 583, 585, 592. For further information on Gregory's 'notorious' quarter acre clause see Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics,* pp. 277-8.

rating of the tithe), 16 (the recovery of the tithe), 17 (every rate made for the relief of the poor in Ireland was to be a poundage rate, based upon an estimate of the net annual value of the several Hereditaments) and 18 (the tithe composition or rent charge of every valuation which was to be made for the purposes of the Poor Law assessment by the Commissioners of Valuation in Ireland under 9 and 10 Victoria cap. 110 was to be separately valued).[144]

Though the clauses empowering the Irish Poor Law Commissioners to purchase or hire additional land for occupation by the various Guardians or for the erection of workhouses and other buildings (Clauses 23 and 26) were introduced by the government on 29 March 1846,[145] they originated from a clause which was introduced and then withdrawn by Poulett Scrope (political economist, pamphleteer and MP for Stroud, 1833-1868), during that same debate.[146] The government was therefore responsible for the introduction of: Clauses 13 (the act 6 Victoria Cap. 92 was amended to allow for provision to be made to assist poor persons to emigrate who had not been resident in the workhouse for three months);[147] 14 (all expenses incurred in aid of emigration of any occupier and his family were to be charged to the Electoral division in which the land occupied by the occupier was situated);[148] 20 (the Unions could be altered without the consent of the Guardians);[149] and 22 (to make provision for religious services in the workhouse).[150] Although it is very difficult to quantify the true extent of the Castle or the Irish Poor Law Commissioners' involvement in the formulation of these latter four clauses, a letter written by Somerville to the Poor Law

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[144] See Hansard, third series, 1847, xic, 611-13.
[145] See Journals of the House of Commons, Vol. 102 (Part 1), 1847: 29 Mar 1847, p. 299.
[146] See Hansard, third series, 1847, xci, 575 and 583.
[147] Ibid., 584.
[148] Ibid., 16 Apr. 1847, 927 and Journals of the House of Commons, Vol 102 (Part I), 1847: 16 Apr. p. 364.
[149] See Journals of the House of Commons, Vol. 102 (Part I), 1847: 29 Mar. 1847, p. 299.
[150] Ibid.

Commissioners on 31 March does indicate that any involvement might have been of a minimal level:

> HM government have nevertheless felt that the power granted to the Commissioners by the existing law for this purpose should be increased and they have consented to an alteration which confers upon the Commissioners, as regards the reconstruction of unions, the same powers which they now possess as regards Electoral divisions ...I have been desired by Sir George Grey to make this communication to you ... with a view of informing you of the course which has been taken by the government and of the reasons which have induced them to confide to you these increased powers.[151]

It seems that the government clearly believed that the Poor Law Commissioners would be best served by having their powers and policies made for them, with very limited or even no consultation. Admittedly both Power and Lewis had been involved in drafting the first edition of the bill but thereafter the executive appear to have taken the matter over and while Lewis may, or may not, have been consulted by ministers on the measure as it progressed through Parliament – the evidence does not exist to suggest either course – Power was certainly back in Dublin during the parliamentary debates and the pace at which amendments were proposed and accepted or rejected by the government would not have allowed for effective cross-country consultation.[152] This is not to say that Bessborough, who was highly popular in Ireland, did not raise his own concerns about the legislation as it was going through, but although the government were prepared to humour him on the subject of a Vagrancy bill,[153] his

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[151] PRO HO 122/19 (Home Office Papers): Somerville to the Poor Law Commissioners, 31 Mar. 1846.
[152] See MS Clar. Dep. C561/2 (Clarendon Papers): Mahony to Labouchere, 14 Apr. 1847 for Power's movements.
[153] See PRO 30/22/6B (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 15 Mar. 1847 and PRO 30/22/6B, (Russell Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 18 Mar. 1847. Bessborough was able to ride on the coat tails of Lansdowne on this, see PRO 30/22/6B ff.13-14 (Russell Papers): Lansdowne to Russell, undated (31 Jan. 1847). 10 and 11 Victoria Cap. 84, the 'act to make provision for the punishment of vagrants and persons offending against the laws in force for the relief of the destitute poor in Ireland' received the Royal Assent on 22 July 1847.

alarm over 'the probability of putting the whole poor rate on the occupying tenant',[154] or his concerns about the consequences for Ireland of 'Gregory's (Stanley's clause)',[155] went unanswered.

On 19 April[156] the bill was read for the first time in the House of Lords and despite a brief hiccup when the Earl of Clancarty attempted, unsuccessfully, to delay the second reading of the bill for six months,[157] by 18 May 1847 the bill had received its third reading in the upper chamber.[158] Seventeen of the thirty-one clauses in the bill sent up to the Lords by the Commons on 16 April were left untouched by the Lords,[159] while five clauses were amended in a very minor way.[160] Stanley proposed that Clause 6 of the fourth edition of the bill[161] be removed and a clause which he believed would have the effect of 'interposing a controlling power between the Board of Guardians and the relieving officer' by ensuring that there was a 'subordinate board' in each electoral district 'to discharge the duties of a relief committee' be substituted in its place.[162] Lansdowne would not allow the clause to be substituted and instead proposed an amendment to Stanley's proposal which brought in a clause from the English Poor

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[154] PRO 30/22/6C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 5 Apr. 1847. See Hansard, third series 1847, xci, 601 for Bentinck's proposal.

[155] PRO 30/22/6C (Russell Papers): Bessborough to Russell, 10 Apr. 1847.

[156] It was ordered to be printed by the House of Lords on 19 Apr. This was the fourth edition of the bill. See HL/PO/JO/10/8/1632 Item 533 (House of Lords Papers) for a copy.

[157] See Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii, 75-87. Although Monteagle carried an amendment which limited the working of the bill to 1 Aug. 1848 'and to the end of the then next session of Parliament' this amendment was reversed by the government on 14 May. See Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii, 430-49 and 794-813.

[158] Ibid., 18 May, 1847, 1050. The House debated the bill and went into committee on 6, 7, 10, 14 and 18 May 1847. A fifth edition of the bill was ordered to be printed on 10 May and a sixth edition on 14 May. See HL/PO/JO/10/8/1632 Item 533 (House of Lords Papers) for copies.

[159] Clauses 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 14, 20-22 and 24-31. The bill that the House of Lords received from the commons was ordered to be printed by the House of Lords on 19 Apr. 1847 and was the fourth edition of the bill.

[160] Clauses 4, 5, 6, 12 and 13. The clauses were amended on 6 and 7 May 1847. See Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii, 456, 461, 497,502 and 521. Also compare the fourth edition of the bill (19 Apr. 1847) with the seventh edition (18 May, 1847). It should be noted that in the seventh edition of the bill clause 6 becomes clause 7, clause 12 becomes clause 13 and clause 13 becomes clause 14. Hansard makes no mention of the amendment to clause 12.

[161] Relieving officers would be allowed to give provisional relief until the next meeting of the guardians.

[162] Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii, 497-9.

Law act, whereby 'the Poor Law Commissioners were given the power to authorize Boards of Guardians in large Unions to appoint committees of their boards to meet at convenient places for the purpose of giving relief.'[163] This proposal was adopted and a new clause was added to the bill.[164]

The English poor law act was also the template for the amendment that Earl Grey carried successfully to the Seventh Clause of the fourth edition of the bill[165] on 18 May. This made it imperative for 'a child to support its parents' in the same way as the English act decreed.[166] Earl Fitzwilliam proposed an amendment to Gregory's Quarter Acre Clause[167] on 7 May, which he hoped would correct the loose wording of the clause and prevent misunderstanding. This amendment reduced the different permutations of occupation as stated by Gregory and removed the need placed upon the Board of Guardians, in granting the relief, to be 'satisfied' that the applicant had 'bona fide and without collusion absolutely parted with or surrendered any right or title ... to the occupation of any land, over and above ... one quarter of a statute acre'.[168] Instead it rested the responsibility of verifying the surrender of title upon the land owner or agent.[169] Lansdowne thought that this amendment 'would make the law more strict' and nodded it through. But Fitzwilliam's amendment was altered to such an extent[170] that the government were forced to step in and Earl Grey shepherded an

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[163] Ibid., 500.

[164] The new clause (clause A) became clause 6 in the seventh edition of the bill, while the old clause 6 became clause 7. See House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Bills, 1847, 417, Vol. III, 213, Microfiche number 51.18 for a copy of this edition of the bill (ordered to be printed by the House of Commons on 18 May 1847).

[165] Relief to wife or child to be relief to husband or parent as the case may be. This clause became the eighth clause in the seventh edition of the act.

[166] Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii, 1047-8.

[167] Clause 9 in the fourth edition of the bill.

[168] Ibid.

[169] See Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii, 504.

[170] It was altered to ensure that the land owner or agent would have to accept the surrender of lands above one quarter of an acre where such lands included 'the entire holding held by such applicant in one holding from the same landlord'. See clause 9 of the fifth edition of the bill (ordered to be printed by the House of Lords on 10 May 1847), HL/PO/JO/10/8/1632 Item 533 (House of Lords Papers). A

amendment to the clause through the House on the day of the third reading of the bill.[171]

Stanley, against the wishes of Lansdowne, successfully carried the omission of Clause 11[172] on 7 May,[173] while the Earl of Lucan (Lord Lieutenant of County Mayo, 1845-1888) had removed Shaw's tithe clauses,[174] with the consent of the government, by 10 May.[175] *Hansard* does not record how Clause 23[176] was amended to afford the Poor Law Commissioners the power of hiring or purchasing three statute acres in addition to twelve acres of land, as opposed to the House of Commons provision of twenty five acres; [177] or who proposed the addition of Clause D and how it was successfully carried.[178] Nor is it much more help with regard to Clause 19[179] as the reporter found Lord Lansdowne's speech in proposing the amendment to the clause inaudible[180] with the result that very little can be gleaned about the motivations for the amendment.

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further amendment appears to have been made to the clause by the time the sixth edition of the bill was ordered to be printed by the House of Lords on 14 May 1847, although no record of the amendment exists in Hansard. See HL/PO/JO/10/8/1632 Item 533 (House of Lords Papers) for this edition.

[171] See Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii, 1047. This became clause 10 in the seventh edition of the bill. Although Grey is recorded by Hansard as stating that the amendment would 'render it imperative on landlords to accept the surrender of land in such cases', the clause contained no such provision when it received the Royal Assent.

[172] Clause 11 of the fourth edition of the bill, stated that expenses beyond a sum of fifteen pence in the pound to be charged to the union at large.

[173] See Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii, 507-21.

[174] Clauses 15-18 of the fourth edition of the bill.

[175] See Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii, 521-2. Hansard only records the removal of clauses 15 and 16 but the fifth edition of the bill, ordered to be printed on 10 May 1847 has all four clauses removed. See HL/PO/JO/10/8/1632 Item 533 (House of Lords Papers) for this edition.

[176] Clause 23 of the fourth edition of the act allowed for additional land to be occupied by the guardians.

[177] Hansard has clause 23 as 'agreed to' without any amendment. See Hansard, third series, 1847,xcii, 557. However, the fifth edition (10 May 1847) of the bill contains the amendment. In the seventh edition of the bill (18 May 1847) the clause becomes clause 21.

[178] Clause D became clause 29 in the seventh edition of the bill. It specified the procedure to be followed in cases of 'disallowance or reduction by the auditor in the accounts of any union' and how the sums were to be recovered.

[179] Clause 19 of the fourth edition of the bill ensured that ex-officio guardians were not to exceed the number of elective guardians.

[180] Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii, 522-3. Lansdowne's amendment removed the elected magistrates from the boards and put the highest rated magistrates in their place. It also specified how the selected number of the 'highest rate-payers amongst the qualified Justices' that were 'entitled to act as ex-

Of the remaining four clauses that were tacked onto the bill by the Lords before it was sent back to the lower chamber,[181] the most interesting was Clause F, or Clause 17 in the seventh edition of the bill.[182] This clause allowed the highest rate payers among the qualified justices to nominate their agents to act on their behalf as ex-officio Guardians and was proposed and carried by Earl Grey on 18 May 1847.[183] When the House of Commons came to consider the Lords' amendments to their bill, the Prime Minister drew particular attention to this 'very objectionable' and 'injurious' provision and asked the House to dissent from it, which they duly did.[184]

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officio Guardians' should declare their 'willingness to act'. The amendment was carried successfully and became clause 16 in the seventh (18 May 1847) edition of the bill.

[181] The bill was read for a third time in the House of Lords on 18 May and then sent to the Commons. The commons ordered the amendments to be printed on 19 May (although the bill states 18 May) and resolved that the amendments would be taken into consideration on 31 May 1847. On 31 May various amendments were made to the Lords' amendments and a committee was appointed to draw up the reasons for disagreeing to the Lords' amendments, which were to be offered to the Lords at a conference. On 1 June 1847 the committee reasons were read and agreed in the House of Commons and a conference was held between the appointed members of the committee and appointed members of the Lords. A report was then made of the conference in both Houses and the eighth and final edition of the bill was ordered to be printed (1 June 1847). On the 3 June the Lords agreed to the amendments made by the Commons to their own amendments and the House of Commons were informed of their agreement on 4 June 1847. 'An Act To Make Further Provision For The Relief Of The Destitute Poor In Ireland' received the Royal assent on 8 June 1847 and passed into the statute book as 10 Victoria Cap. 31. See Journals of the House of Commons, Vol. 102, 1847, (Part I) 543, 593-5, 605-6, 624, 634 and Journals of the House of Lords, Vol. 79, pp. 229-30, 268-70 and 288.

[182] The other three clauses were:Clause B, which became clause 12 in the seventh edition of the bill and was proposed and carried by the Earl of Lucan on 14 May 1847 (See Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii, 819-20) defined what constituted residence in an electoral division.

Clause C, which became clause 25 in the seventh edition of the bill and was proposed and carried by Monteagle (see HL/PO/JO/10/8/1632 Item 533 (House of Lords Papers): the fifth (10 May 1847) edition of the bill, p.20), allowed the Commissioners to combine unions into school districts.

Clause E, which became clause 30 in the seventh edition of the bill and was proposed and carried by Stanley (see HL/PO/JO/10/8/1632 Item 533 (House of Lords Papers): the fourth (19 Apr. 1847) edition of the bill, p.14), made provision for an account of the total expenditure on the relief of the poor in each union and of the total number relieved in each union, to be laid before Parliament on an annual basis.

[183] See Hansard, third series, 1847, xcii,1050.

[184] Ibid., 31 May 1847, pp.1303-4. This was the only clause added by the Lords to be removed by the Commons. The government accepted the deletion of the Tithe clauses (clauses 15-18 in the fourth, 19 Apr. 1847 edition) and the addition of clauses A, C, D and E. Clause B was amended by the Commons to ensure that the definition of what constituted residency in an electoral division was linked to the charging of the expense of relief to any electoral division. While the Commons did little more than tidy clause 16 - the ex-officio guardian clause – up without making any material amendment to the meaning of the Lords' changes. Clauses 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 18-32 of the seventh (18 May 1847) edition of the bill all remained as the Lords left them, although following the Commons removal of Clause F (clause 17 of the seventh edition of the bill), clauses 18-32 all went back one in numerical order, hence clause 18 in the seventh edition of the bill became clause 17 in the eighth and final edition of the bill (1 June 1847). See HL/PO/JO/10/8/1632 Item 533 (House of Lords Papers): 'A Bill With The Amendments

Yet it is interesting that Russell found himself in the position of dissenting from a provision which a member of his own Cabinet had introduced into the bill. It could be that Grey and Lansdowne[185] were forced to introduce the amendment without the consent of the Cabinet, as Lansdowne was not present at the meeting of Cabinet on 17 May and Hobhouse recorded that apart from Clarendon's appointment to the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, no other business was transacted at the meeting.[186] However, the question arises why did Grey or Lansdowne not mention the matter at any of the meetings of the Cabinet prior to that date? For the clause first appeared in a handwritten amendment to the sixth edition of the bill, printed on 14 May.[187] The clause was not formally incorporated into the bill when it was printed on 14 May but had been incorporated in the seventh edition of the bill, ordered to be printed by the House of Commons on 18 May.[188] Therefore while Grey introduced the clause on 18 May, he and Lansdowne could have been working on it from 14 May, if not earlier, and could have brought the subject before the meeting of the Cabinet on 15 May, when the Poor Law bill topped the order of business at the Cabinet.[189] What makes the matter noteworthy is that the manuscript version of the amendment to the bill appears to be in Twisleton's hand[190] and Lansdowne could potentially have discussed the matter with the Commissioner as early as 6 April, when Twisleton and he met in

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Made By The Commons To The Bill As Amended By The Lords Intituled An Act to make further Provision for the relief of the destitute Poor in Ireland.'

[185] Lansdowne was fully aware of the clause as in version 6 of the bill, 14 May 1847, there is a note after the handwritten clause in Lansowne's hand, proposing to 'put into the clause "or agent of any such highest rate payers being also a qualified magistrate" and it appears to me either would do', see, p. 10. This edition was used as the template for the seventh edition (18 May 1847) of the bill.

[186] Add. MS 43750 (Broughton Papers, Hobhouse Diary), 17 May 1847.

[187] HL/PO/JO/10/8/1632 Item 533 (House of Lords Papers): the sixth edition of the bill, 14 May 1847, p. 10.

[188] HL/PO/JO/10/8/1632 Item 533 (House of Lords Papers): the seventh edition of the bill, 18 May, 1847.

[189] Add. MS 43750 (Broughton Papers, Hobhouse Diary), 15 May 1847.

[190] See HL/PO/JO/10/8/1632 Item 533 (House of Lords Papers): the sixth edition of the bill, 14 May 1847, p.10.

London to discuss the Irish Poor Law.[191] Of course, Twisleton may have had nothing to do with the clause, but if the amendment is in his hand, as appears to be the case, it is interesting that the one time the Commissioner had any involvement in drawing up the bill which he would ultimately have to make work, he was so far removed from the prevailing winds of government thinking on Irish matters that he contributed to the addition of a clause which ran counter to all that the government held dear as regards the elimination of Irish absentee proprietors. However, even if Twisleton had simply been doing what he had been told to do by Lansdowne or Grey, this one clause is illustrative of a marked lack of communication and even a discrepancy in approach in the Cabinet towards the Irish Poor Law extension act as a whole.

How then did the act which received the Royal assent on 8 June and which Twisleton had to make work in Ireland, differ from the bill which had been introduced into the House of Commons on 25 January? It is certainly the case that all fourteen of the original clauses, as proposed and drawn by Labouchere, Lewis, Power and Wood made it into the act.[192] But along the way the amendments won, lost, withdrawn or forced upon the government by Bentinck, Gregory, Lucan, Monteagle, Poulett Scrope and Stanley[193] moulded the act into a very different entity from the one the Prime Minister had clearly envisaged in January 1847 when he remarked to Bessborough that while the bill would give relief to the 'old and infirm', the able-bodied would have to depend on 'our other measures' for their relief.[194] For the Commissioners,

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[191] PRO 30/22/6C (Russell Papers): Lansdowne to Russell, 7 Apr. 1847. Lansdowne did not elaborate on his discussion with Twisleton for Russell's benefit as he recorded that he 'knew' Twisleton had seen the Prime Minister after their discussion. However if Lansdowne and Twisleton did discuss 'Clause F', neither recorded the fact afterwards and Russell did not mention it at that time.

[192] Clauses 1-5, 7-9, 25-7 and 30-1. Although amendments were made to five of these clauses and clause 2 and 3 of the 25/1/1847 edition were amalgamated in the act.

[193] See pp. 238-43 above.

[194] B153 (Bessborough Papers): Russell to Bessborough, 16 Jan. 1847.

who had opposed this act from the start, [195] these amendments would have one clear consequence: they would increase the financial burden of the electoral divisions in Ireland. But where were the letters of protest or even of concern from Twisleton or Power to the government ministers? [196] Redington certainly made his feelings known to Clarendon about the difficulties associated with clause 12 of the new bill, but by the time he penned his letter any opposition to the measure had become fruitless.[197] It could be argued that Twisleton had enough on his plate as a member both of the Board of Health[198] and Burgoyne's Relief Commission, in addition to the day to day administration of the Poor Law and so was perhaps not best placed to offer opposition or advice on the subject. But his attitude to policy making can again be seen in a letter he sent to Clarendon on 24 July that accompanied a memorandum that the Viceroy had requested on the financial condition of the Unions in Ireland in which he said, 'I am desirous that my name should not be introduced on the subject. It does not seem to be within the province of any administrative department to volunteer opinions to government'.[199] Nevertheless Twisleton assured the Lord Lieutenant that he would zealously urge the collection of the rates and Clarendon, as we have seen, was able to inform his brother-in-law that he found the Commissioner 'quick, firm' and 'desperately afraid of being thought deficient in zeal about carrying out the law'.[200] At this point, this would have been music to the Viceroy's ears, for he had been telling

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[195] Lewis was still opposing the measure and attempting to divert the government's course on 10 Apr. See 3311 (Harpton Court Papers): Confidential memorandum upon the extension of the Irish poor law, 10 Apr. 1847 and C/2377 (Harpton Court Papers): Senior to Lewis, 26 Apr. 1847.

[196] Especially when Stanley altered the act in a fundamental manner with his successful excision of clause 10 of the second edition of the billon 7 May, 1847. See House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Bills, 1847, 126, Vol. III. 193, Microfiche 51.18: 1 Mar. 1847. The clause allowed for 'all expenses beyond a sum of fifteen pence in the pound to be charged to the union at large'.

[197] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 24/1 (Clarendon Papers): Redington to Clarendon, 2 June 1847.

[198] PRO T64/363 B (Treasury Papers): Burgoyne to Trevelyan, 18 Apr. 1847.

[199] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 29 (Clarendon Papers): Twisleton to Clarendon, 24 July 1847.

[200] MS Clar. Dep. C.532 (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Lewis, 8 Aug. 1847.

Wood since early July that the rates would be difficult to collect[201] and had assured the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he would take a very firm line with all applications for advances and for the appointment of Paid Guardians.[202]

But Twisleton's studied firmness was soon to cause the Castle trouble and on 24 August the new Chief Secretary, Somerville,[203] had to appeal to Wood for help to arbitrate between the Poor Law Commissioners and the Castle. At the heart of the matter lay the publication of the government's decision on the repayment of any funds due under the Temporary Relief act. In a letter written by Trevelyan on 10 June, the Board of Guardians were requested 'to take immediate steps for the employment of so much as would be provided for by a rate of 3 s in the pound', whereas in a letter sent by Wood to Somerville on 17 August, the Chancellor had stipulated that the Guardians 'should be told that if they strike a rate to the extent of 3 s no further demand for repayment will be made at present, beyond what such a rate will give, after repaying current expenses.'[204] Unfortunately Twisleton insisted on proceeding under the terms of the Treasury minute as communicated by Trevelyan, while Clarendon, Redington and Somerville were strongly in favour of the 'more indulgent' course, as intimated in Wood's letter of 17 August. Twisleton had made it clear that he would not budge unless 'some definite instructions in a public letter' were issued by the government to justify the Commission's departure from the Treasury Minute and this was what Somerville now requested.[205] In the event, it was proposed to communicate the government's thinking on the matter to the Relief Commissioners

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[201] A4/57/1 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Clarendon to Wood, 12 July 1847.
[202] A4/57/1 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Clarendon to Wood, 15 July 1847.
[203] Somerville changed places with Labouchere and kissed hands as the Chief Secretary of Ireland on 22 July 1847. See Add. MS 43751 (Broughton Papers, Hobhouse Diary), 22 July 1847.
[204] Somerville provides the most succinct account of the affair, see T/2982 (Somerville Letterbook): Somerville to Wood, 12, 24, 31 Aug. 1847.
[205] Ibid: 24 Aug. 1847.

and leave them to decide whether to promulgate the decision or not;[206] but the episode is significant because it represents the first time that the Castle and the Custom House were to adopt such openly opposing views on a question and suggests something of Twisleton's potential for intransigence on such matters.

Yet, to Wood's dismay, Twisleton had managed to bring the Lord Lieutenant around on the question of the advantages of Paid Guardians over Elected Guardians – 'they have or assume an authority which the Elected Guardians are afraid to exercise and there is more disposition to obey them'.[207] This was clearly a strategy which appealed to Clarendon's own desire to make a department which he believed had become and would be for some time 'de facto the government of the country', more powerful.[208] But with increased powers came increased responsibilities and Clarendon wanted to gain more control over the way the department was run as a whole and resented the way Twisleton, 'being nervous that he should be thought wanting in zeal' was prone to acting 'too rigidly up to the very letter of the law when by trifling accommodations he might secure its spirit and its objects being fulfilled'.[209] One month later, Clarendon informed Wood that he still did not have 'all the control over it' - the administration of the Poor Law - that he would like, but that he meant 'gradually to get more'.[210]

The policy of retaining many of the 'best inspectors' under the Temporary relief act to fulfil the role of assistant inspectors under the Poor Law, provides just one example of the increased influence of Clarendon in the affairs of the Custom

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[206] A4/59 Part I (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Trevelyan to Wood, 31 Aug. 1847 and A4/56/2 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Russell memorandum, 31 Aug. 1847.
[207] A4/57/1 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Clarendon to Wood, 7 Sep. 1847.
[208] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. I, 51b (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Carew, 10 Sep. 1847.
[209] A4/57/1 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Clarendon to Wood, 7 Sep. 1847. The example Clarendon offered was Twisleton's refusal to allow the rates in poor districts be taken by instalments 'as they can be got and just as rent is collected' but Twisleton raised a series of 'technical' objections to the proposal.
[210] A4/57/1 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Clarendon to Wood, 7 Oct. 1847.

House.[211] Clarendon also tried to convince the Prime Minister that amendments to the Poor Law extension act, in general[212] and the Quarter acre clause, in particular, were required.[213] However, the Cabinet's veto of his Landlord and Tenant Relations bill[214] along with the hiatus caused by the murder of 'improving' landowner Major Mahon[215]distracted the attention of the Lord Lieutenant from the Poor Law and its administration so that the issue was temporarily neglected.

By the end of December Clarendon had turned his attention back to the Poor Law in Ireland. Russell had written to Clarendon on Christmas day to inform him that he considered the increased prospects of starvation in Ireland and the difficulty of collecting rates in that land a 'dilemma' which both alarmed and afflicted him.[216] Clarendon took up the theme in a letter to the Home Secretary several days later:

> What most alarms me however is not crime for sooner or later we shall get the better of that, but I do not see how we are to deal with distress or indeed how the Poor Law is to be worked in the destitute counties of the South and West.[217]

But during the period when Clarendon's attention had been focused elsewhere Twisleton appears to have established an effective working relationship with the Treasury. For instance, in September, when the Commissary-General was still trying to assess Twisleton's capabilities, Roth in a comment to Trevelyan observed, 'how far he is a man of business in the general sense of the term I am yet unable to judge ... though I am disposed to think favourably'.[218] Trevelyan evidently thought that a

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[211] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. I, 72b-74b (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Russell, 8 Oct. 1847.
[212] MS Clar.Dep. Ir. Vol. I, 113b-115a (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Russell, 3 Nov. 1847.
[213] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 75 (Clarendon Papers): Redington memorandum on Poverty: 16 Oct. 1847 and PRO 30/22/6F, (Russell Papers): Clarendon to Russell, 18 Oct. 1847.
[214] PRO 30/22/6F (Russell Papers): Clarendon to Russell, 18, 23 Oct. 1847.
[215] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. I, 113b-115a (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Russell, 3 Nov. 1847. See P. Kelly, *The Killing of Major Dennis Mahon* (New York, 2007) for further details of the 'Mahon affair.'
[216] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 43 (Clarendon Papers): Russell to Clarendon, 25 Dec. 1847.
[217] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. II, 54A-55A (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to G. Grey, 30 Dec. 1847.
[218] PRO T64/369/B2 (Treasury Papers): Routh to Trevelyan, 7 Sept.1847.

relationship beyond the routine transaction of business with the head of the Poor Law administration in Ireland was worth pursuing and following Routh's assessment, quickly wrote to Twisleton to invite him to communicate privately with him in the future.[219] This Twisleton did and despite some teething troubles – Twisleton rejected Trevelyan's attempt to foist his accountant, Bromley, on the Poor Law board[220] - the Commissioner soon appears to have realised where his bread was best buttered. Thus Trevelyan was informed that he could assure the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he would administer all funds in the 'most economical manner within my power' and that he was 'strongly sensible of the pecuniary difficulties connected with the present state of the national finances and of the money market' and that he would do his 'utmost to prevent applications to government for assistance and to enforce the payment of the poor rates by the Irish rate payers.'[221] This last claim was not simply a fob off, for by the end of the year Clarendon was assuring Russell that by 1 January 1848 nearly a million pounds would have been collected in rates.[222]

Twisleton rarely missed an opportunity to reiterate to the Treasury his tough approach to the relief of Irish distress in this period. Thus Trevelyan was informed that, even in mid-November and despite all of the fuss made over the matter by Somerville in late August, Twisleton and his colleagues were still 'somewhat puzzled to return a safe publick answer respecting the repayments under the Temporary relief act'.[223] And when the Assistant Secretary enquired about an alleged death from starvation in the Strabane workhouse that had been brought to his attention by Sir Denis Le Merchant, he received the following answer from the Poor Law Commissioner:

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[219] PRP T64/366/A (Treasury Papers): Trevelyan to Twisleton, 14 Sept. 1847.
[220] PRO T64/367/A2 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 22 Oct. 1847
[221] Ibid: Twisleton to Trevelyan, 23 Oct. 1847.
[222] PRO 30/22/6H (Russell Papers): Clarendon to Russell, 27 Dec. 1847.
[223] PRO T64/367/A3 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 17 Nov. 1847.

> I am fully sensible that every exertion ought to be made and that every exertion will be required by the House of Commons, in order to prevent deaths from starvation. Still I trust that it is compatible with this feeling for one to state that the responsibility on this head rests mainly with Board of Guardians and Rate Payers who ought to pay their rates. The interests of the whole Empire (including Ireland) demand that rates for the relief of the destitute should, up to a certain point; be raised at all hazards by local taxation. It would be a heavy blow to the prosperity of the Empire, if the Irish were to perpetuate the habit of looking to the Imperial taxes for the relief of their distress – and in making exertions to prevent the perpetuation of such a habit, some risks must be run. You cannot fight a great battle without some loss. … and until the Rate Payers have paid the 3s rate at least, or the greater part of it, the responsibility of deaths from starvation rests with them, if such deaths arise from want of funds.[224]

Twisleton's language was perhaps subtler here than the language Wood had employed in the past - 'Where the people refused to work and sow, they must starve'[225] - but the Chancellor and his assistant must have gained the impression that Twisleton and the Treasury were mutually in agreement. From Twisleton's point of view, this tough approach was to pay dividends for although the Poor Law Commissioner did not quite receive a blank cheque of good credit at the Treasury, his requests certainly did not go unheeded. Thus when the Assistant Secretary asked if Twisleton agreed that there should be a workhouse in the Barony of Erris and the Commissioner replied 'where is the money for building to come from?'[226] an offer for the Board of Works to construct several workhouses in various distressed districts was received from the Treasury within a month.[227] Unsurprisingly the Commissioner accepted the offer with alacrity and even asked for the inclusion of one more workhouse.[228]

Clarendon, on the other hand, found it increasingly difficult to obtain Twisleton's backing for his policies and initiatives. One such scheme involved the

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[224] PRO T64/369B/1 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 14 Dec. 1847.
[225] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 31 (Clarendon Papers): Wood to Clarendon, 15 Aug. 1847.
[226] PRO T64/367/A3 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 18 Nov. 1847. For more information on the situation in Erris, see Ó Gráda, *Black '47 and Beyond,* pp. 75-6.
[227] PRO T64/369B/1 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 4 Dec. 1847.
[228] Ibid.

employment of the able bodied poor that were receiving out door relief on productive schemes such as the reclamation of wastelands. After hinting in a letter written in mid-November to the Viceroy that he was not in favour of encouraging Guardians to employ 'pauper labour for profit',[229] Twisleton gave his opinion against the matter more explicitly on 5 December – 'the experience of England respecting pauper labour appears to me conclusive …'.[230] And while Clarendon dismissed Twisleton's views in his next letter to George Grey on the subject – 'Twisleton is opposed to it but that he is to every alteration of the law'[231] – the Commissioner's support was sufficiently important to him to make another attempt at enlisting his help. He did this by sending a pamphlet written by James Fagan, the MP for Wexford, on the employment of able bodied outdoor paupers on the reclamation of wastelands, for the Commissioner's comment. The answer that was returned and forwarded to Russell,[232] while grudgingly supportive – 'it would undoubtedly give relief from the pressure of population' – made it clear that Twisleton did not want to deal with the matter: 'The general scheme is peculiarly one for the consideration of the government', and appealed to the Treasury to be the final arbiter of the case – 'the chief difficulty is the financial difficulty.'[233] Despite the Premier's concurrence with Twisleton,[234] Clarendon had a bill drawn up on the subject which he sent to the Cabinet on 15 February [235] and Russell was finally informed that the bill had been approved by Twisleton.[236] Although Clarendon was still professing the Commissioner's support for

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[229] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 60 (Clarendon Papers): Twisleton to Clarendon, 17 Nov. 1847.
[230] Ibid: Twisleton to Clarendon, 5 Dec. 1847.
[231] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. II, pp.54A-55A (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to G. Grey, 30 Dec. 1847.
[232] Ibid., pp.71B-72B: Clarendon to Russell, 9 Jan. 1848.
[233] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 75 (Clarendon Papers): Twisleton Memorandum on Mr. Fagan's Pamphlet of Suggestions for the immediate Reclamation of Waste Lands in Ireland', 9 Jan. 1848.
[234] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 43 (Clarendon Papers): Russell to Clarendon, 15 Jan. 1848.
[235] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. II, 122B-123A (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to G. Grey, 15 Feb. 1848.
[236] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. II, 125B-126 (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Russell, 19 Feb. 1848.

the bill in early April,[237] Trevelyan knew the real story as Twisleton had informed him in February that he would only employ the bill in 'the last resort',[238] and had expressed himself less guardedly in March:

> I do not pretend to have any affection for it. ... it is not open to any objection on Poor Law principles – as distinguished from grounds of policy connected with the visionary ideas in this country respecting the benefit to be derived generally from the cultivation of waste lands.
> You have stated nearly correctly the only abstract objection to the plan on Poor Law principles when you state it is totally insufficient as a check and test.[239]

Clarendon also found the Commissioner's support for his proposal of a Commission to examine the Union and Electoral boundaries in Ireland inappropriately feeble. The Lord Lieutenant saw this Commission as a sure-fire method of stifling the clamour that was kept up for the reform of the Poor Law extension act [240] and he requested Somerville to lobby the Cabinet for its adoption.[241] The idea of a Commission was approved on 21 February and Clarendon was requested to seek Twisleton's advice on the details of the matter. [242] Russell's request elicited a fact about the Commission which Clarendon had managed to conceal up to that time – that Twisleton was 'not very favourable to the project' – but the Lord Lieutenant once again swiftly dismissed such objections – 'He has ... nothing better to suggest than this Commission'.[243] Unfortunately Clarendon did not find Twisleton's objections to the measure quite so easy to dismiss and on 6 March the Viceroy had to inform Sir George Grey that Twisleton had declined 'drawing up the part about Electoral division as he disapproved of any alteration in them and could not therefore make up his mind what

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[237] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. II, 198A-199 (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to G. Grey, 5 Apr. 1848.
[238] PRO T64/370/C (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 27 Feb. 1848.
[239] PRO T64/369/B3 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 7 Mar. 1848. In the event the bill came to nothing but Clarendon and Redington were still advocating its adoption in 1849. See, for example, PRO 30/22/7F (Russell Papers): Redington to Clarendon, 1 Apr. 1849.
[240] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. II, 71B-72B (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Russell, 9 Jan. 1848.
[241] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. II, 118A-119A (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Somerville, 13 Feb. 1848.
[242] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 12 (Clarendon Papers): G. Grey to Clarendon, 21 Feb. 1848.
[243] MS Clar. Dep.Ir. Vol. II, 130B-132A (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to G. Grey, 24 Feb. 1848.

to suggest.'[244] Twisleton then sent a letter to the Treasury that was not calculated to further the proposal:

> If the Irish landlords translated their feelings into words sincerely, they would say to the British Parliament '... our debts are heavy, we get hardly any rents, do not burden us with new taxes to support our poor – but give us money for [from] the Imperial funds for the purpose'.
> This, however, would be continuing the language of Mendicants ... So, instead of frankly stating where the shoe really pinches, they cry out for some alteration of the area of taxation.

Although Twisleton was willing to concede that 'something in the way of inquiry at least on the subject' was 'necessary' and was a 'very politick measure', he still could not resist appealing to Trevelyan's weak spot:

> If I were a Guardian of the Publick Purse I should feel uneasy at any project for reducing the areas of taxation in Ireland. It is demonstrable that the smaller the areas of Taxation the greater must be the inequalities of Rating. But the greater the inequalities of Rating, the more crushing the burden on particular localities – and the heavier the burden on particular localities, the more touching the case for an appeal to the sympathy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.[245]

This was not simply an exculpatory letter to excuse the insubordination of an official and attempt to set things right back in London; it also represented a subtle, but wilful attempt to derail a deliberate policy of the Irish executive of which Twisleton did not approve. And while Clarendon appears to have simply dismissed the Commissioner's truculence on this matter as absolutely characteristic of a man who he found 'so strange in his opinions and his ways that it is difficult to know what he thinks or wishes'[246] and Sir George Grey believed that Twisleton had no right to act in such a manner,[247] the story might have been quite different if Clarendon, at least, had been privy to the Commissioner's thoughts as contained in the correspondence Trevelyan was receiving from him

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[244] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. II, 149B-150A (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to G. Grey, 6 Mar. 1848.
[245] PRO T64/369/B3 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 7 Mar. 1848.
[246] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. II, 156B-157A (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to G. Grey, 12 Mar. 1848.
[247] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Box 12 (Clarendon Papers): G. Grey to Clarendon, 3 Apr. 1848.

As has been demonstrated, the Treasury did not find Twisleton's actions and opinions 'strange'. Thus the Commissioner was able to utilise the credit that he had built up with Trevelyan and Wood to obtain an extension of the Paid Guardians system until March 1849,[248] and the Treasury even agreed not to levy the three shilling rate 'before harvest' for the repayment of the relief debts due under the 'Burgoyne act'.[249] He did so by continually reminding Trevelyan and Wood of his tough approach to the ratepayers:

> With respect to paid Guardians, my main object has been to prevent the Irish unions from making demands upon the National funds, at a time when such demands, if carried to any very great extent, might be seriously injurious to the Empire. ... it seems essential for the common good of all to throw the Irish on their own resources, as far as possible.[250]

This approach worked and while Irish landlords such as Clanricarde eventually came to loathe him because of it - 'Twisleton says (and swore) he considers the first object the Commission of the Poor Law are to keep in view is to collect the greatest possible amount of rates'[251] – the Poor Law Commissioner could do no wrong in Russell's eyes and Clarendon was told by Russell to leave Poor Law matters to Twisleton: 'He seems to me to do uncommonly well and Poor Law principles are like Geology or Astronomy only to be known by those who have attended to and liked the subject'.[252] And Twisleton was informed by Trevelyan at this time that there had been 'a growing

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[248] PRO T64/367/C1 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 26 Jan. 1848 with additional note from Twisleton, 3 Feb. 1848.
[249] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 27 (Clarendon Papers): Somerville to Clarendon, 8 May 1848 and MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 43 (Clarendon Papers): Russell to Clarendon, 18 May 1848
[250] PRO 30/22/7A (Russell Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 3 Feb. 1848. Twisleton was not afraid of bringing the government up short when he thought they were wavering: 'I was a little afraid (to tell you the truth) that Government (not you) were becoming somewhat timid on the subject, as the meeting of Parliament was approaching and I was desirous that you should make them understand that there was nothing really to fear in reference to the feeling on this side of the water.' See PRO T64/370/C (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 7 Feb. 1848.
[251] A4/96 (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Clanricarde to Wood, 3 Aug. 1848. By Feb. 1848 Clanricarde saw Twisleton and Trevelyan as one body, working towards the same end. See MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 9 (Clarendon Papers): Clanricarde to Clarendon, 9 Feb. 1849.
[252] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 43 (Clarendon Papers): Russell to Clarendon, 17 Feb. 1848.

confidence in the administration of the Poor Law by you and your Colleagues for some time past'.[253]

Yet by November 1848 Twisleton's relationship with the Treasury was more problematic and the Commissioner's throwaway line at the end of a letter to Clarendon written on 15 November – 'It seems certain that a favourable opportunity presents itself for the extinction of the Celtic Race in Connaught – but we have not yet received any official intimation that any project of this kind has been favourably entertained'[254] - reveals something of the extent of this drift in relations. The first real blow to Twisleton's relationship with the Treasury was struck by the Poor Law Commissioners circular allowing relief to the children of farmers or labourers 'while the heads or more of the families are left to their ordinary avocations'.[255] Or, as Sir George Grey put it, allowing relief to be given to the families of 'men who refuse to give up their land'.[256] Clanricarde saw this circular as an attempt to 'over-ride and set aside checks which, after great deliberation and discussion, Parliament imposed upon them'[257] that is, the Quarter acre clause. Lansdowne and Campbell thought the circular to be a 'violation' of the 'spirit' and even of 'the letter' of the act [258] and Trevelyan wanted to know whether the matter could be cleared up without an official communication to the Poor Law Board in Ireland, which was what Wood was

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[253] PRO T64/370/C (Treasury Papers): Trevelyan to Twisleton, 8 Feb. 1848. Twisleton was aware of the price to be paid for such support and this manifested itself in an ability to know when to back down. Hence when his request for any unwanted clothing or bedding from the Ordnance was flatly refused by Trevelyan, the Commissioner accepted the decision and instead directed his misgivings at Clarendon. See PRO T64/366/A (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 9 Nov. 1848 (Trevelyan's recommendation for Wood is recorded at the end of the letter) and MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 29 (Clarendon Papers): Twisleton to Clarendon, 15 Nov. 1848.

[254] Ibid.

[255] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 9 (Clarendon Papers): Clanricarde to Clarendon, 5 June 1848.

[256] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 12 (Clarendon Papers): G. Grey to Clarendon, 8 June 1848.

[257] Ibid.

[258] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 47 (Clarendon Papers): Lansdowne to Clarendon, 6 June 1848. Lansdowne informed Clarendon that he was 'never more embarrassed than with the circular question', see MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 47 (Clarendon Papers): Lansdowne to Clarendon, 24 June 1848.

contemplating.[259] Twisleton, who was in London at this time being examined by Lord Lucan's committee, lost no time in explaining himself to Trevelyan, but unfortunately his letter has not survived in a complete state. It is possible to discern that he referred Wood and Sir George Grey, via Lewis, to the opinion of a Mr Hean (the counsel consulted by the Poor Law Commissioners on the matter) and also to the Attorney General's stated opinion on the case. He also pointed out how an amendment to the original clause of the bill, as proposed by Power, had caused the difficulty and proposed that Power's original clause be re-enacted.[260] But, despite or perhaps because of Clarendon's surprisingly stalwart defence of the Commissioner,[261] the damage was done and the Treasury was confirmed in this view following Spring Rice's notification of the serious consequences that could be anticipated from the circular on the weekly issues of the British Association in Ireland.[262]

In the event Lewis saved the day[263] and an official letter was sent to the Poor Law Commissioners in Ireland at the end of the month.[264] But while Twisleton may not even have been present in Ireland when the circular was issued[265] he certainly took the fall on behalf of his fellow Commissioners, at a price of some personal credibility in the eyes of the government. Thus on 13 June Trevelyan informed Twisleton that the Treasury was concerned because the Commissioner appeared to 'contemplate a much more extensive measure of assistance to Unions' than the

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[259] PRO T64/367/ B1 (Treasury Papers): Trevelyan to Twisleton, 12 June 1848.
[260] PRO T64/367/B1 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 15 June 1848.
[261] MS Clar. Dep. Ir. Vol. II pp. 299B-301A (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to G. Grey, 11 June 1848.
[262] PRO T64/367/B1 (Treasury Papers): Spring Rice to Trevelyan, 8 June 1848.
[263] MS Clar. Dep. C.530 (Clarendon Papers): Lewis to Clarendon, 18 June 1848.
[264] PRO HO 122/20 (Home Office Papers): Lewis to The Secretary of the Poor Law Commissioners, 30 June 1848.
[265] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Letterbook Vol. III, p. 19B (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Russell, 3 July 1848. Redington certainly provided a spirited defense of the actions of the Commissioners, see MS Clar. Dep. Irish Letterbook Vol. III, pp. 10B-11A (Clarendon Papers): Clarendon to Lansdowne, 22 June 1848.

government had 'any idea of according'.[266] And one month later the Treasury's apparent lack of confidence in the discretion of the Commissioner to allocate funds appropriately, in this instant in relation to grants to Galway and Tuam, drew from Twisleton the most severe rebuke that he ever issued in his correspondence with the Treasury:

> I wish that before you throw slurs on the Commission in your Treasury Minutes you would adhere to the usual official practice of inviting explanations. I think that you ought to have had sufficient confidence in us to presume that there was something more in the Galway and Tuam grants than met the eye in a statistical document.[267]

Trevelyan, suitably chastised, must then have gone some way to mend bridges, for within a week the Commissioner was able to send the following answer to his Trevelyan's recent missives:

> I thank you for your letters concerning the grants to Tuam and Galway unions. I am quite satisfied on the subject now; although I confess that I was a little sore originally. I am as indifferent as any one can be to abuse from enemies … but you will admit that it is discouraging to be left in the lurch by one's friends at the same time. It is, however, now all right.[268]

And so the Twisleton/Treasury relationship appears to have assumed an even keel again, with Twisleton assuring Trevelyan and Wood that they could rely upon him to be as 'economical as possible' and could depend upon him to do everything in his power to 'press forward the collection of the rates'.[269] But the element of absolute trust had undoubtedly been lost on both sides of the Irish Sea and as the funds that the government were willing to make available for the relief of distress in Ireland dwindled, so these tensions began to resurface.

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[266] PRO T64/367/B1 (Treasury Papers): Trevelyan to Twisleton, 13 June 1848.
[267] PRO T64/367/B2 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 9 July 1849. This letter is incorrectly dated. It should read 1848.
[268] PRO T64/367/B2 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 15 July 1848.
[269] PRO T64/367/B2 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Clarendon, 10 Aug. 1848 and A4/181/ Part II (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Twisleton to Wood, 21 Aug. 1848.

Still, it is a mark of both the Treasury's trust in Twisleton and the strength of the relationship that the Commissioner had forged with the Treasury, that when the Poor Law Commissioners reduced the maximum poor rate due in Ireland from 5 shillings down to 3 shillings, both Wood and Grey suspected that such an action of subterfuge could only have been done at the 'connivance ... of Lord John and Lord Clarendon' following Russell's visit to Ireland in early September. And Trevelyan was instructed to write 'privately' to Twisleton to ask if this was the case.[270] In the event the relationship between Twisleton and the Treasury weathered even this storm and Twisleton was still speaking the Treasury's language as late as February 1849. For example, he adopted an unsympathetic tone in reference to the reported sufferings of the people in many parts of Ireland: 'What I think of Gort union is that they were really hurt there when they cried. In many parts of Ireland, especially in the East, men have cried without having been hurt.'[271] Yet a request in early February 1849 for an enquiry to be made into 'the causes of deaths mentioned in the Constabulary Reports or in Coroners Inquests not referred to in those Reports' brought the subject of acceptable mortality rates and the future relief of Irish distress to the table in a way which the Commissioner could no longer ignore.[272] In Twisleton's view, there was only one case in the reports where the officer engaged in the administration of the Poor Law was to blame for any instance of mortality and he thought it 'very desirable' that the government had 'a clear understanding as to the risk which undoubtedly exists of occasional cases of death from starvation under the present relief system'. Trevelyan was informed that the only guarantee against such mortality was a revival of the Temporary relief system and advances from the Exchequer to the

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[270] A4/59/Part I (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Trevelyan to Wood, 16 Sept. 1848 and PROT64/370/B1 (Treasury Papers): Wood to Trevelyan, 19 Sept. 1848. See also, Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*, pp. 369-70. The author has not been able to locate Twisleton's response.
[271] PRO T64/366/A (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 6 Feb. 1849.
[272] PRO T64/370/C (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 9 Feb. 1849.

different unions in Ireland. Given that Trevelyan knew what Twisleton thought about gratuitous relief and the Temporary relief act, the Commissioner could not have been viewed as a serious advocate of this form of relief by Trevelyan[273] and in all likelihood Twisleton did not suggest this as a credible relief policy alternative. Instead, Twisleton made it clear that certain choices had been made, for the benefit of the Empire, and while the summary that he gave of these choices was entirely neutral, the absence of any condemnatory comment from the Commissioner here is significant:

> It is certainly very horrible to think that even one human being should die of starvation – and I would be very far from speaking lightly or thinking lightly of such a calamity. But still it would have been wholly unreasonable to have entered on such a system as that which has been pursued during the last 4 months without contemplating the possibility (and I must in sincerity add, the probability) that some deaths from starvation would be the result.
> Considering, however, the state of the national finances and of the money market in October last, it seemed to be a less evil to the Empire to encounter that risk than to continue the system of advances from the publick purse.[274]

Twisleton had informed Clarendon in January that he assumed 'it will be absolutely necessary under any circumstances to give some assistance for two or three years to distressed Unions in the West of Ireland'[275] and he took the opportunity on 9 February in his letter to Trevelyan to spell out the facts of the case again:

> If the system pursued during the last 4 months is continued, there will be a continuance of the same risks ...and the time has now arrived when we must increase in the most distressed localities, the amount of assistance which is to be given from the Reserve Fund.[276]

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[273] PRO T64/369/B3 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 7 Mar. 1848: 'Still the exacting 8 or 10 hours labour in digging drains and trenching waste lands is a better check and test than the exacting no labour at all, as was generally the case under the Temporary Relief act. In fact it is notorious that notwithstanding all the able exertions of Sir J B to check such abuses, relief in aid of wages was very common; able bodied men receiving their rations at one time of day and working for their employers during the remainder. This could be rendered impossible by exacting any kind of work during 10 or 8 hours of the day.'
[274] PRO T64/370/C (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 9 Feb. 1849.
[275] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 29 (Clarendon Papers): Twisleton to Clarendon, 2 Jan. 1849.
[276] PRO T64/370/C (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 9 Feb. 1849.

What really concerned the Commissioner was a fear that he and his fellow Commissioners were going to be hung out to dry because of the levels of mortality in the poor houses in Ireland, which were the result of a policy which he could not now support:

> As the course of policy which the House seems at present inclined to pursue will inevitably, if persisted in, occasion loss of life at a period more or less distant in proportion to the willingness of contractors in different Unions to advance supplies on credit, I am anxious to keep the Irish Poor Law Commission clear from the responsibility of any participation in that policy, so that the responsibility for any such loss of life may fall on those parties with whom it ought in fairness to rest, viz. Members of the House of Commons.[277]

Twisleton did not say that he was thinking of, or was going to, resign at this point and he was careful to shift the emphasis of culpability to the House of Commons. Still, he wanted the government to know that the Poor Law Commissioners could not be held responsible for the increased mortality in Ireland which, as he saw it would result from the House of Commons' stated policy, as communicated to him in Wood's letter of 19 February.[278] The solution, as Twisleton saw it, was to use the opportunity of the forthcoming publication of the eighth series of Parliamentary Papers respecting the Unions in Ireland, and of the Treasury Papers to shape the 'feelings of the House of Commons' and of 'the English People' on the subject. And he informed the Chancellor that he was 'desirous' of being examined by the Committee on the Irish

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[277] A4/181/Part II (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Twisleton to Wood, 22 Feb. 1849. This letter came in the wake of the trouble the Government had in securing an advance of £50 000 for the relief of Irish distress from the House of Commons. See MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 27 (Clarendon Papers): Somerville to Clarendon, 7 Feb. 1849 and RA/VIC/D19/20 (Royal Archives): Russell to the Queen, 13 Feb. 1849. Graham rightly held himself 'partly responsible' for the Rate in Aid Bill, see PRO 30/22/6B, f.342 (Russell Papers): Graham to Russell, undated (Mar. 1849 - although the letter has been placed in an earlier file).

[278] A4/181/Part II (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Twisleton to Wood, 22 Feb. 1849.

Poor Laws[279] and that he wished to ensure that several inspectors from the Western Unions were also examined by the Committee, in order to kick start this public opinion moulding process.[280] Twisleton's clearly expressed policy here was to work with Wood and the government to obtain an additional grant from the Consolidated Fund or, if that was refused, to call together a public subscription under a Queen's Letter. Nevertheless he informed the Chancellor that he hoped that by placing on the record in 'temperate and guarded language' the exact reasons why the population of the Western Unions were not to be too had pressed, he would 'not be acting in opposition to the policy and the wishes of the government.'[281]

Twisleton knew that as far as any plan for state sponsored emigration was concerned, if Wood had at his disposal 'all the real and imagined gold of California' it would still be 'insufficient of itself in a few districts of the West'[282] and he also knew that further grants from the consolidated fund or from a Queen's Letter would not stop people dying from starvation in Ireland. What mattered to him was that he and his department were going to be blamed for these deaths.

In December 1847 he had assured Trevelyan that he could live with such deaths, because the responsibility for them rested with the Irish rate payers:

> The interests of the whole Empire (including Ireland) demand that rates for the relief of the destitute should, up to a certain point; be raised at all hazards by local taxation. It would be a heavy blow to the prosperity of the Empire, if the Irish were to perpetuate the habit of looking to the Imperial taxes for the relief of their distress – and in making exertions to prevent the perpetuation of such a habit, some risks must be run. You cannot fight a great battle without some loss.[283]

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[279] For the committee's appointment see MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 27 (Clarendon Papers): Somerville to Clarendon, 6 Feb. 1849.
[280] A4/181/Part II (Hickleton Microfilm Papers): Twisleton to Wood, 22 Feb. 1849.
[281] Ibid.
[282] MS Clar. Dep. C.532 (Clarendon Papers): Twisleton to Clarendon, 10 Jan. 1849.
[283] PRO T64/369B/1 (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 14 Dec. 1847.

However, by February 1849 he believed that that 'certain point' had been reached as far the collection of rates in Ireland was concerned and that the safety of the Empire was no longer in sufficient peril to justify leaving Ireland to face such dangers alone. As soon as a large majority was obtained for the Rate in Aid resolution in the House of Commons, Twisleton submitted his resignation to the Prime Minister.[284] Clarendon was informed that Twisleton 'could not, without a sense of dishonour, consent to be an Instrument in fighting a Battle over the Rate in Aid on its [the government's] behalf with Boards of Guardians' and that he 'generally' so disapproved of the 'Poor Law Policy of the House of Commons towards Ireland' that he thought it advisable for the government to have another administrator to carry the policy into execution.[285] Twisleton later informed the Lord Lieutenant that he regarded the bill as 'the greatest political mistake in my time, since the rejection of the Roman Catholic Relief bill and of its Wings by the House of Lords in 1825'.[286] For, as he saw it, the bill was 'a step precisely in the wrong direction in reference to the great object of knitting the affections of Ireland to Great Britain', a policy which he thought to be of far greater permanent importance to the 'greatness of the Empire' than the 'conquest of Scinde or of the Punjab', which was running high in the news billing of the day.[287]

But Twisleton still wanted to press on with his stated policy of attempting to mould parliamentary opinion and on 13 March he sought Clarendon's opinion on how he might best do this, reluctant as he was to embarrass the government with a public resignation and to give evidence before the Poor Law Committee in Parliament as a servant of the government: 'especially as the point in issue is, strictly speaking, exclusively within their [the government's] province, and ought not to be interfered

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[284] PRO T64/366/A (Treasury Papers): Twisleton to Clarendon, 24 Mar. 1849.
[285] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 29 (Clarendon Papers): Twisleton to Clarendon, 9 Mar. 1849.
[286] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 29 (Clarendon Papers): Twisleton to Clarendon, 13 Mar. 1849.
[287] Ibid.: Twisleton to Clarendon, 10 Mar. 1849.

with by any Poor Law Commissioner'.[288] This was characteristic of a man who felt it to be within his sole province as a government official to implement policy and not to formulate it. Whether this was, or was not, a weakness depends on the position one approaches it from. For the Irish men, women and children who died from starvation in the period running up to February 1849 because the Commissioner was content to toe the Treasury line with regard to incurring 'some loss' in order to ensure that the Irish did not 'perpetuate the habit of looking to the Imperial taxes for the relief of their distress', it was undoubtedly a weakness.

Redington certainly could not discern the motives which truly influenced Twisleton in this matter for, to his mind, if the Commissioner 'considered that he could never be justified in carrying out, as an administrator, a law which he disapproved' then 'his resignation ought to have taken place in August 1847'.[289] Instead in August 1847 as Ireland faced the prospect of another season of distress, the head of the Poor Law in Ireland, in presenting the options on which the 'basis of all the financial calculations for the next year' rested as being between two simple alternatives – 'either to permit the deaths to take place for the purpose of breaking off the habit of dependence on English bounty, or to advance food or money in certain districts for the relief of destitution' – was only capable of tendering the following advice:

> It is entirely a question for the government to determine which of the two alternatives will be attended with the fewest evils in their estimation.[290]

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[288] Ibid.: Twisleton to Clarendon, 13 Mar. 1849.
[289] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 24/2 (Clarendon Papers): Redington to Clarendon, 28 Mar. 1849.
[290] MS Clar. Dep. Irish Box 60 (Clarendon Papers): Twisleton to Clarendon, 14 Aug. 1847.

Conclusion

In 1976 Montague began his doctoral thesis with a disclaimer:

> It is outside the scope of this thesis to attempt the re-writing of the history of the period.[1]

This thesis will end with one. For the thesis is not intended to be the last word on the impact of the Castle and the Custom House on the Cabinet in the formulation and administration of Irish Famine relief policy; there still remains much work to be done on the impact of Castle advisers such as John Pitt Kennedy or John Hamilton of St Ernans, Donegal on the formulation of relief policy. The contributions of the Castle legal advisers would also repay futher study. But, disclaimer aside, this study has concluded that Peel was not primarily interested in the 'science' of the 'Science Commissioners'. He needed their reports to convince his Cabinet to follow him on the repeal of the corn laws question. The Scarcity Commission was an exercise in public relations. Peel and Graham became tired of its meddlesome interference with the policy formulation process and culled its constituent members to ensure that the Government had an administrative committee that would toe their line. Nor were they ever serious about it either as an advisory body on the extent of the blight in Ireland, or as a board capable of proposing policy measures. The policies of relief had been made already in Whitehall and Westminster, not in Dublin.

The study has attempted to demonstrate that in the period that Griffith and Larcom remained outside the Board of Works, these officials adopted fundamentally different views about the existence of Irish distress from those of the officials within the Board of Works proper. By the time Lincoln realised this, it was too late. For Peel was out of office and the force the Chief Secretary wished to keep out of the picture,

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[1] Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction', p. 1.

the Treasury, was given the task of reorganising the Board of Works to make it fit to face another season of famine. In addition, while Lincoln thought that officials such as Jones disagreed with Trevelyan, in actual fact they frequently shared his outlook on the best way to proceed with the relief of Irish distress.

Historians such as Montague[2] and Gray[3] have also placed too great an emphasis on Larcom's 'Separation of Relief from Industry' memorandum to the Cabinet's decision to abandon relief by Public Works in favour of soup and the Poor Law in January 1847. In the first place the memorandum no longer exists and it is therefore difficult to discern what relief proposals the Commissioner favoured. This emphasis is also misplaced because it has drawn attention away from the message that the Board was trying to convey to their political superiors in January 1847. That message was that the Board considered they had an important part to play in the future provision of relief in Ireland. They wanted to separate relief from industry, but this did not mean that the industry could not provide relief. Those too ill or infirm to work were to be removed from the equation, in order to allow those capable of earning an honest wage to earn it. The Board asked for a short term solution in January 1847, to tide them over before their powers were increased and they could take on a renewed role in the relief efforts. By the time the Commissioners came to promulgate this message, the Treasury had become convinced of the benefits of an extended Poor Law in Ireland and adopted a selective deafness in relation to the Board in order to further their own policy proposals.

The political context of the Cabinet's decision to abandon Public Works has also been glossed over in historical accounts. The series of compromises forced on the Castle by the Cabinet; the dissimulation displayed by the Lord Lieutenant; the

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[2] Montague, 'Relief and Reconstruction in Ireland', pp. 123-4
[3] Gray, *Famine, Land and Politics*, p. 263.

differences which existed between the Irish executive; the confusion created by Russell and the Irish executive over the Temporary and Permanent policy proposals and the wavering nerve and indecision of Henry Labouchere and Lord John Russell had far greater impact on the decisions of the Cabinet than the memoranda and pleadings of Larcom, Griffith and Jones.

Twisleton's place as the 'hero' in the 'story' of the Famine has been reassessed. The Empire mattered to Twisleton more than the deaths of the starving Irish. He resigned over the Rate In Aid measure in March 1849 because he felt that the Empire was in a position where it could afford to relieve Irish distress without any serious threat to its cohesion. Had such a threat existed, it is questionable whether he would have gone. He also undoubtedly feared that the responsibility for increased mortality rates in the Poor Law Unions would be placed upon the Board and ultimately upon his shoulders.

Twisleton interpreted his duties as an administrator in a very strict sense. The formulation of policy was an activity which he believed to be outside of his remit. If pressed he would give his opinion on a matter of policy but he was reluctant to do so. It is therefore difficult to say with any certainty whether or not Twisleton agreed with the Treasury in the common stance that he adopted with that department on many of the issues the Poor Law Commissioners faced in Ireland.

Redington raised a valid point when he informed Clarendon that he could not understand why Twisleton had not resigned when the Poor Law Extension Act was brought in during the summer of 1847. Yet Twisleton wanted to remain in Ireland and was concerned for the security of his position as head of the Poor Law there. When Bessborough ensured that the Commissioner was kept on in Ireland, Clarendon reaped the consequences of his predecessor's plea. For Twisleton was so concerned

that his superiors might find him wanting in his efforts to enforce a policy which, when pushed, he had advised against that he threw himself into the enforcement of the Law and particularly the enforcement of the rates with great vigour. Clarendon came to resent this and the distressed Irish men, women and children undoubtedly suffered as a result. For Twisleton found the fact that 'loss' would occur through starvation to be acceptable for a significant period of time.

Were the Dublin Castle administrators the 'sorry lot' that Nowlan thought they were?[4] Dudley Edwards did not provide much of a clue in his diary as to why Nowlan thought this was the case.[5] However while Edwards conceded that '"The Circumlocution office" was not exactly the same as Dublin Castle' the implication of his employment of this term is that he believed similarities existed between Dickens' fictional office and Dublin Castle. In a conversation with the author in 2005, Nowlan made it clear that he considered that the Castle administrators 'had no great character or initiative'[6] and that they 'achieved little.' However the question must be asked, what could such men have realistically achieved?

Many of the senior administrators working in Ireland during the Famine were on secondment from the armed forces or had lengthy periods of military service behind

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[4] K.B. Nowlan quoted by R.D. Edwards. See University College, Dublin, LA 22/37 (R. Dudley Edwards' Academic Diary): 5 Mar. 1954. It is interesting that the question did not prompt Nowlan to ponder whether their political superiors were any better? Peel certainly seemed content to sacrifice the starving people of Ireland to political expediency by repudiating his responsibility as a statesman of notable influence to offer any effective opposition to the policies of the Government for a prolonged period of time. He abrogated this responsibility because he wanted to ensure that the successful repeal of the Corn Laws would not be endangered by a Protectionist rally which required him to exercise his authority to keep the government in power. While Russell was, for the most part, incapable of demonstrating any of the qualities of a good leader, on the rare occasions that he was able to muster both the strength and the courage to demonstrate leadership, for example in Cabinet over the threatened resignation of Bessborough, or in Parliament over Bentinck's railway scheme, his government and the opposition fell strangely into line.

[5] As a group the Dublin Castle administrators certainly did not display any noticeably religious antipathy towards the starving people of Ireland, which is striking given what Gray tells us about the preponderance and influence of providentialism amonst their political superiors.

[6] Transcript of a conversation between N.R. Dunn and K.B. Nowlan: 14 Sept. 2005.

them.[7] As such they were conditioned to following orders. In addition very few of these men were from Ireland. They had travelled there because it opened up the prospect of further career progression [8] and, for that reason they were unlikely to want to jeopardise their prospects by falling foul of their employers. Moreover, as the taxonomy of the Scarcity Commissioners contained in the second chapter clearly demonstrates, many of the relief officials in Ireland reported directly to the Treasury.[9]

Clarendon believed that it was a 'bad arrangement' for 'an office so important' as the Board of Works to 'be altogether independent of the Irish government'[10] and he might well have said the same about Routh and his department, had the Commissariat's presence in Ireland not been on such a temporary basis. For Lincoln and Pennefather; Clarendon and Redington the fact that the Board of Works reported to Trevelyan first and the Castle second posed a serious problem. Yet even when these officials were placed under the jurisdiction of the Lord Lieutenant, as Twisleton was after the Poor Law Extension act had been passed, clashes frequently occurred between views held at the Vice Regal Lodge and those maintained in the Custom House. More often than not, this was because the views held by Ireland's senior administrators, for example on the prevalence of widespread abuse within the relief system; the importance of enforcing a test of eligibility; and the inadvisability and dangers associated with gratuitous relief were in closer alignment with those maintained by the Treasury than by the Castle.[11]

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[7] Griffith and Twisleton were the exceptions amongst the senior relief administrators.
[8] Twisleton offers the best example of an administrator who climbed up the career ladder by transferring to Ireland.
[9] This official reporting-line relationship with the Treasury was compounded by the fact that the alternative networks of support and additional sources of advice and information available to many of the Dublin Castle administrators were very narrow.
[10] A4/57/1 (Hickleton papers Microfilm): Clarendon to Wood, 20 Sept. 1847.
[11] See, for example, NeC 1,331/1/1 (Newcastle papers): Pennefather to Lincoln, 3 May 1846; PRO T64/366/A (Treasury papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 6 Feb. 1849; PRO T64/369/B3 (Treasury papers): Twisleton to Trevelyan, 7 Mar. 1848; and Parliamentary Papers 1847, L. (764), p. 495: Commissioners of Public Works to the Lords of the Treasury, Jan. 1847.

Appendix One

Index of Abbreviations

A	Aberdeen
Bess.	Bessborough
Cab.	Cabinet
C.O.	Colonial Office
Cons returns	Consular Returns
D	Drayton Manor
Ed.	Editor
F	Fremantle
F.O.	Foreign Office
Fr	French
G	Graham
G.Grey	Sir George Grey
Gov	Governor
Govt.	Government
H	Heytesbury
H.O.	Home Office
Info.	Information
Ir.	Ireland / Irish
K	Kane
L	Lindley
MHC	Mansion House Committee
P	Peel
Parl	Parliament
Pl	Playfair
PL	Poor Law
Pot	Potatoes
Q	HM Queen Victoria
RASE	Royal Agricultural Society of England
RC	Roman Catholic
RDS	Royal Dublin Society
Sc	Scotland
Science Com	Science Commission
T	Trevelyan
V.R. Lodge	Vice Regal Lodge
W	Wellington

Where space permits, full names are employed.

Appendix One

Index of Sources

Aberdeen	Aberdeen Papers, British Library, London
Bourke	Bourke, M.Sc. Thesis
D	Derby Papers, Liverpool Record Office, Liverpool
D/EBP	Bouverie Pusey Papers, Berkshire Record Office, Reading
Edinburgh U.	Edinburgh University General Collection, Edinburgh
F D/F FR	Fremantle Papers, Buckinghamshire Record Office, Aylesbury
Graham	Graham Papers, British Library, London.
Goulburn	Goulburn Papers, Surrey History Centre, Woking.
Herbert	Herbert Papers, Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office, Trowbridge.
H.O.	Home Office Papers, National Archives, London
Lindley	Lindley Papers, Kew, London.
Nat. Bot Gardens	National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Ireland.
NeC	Newcastle Papers, Nottingham University Library, Nottingham.
Parkes	Parkes Papers, Berkshire Record Office, Reading
Peel or P	Peel Papers, British Library, London.
Playfair	Playfair Papers, Imperial College, London.
Pusey Dep.	Pusey Papers, Berkshire Record Office, Reading
Ramsay	Ramsay Papers, Imperial College, London.
RA QVJ	Royal Archives, Queen Victoria's Journal, Windsor Castle
RASE	Royal Agricultural Society of England, Reading
RLFC	Relief Commission Papers, National Archives, Dublin
RDS	Royal Dublin Society, Dublin
TPLB	Trevelyan Private Letter Books, The Robinson Library, Newcastle
W	Wellington Papers, University Of Southampton, Southampton
WO	War Office Papers, National Archives, London

Appendix One

Chronology of Events
June – December 1845

British Association meeting, Cambridge	18 June – Literary Gazette, 21 June.
G to H-coercion and turning point in Irish affairs	29 June – Graham Papers
G to H-no coercive powers to be used	6 July – Graham Papers.
P audience with Queen- Irish Colleges Bill	13 July – RA QVJ 13/7/45.
G to H-reform the Irish Board of Works	15 July – Graham Papers.
R.A.S.E. Annual Country Meeting at Shrewsbury	17 July – R.A.S.E.JournalV,II,p.lviii.
G to H-future Irish conciliation policy	18 July – Graham Papers.
P audience with The Prince Albert and Queen	19 July – RA QVJ 19/7/45.
G to H-McKenna and Catholic appointments	22 July – Graham Papers.
G to H-policy of paying Catholic priests	30 July – Graham Papers.
G to F-military position in Ir.	31 July – Graham Papers.
The Corn Laws-The Times leading article	1 August – The Times.
G to F-returns police reports, paying R.C priests	6 August – Graham Papers.
G to H-McKenna appointment, paying R.C. priests	7 August – Graham Papers.
H to G-sends Burgoyne memo. on Board of Works	7 August – Graham Papers.
P audience with Queen – McKenna discussed	8 August – RA QVJ 8/8/45.
Queen sets off for her European tour	9 August – RA QVJ 9/8/45.
H to G-policy of paying R.C. priests	9 August – Graham Papers.
G to H-outlines future Irish policy	10 August – Graham Papers
G to H-pressing for payment of R.C. priests	11 August – Graham Papers.
P to Drayton Manor	11 August – Peel 40479.
G sends P extract from Parker letter	12 August – Peel 40451.
G visits P at Drayton Manor	Precise date unknown.
G to Stanley at Walton until 16/8	13 August – Graham Papers
H to G-will try and pay R.C. priests	14 August – Graham Papers.
P to G-the Sunderland election and the League	15 August – Graham Papers
G to P-what legislation aggravates/mitigates dearth?	15 August – Graham Papers
G to H-must pay R.C. priests	15 August – Graham Papers.
P to G-has read Cobden's speech at Sunderland	16 August – Graham Papers
H to G-difficulty of paying R.C. priests	18 August – Graham Papers.
G to F-harvest prospects and potato crop in Ir.	18 August – Graham Papers.
F to G-Blakeney favorable tour of mid and west Ir.	19 August – Graham Papers.
P to Aberdeen-Trade Returns	19 August – Peel 40455.
F to G-no injury to crops, potato crop good	20 August – Graham Papers.
G to P-G's brother in law dies on 19/8	20 August – Graham Papers
G to P potato crop in the South injured	21 August – Peel 40451.

P to G-Young is coming for dinner on 23/8	22 August – Graham Papers
G to P-memorandum on 'defenceless position'	26 August – Graham Papers
Lord and Lady Villiers at Drayton Manor	30 August – Peel 40573.
P to Queen-Ireland is peaceful	31 August – Peel 40440.
P to Croker-remembers winter 1842	31 August – Peel 40573.
Croker to P-reports of potato failure in Ireland	31 August – Peel 40573.
H to G- potato crop good, harvest favourable	31 August – Graham Papers.

The harvest-Times leading article	1 September – The Times.
Gov Bank Scotland to P on crops in Scotland	1 September – Peel 40573.
G to H-returns Leinster's letter, divide R.C policy	5 September – Graham Papers.
Jones to P potato crop blighted in Wales, sent to G	5 September – Peel 40573.
G, Herbert, Haddington leave Drayton Manor on 4	5 September – Peel 40468.
Stanley to G-national defence	6 September – Graham Papers.
H to G-sends letter from Clanricarde, harvest good	6 September – Graham Papers.
H to F-policy towards R.C.'s in Ir.	6 September – Graham Papers.
G to P-Orange order dangers in Ireland	8 September – Graham Papers.
The Times-Cornwall Gazette describing blight	8 September – The Times.
Lord Delalvarr to P-potato crop in Kent blighted	8 September – Peel 40573.
G leaves Stanley at Walton	8 September – Peel 40468.
Council meeting on 13	8 September – Peel 40468.
G to H-is any reason to fear failure in potato crop?	9 September – Graham Papers.
Potatoes in the London markets-presence of blight	9 September – The Times.
Croker to P-P's forthcoming visit to H. Baring	9 September – Peel 40573.
G to H-colleges 'monuments to...generous policy'	10 September – Graham Papers.
R.D.S. meeting-the potato blight	11 September – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Bristol Mercury, 6/9 observations on blight	11 September – The Times.
H to G-potato crop is only partially blighted	12 September – Graham Papers.
Council meeting at Osborne, P stays until 16/9	13 September – RA QVJ 13/9/45.
F to his uncle-religious animosities in Ir.	13 September- F, DFR Box 229 7
Preventative measures used in Antwerp	13 September – The Times.
P audience with Queen-Corn Laws have to go	14 September – RA QVJ 14/9/45.
H to G-alarming letter from Royal Ag. Im. Soc.	14 September – Graham Papers.
Graham to Netherby	14 September – Peel 40451.
Forbes, Wexford to Ramsay-saw Pl in London	14 September – Ramsay 8/389.
P audience with Queen – Defence, Tahiti	15 September – RA QVJ 15/9/45.
F to G-Bullen letter, Constabulary reports ordered	15 September – Graham Papers.
Düsseldorf farmer and preventative measures	15 September – The Times.
Pennefather to Constabulary-ordering returns	15 September-R.C. 2/441/18Z13210.
Peel to Whitehall	15 September – Peel 40451.
H. Baring to P-expects Peel on 22/9	16 September – Peel 40574.
Dalhousie to P-agricultural survey	17 September – Peel 40574.
R.D.S. meeting-the potato blight	18 September – R.D.S. Proceedings.
G to P -"increased apprehensions for potatoes"	18 September – Peel 40451.
G to P sends unfavorable report from Ireland	19 September – Peel 40451.

P to G-bad accounts blight-Belgium and Holland	19 September – Graham Papers.
De La Beche to Ramsay-news from Ir.	20 September – Ramsay 7/127.
Croker to P-unfavorable report of the potato crop	20 September – Peel 40574.
Sturge to P-blight in Europe	20 September – Peel 40574.
P to F-greatly alarmed at G's potato papers	20 September – Peel 40476.
H to G-contradictory reports of potato crop	22 September – Graham Papers.
Peel at H. Baring's house in Brandon, Bucks	23 September – Peel 40574.
P to Croker-news of blight in Ireland is bad	23 September – Peel 40574.
G to H-in England the blight is extensive	24 September – Graham Papers.
The Corn Laws-The Times leading article	25 September – The Times.
The blight in Kent	25 September – The Times.
H to G-consequences of failure, favorable reports	26 September – Graham Papers.
Jones to Young-palliative proposals for blight	26 September – Peel 40574.
Monteagle to P-proposes the use of Indian Corn	27 September – Peel 40574.
Croker to P-European failure, to be at D on 6/10	28 September – Peel 40574.
G to P sends more favorable report from Ireland	28 September – Peel 40451.
P to G sends unfavorable report on Polish Harvest	28 September – Peel 40451.
P to G-lost Sturgis' letter-foreign wheat duty free	29 September – Graham Papers.
Everett to P-news of the blight in the U.S.A.	29 September – Peel 40574.
Graham in Whitehall	29 September – Peel 40451.
Fremantle sends P favorable reports	29 September – Peel 40476.
H to G-Thurles meeting-repeal alive again	30 September – Graham Papers.
Prediction of a terrible visitation in England	30 September – The Times.
Graham at Netherby	30 September – Peel 40451.
P to G good account from Mayo	30 September – Peel 40451.
G to P unfavorable report from Ireland	30 September – Peel 40451.
P to Monteagle-asks for info on Irish potato crop	30 September – Peel 40574.
Extracts from Cons returns-corn/Europe/U.S.A.	30 September – Peel 40574.
Sir W.W.Smyth to Ramsay-news from Carlow	30 September – Ramsay 8/700/5.
H to G-F-potatoes favorable in Killarney district	1 October – Graham Papers.
P at Westminster and at Drayton Manor	1 October – Peel 40479.
Young to P-agricultural survey in Ireland	1 October – Peel 40575.
Pennefather to Sutton-abstracts constabulary reports	2 October – H O 45 1080 B.
Berkeley to Lindley-potato blight, blight pamphlets	2 October – Lindley,Berkeley, f78.
G to H-worried about Thurles report	3 October – Graham Papers.
H to G-summary of Constabulary reports, potatoes	3 October – Graham Papers
P to Hunt-he does read 'The Spectator'	3 October – Peel 40575.
Goulburn sends Provincial Bank returns to P	3 October – Peel 40445.
Peel at Drayton Manor	3 October – Peel 40451.
P to G favorable report from Fremantle	3 October – Peel 40451.
James to Ramsay-Forbes in Ir. now a week	4 October – Edinburgh U, Gen.1426.
Reports of the state of the Irish harvest	4 October – Peel 40575.
Individual town reports on the Irish harvest	4-7October – P 40575,146,218,236.
P to G-repeal meetings and Govt. action	5 October – Graham Papers.
G to P favorable reports from Ireland	6 October – Peel 40451.

G to H-anxiety in Cabinet over Repeal meetings	7 October – Graham Papers
Berkeley to Lindley-atmospheric theory incorrect	8 October – Lindley, Berkeley,f.79.
Bank of England to Goulburn, P, G-harvest returns	8 October – Peel 40578.
Buckland to P-arranging date of his visit to D	8 October – Peel 40575.
Dillon Croker to F-unfavorable report – sent to P	8 October – Peel 40575.
Goulburn sends abstracts and Prov Bank letter to P	8 October – Peel 40445.
G to P sanguine that some reports exaggerated	8 October – Peel 40451.
Pennefather to Sutton-abstracts constabulary reports	9 October – H O 45 1080 B.
H to G-Lord Devon and Palmerston are in Ir.	9 October – Graham Papers
Lord Stuart de Decies to F-unfavorable report-to P	9 October – Peel 40575.
Report on potato crop in Derry-sent to P	9 October – Peel 40575.
Kenah to Sir C. Burrell-unfavorable-to P on14	9 October – Peel 40575.
P audience with The Prince Albert, P stays until 13	10 October – RA QVJ 10/10/45.
H to G-unfavorable reports, what will Govt. do?	10 October – Graham Papers
Fremantle sends P less favorable accounts	10 October – Peel 40476.
Apprehended dearth of food – leading article	10 October – The Times.
Sir W.W. Smyth to Ramsay-Forbes has visited	11 October – Ramsay 8/700/6.
Hewson to P-must open the ports	11 October – Peel 40575.
Trench to P-the blight is universal in Ireland	11 October – Peel 40575.
P audience with Queen	12 October – RA QVT 12/10/45.
H to G-unfavorable reports, Lord Clare letter	12 October – Graham Papers
Heytesbury to P-alarmed at state of potatoes	12 October – Peel 40479.
Buckland to P-promises to forward Pl invitation	12 October – Peel 40575.
P to W-forwards Guizot letter on French navy	13 October – W 2/133/50-54.
P audience with The Prince Albert	13 October – RA QVJ 13/10/45.
Pennefather to Sutton-Castle Kelly magistrate report	13 October – H O 45 1080 B.
Pennefather to Sutton-Mayor of Cork's letter	13 October – H O 45 1080 B.
P to F, Windsor-is sorry about unfavorable reports	13 October – F, D FR Box 230 I.
G to H-alarmed, political consequences of blight	13 October – Graham Papers.
Hanly to P-P sends this on to Goulburn	13 October – Peel 40575.
Fremantle sends letters to P from H, Monteagle	13 October – Peel 40476.
G sends P letter from Heytesbury – blight serious	13 October – Peel 40451.
P in Whitehall	13 October – Peel 40451.
P to G-remove impediments to imports	13 October – Peel 40451.
H to G-unfavorable reports, only on digging truth	14 October – Graham Papers
McCann to P-reports are exaggerated	14 October – Peel 40575.
Stanley sends P unfavorable reports from Ir.	14 October – Peel 40468.
G sends P unfavorable reports from Ir. (Police)	14 October – Peel 40451.
H to G-failure general/open ports no use/Robinson	15 October – Graham Papers.
Pennefather to Sutton-sends Babington letter	15 October – H O 45 1080 B.
P to Heytesbury-asks for Commission, total repeal	15 October – Peel 40479.
Fermoy Board of Guardians to H-prohibit exports	15 October – Peel 40575.
Symot to P-info on potato exports, Liverpool	15 October – Peel 40575.
P at Drayton Manor	15 October – Peel 40451.
P informs Wellington of blight in Ir.	15 October – Peel 40461.
Potatoes-the crop and blight in Belgium	15 October – The Times.

Pennefather to Sutton-abstract Constabulary reports	16 October – H O 45 1080 B.
Ramsay wrote to Forbes in Dublin	16 October – Ramsay 1 / 4 Diary.
H to G-unfavorable abstract,1801 rice/maize import	16 October – Graham Papers
H to G-1801 precedent for proclamations	16 October – Graham Papers
R.D.S. meeting-Sub Committee formed	16 October – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Pl/Parkes/Buckland/Talbot/Aylesford at D on 15/10	16? October – Peel 40574.
P to Everett- believes Buckland's blight theory	16? October – Peel 40574.
Sir W.W.Smyth to Ramsay-news from Ir.	17 October – Ramsay 8/700/7.
Liverpool Times-method of storing potatoes	17 October – The Times.
Heytesbury to P-Special Commission not required	17 October – Peel 40479.
Commissariat, Nova Scotia-distress expected	17 October – Peel 40576.
Young to P-unfavorable account from Ireland	17 October – Peel 40576.
J.Burns to P-palliative proposals	17 October – Peel 40576.
G to P agrees that detailed information is required	17 October – Peel 40451.
Wellington to P-there is a large oats crop in Ir.	17 October – Peel 40461.
H to G-Fermoy memorial/prohibit exports	18 October – Graham Papers.
P to Goulburn-accounts from Ir. very alarming	18 October – Goulburn 304 Box 42.
G to P-proposed measures, Robinson investigation	18 October – Graham Papers.
G to F-the blight has ruined favorable conditions	18 October – Graham Papers
P to G-on Kane	18 October – Graham 1.94.
R.D.S. meeting-Kane present	18 October – R.D.S. Proceedings.
The potato crop in Ireland	18 October – The Times.
Morgan to P-favorable report from Cork	18 October – Peel 40576.
Smith to P-unfavorable report from Antrim	18 October – Peel 40576.
P to Goulburn-suggests repeal of the corn laws	18 October – Peel 40445.
Goulburn sends P a report from Monaghan	18 October – Peel 40445.
Playfair/Parkes/Buckland at Drayton Manor	18 October – Peel 40451.
P to F-what should govt. do? Kane	19 October – F, D FR Box 230 1
H to G-sends provincial abstract, wait until 14/11	19 October – Graham Papers
P to G-sends Wellington letter on food in Ireland	19 October – Graham Papers.
Bullen (Sec. Royal Ag. Ireland)-unfavorable	19 October – Peel 40576.
Atkinson to P-favorable report from Rathomen	19 October – Peel 40576.
G sends P unfavorable report from Ireland	19 October – Peel 40451.
Playfair to Drayton Manor	19 October – Peel 40575.
Wellongton dines with Queen, stays until 23	20 October – RA QVJ 20/10/45.
Babington(Brit Ass.) to Lindley-Fr. Govt. report	20 October – Lindley,Babington f39.
H to P-has written to Kane, sends Pl note back	20 October – Peel 40479.
Fremantle has interview with Sec. Ag. Soc on 18	20 October – Peel 40476.
P sends a circular calling a Cabinet for 31/10	20 October – Peel 40575.
Fremantle to P- has had interview with Kane	20 October – Peel 40476.
Fr to G-Kane is working on the Science of blight	20 October – Aberdeen 43065.
Playfair outlines the Commission, to London	20 October – Peel 40576.
H to G-interview with Kane on 20/10, Pl/L	21 October – Graham Papers.
G to H-Pl to be sent to Ir.does not hold much hope	21 October – Graham Papers.
Phillips to Pennefather-acknowledging returns	21 October – R.C.2/441/18Z14246.
Lindley to P-accepts commission	21 October – Peel 40576.

P in London	21 October – Peel 40461.
P to Wellington-is sending Playfair to Ir.	21 October – Peel 40461/W 2/133/77
Playfair writes from London, Lindley accepts	21 October – Peel 40576.
Goulburn to P-not satisfied that blight serious	21 October – Peel 40445.
Bain to P-suggestions for preventing distress	21 October – Peel 40576.
Sir George Clerk to P-unfavorable reports from Ir.	21 October – Peel 40576.
Jardine to P-scientific investigation in Sc.	21 October – Peel 40576.
Hope Johnstone to P-scientific investigation in Sc.	21 October – Peel 40576.
Nicholson to P-partial reports on the potato crop	21 October – Peel 40576.
Buckland to Playfair-sends specimens of potatoes	22 October – Playfair, 107.
Earl of Dunraven to P-unfavorable reports	22 October – Peel 40576.
Sir George Clerk to P-unfavorable reports from Sc.	22 October – Peel 40576.
Huton to P-unfavorable report from Kilrush	22 October – Peel 40576.
Harland, Manchester to P-practical methods	22 October – Peel 40576.
P to American Minister for dinner on 3/11	22 October – Peel 40576.
Usborne to P-unfavorable reports from Limerick	22 October – Peel 40576.
Extract from consular despatch, Naples, Poland	22 October – Peel 40576.
Aberdeen to P-admit Indian corn duty free	22 October – Peel 40455.
P proposes to be in London on 25/10/1845	22 October – Peel 40451.
Colonel Le Conteur to W-French designs on Jersey	23 October – W 2/133/84.
H to G-Pl/L arrived, P.R., 1822 precedent	23 October – Graham Papers.
De La Beche to Ramsay-Forbes gone, Pl arrived	23 October – Ramsay 7/139.
P to G-returns H's unfavorable letters	23 October – Graham Papers.
R.D.S.meeting-the potato blight	23 October – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Bullen to F-unfavorable reports	23 Oct - R.L.F.C.2/441/18Z14348.
Heartney to P-unfavorable reports, County Clare	23 October – Peel 40576.
Herbert to P-accepts invitation for 3/11 at D	23 October – Peel 40576.
Prince Castilcicala, Mr. Dedel also for 3/11 at D	23 October – Peel 40576.
P proposes repeal to Aberdeen	23 October – Peel 40455.
P to W-forwards A's letter on Thiers interview	24 October – W 2/133/85.
Lindley to Berkeley-Dublin, blight widespread	24 October – Berkeley, Lindley.
H to Pl/L-additional request to list of 23/10-info.	24 October – Lindley Hey, f. 406.
H to G-sends a second letter from Mr. Melville	24 October – Graham Papers.
Potatoes	24 October – The Times.
Kane to H-practical man	24 Oct - R.L.F.C.2/441/18Z14292.
Pl to H-requests Constabulary returns	24Oct - R.L.F.C. 2/441/18Z14290.
H to P-Pl/L have arrived, have given them orders	24 October – Peel 40479.
Saunders to Heytesbury and P-unfavorable, Kerry	24 October – Peel 40576.
Monteagle to P-mixed reports from Ireland	24 October – Peel 40576.
Henderson (Ed. Newry Telegraph) to P-potato crop	24 October – Peel 40576.
Holcombe, Edinburgh to P-palliative proposals	24 October – Peel 40576.
Stanley returns to P enclosures on blight in Ir.	24 October – Peel 40468.
G sends P an unfavorable account from Ireland	24 October – Peel 40451.
G proposes to meet P at Lincoln's Hall on 30/10	24 October – Peel 40451.
Pl/L/K to H-first report	24 Oct - R.L.F.C.2/441/18Z14350.
First Report issued	24 October – Bourke II b,14.

Kane to H-practical agricultural member	24 October – H O 45 1080 C.
H to G-not to trust good reports,	25 October – Graham Papers.
Abstract of Ir. Coast Guard reports-mixed	25 October – Peel 40576.
Palmer,Galway to P-potato farina	25 October – Peel 40576.
P to Col. Bolwes-gardener and Pl. sent proposals	25 October – Peel 40576.
Bushby, Liverpool to P-difficulties accurate info.	25 October – Peel 40576.
Colsher, Liverpool to P-unfavorable corn, oats	25 October – Peel 40576.
Eckersley, Chester to P-blight present	25 October – Peel 40576.
Liverpool merchant to P-corn prices in Europe	25 October – Peel 40576.
Fremantle sends P first Science Com. report	25 October – Peel 40476.
G sends P report from Ireland	25 October – Peel 40451.
Raikes to W-positive report of potatoes from Cahir	26 October – Wellington 2/133/92.
Lindley to Moore-requests interview on 28/10	26 October – Nat.Bot.Gardens.
H to G-Constabulary abstracts, Pl/L/K directions	26 October – Graham Papers
P to Dalhosie-requests an interview for 5,6/11	26 October – Peel 40577.
Ercott M.P., Taunton to P-unfavorable report	26 October – Peel 40577.
Earl of Glengall,Cahew to P-much exaggeration	26 October – Peel 40577.
Arbuthnot to P-repeal must soon come	26 October – Peel 40484.
P to Hardinge-blight in Europe and America	26 October – Peel 40475.
G forwards note from Buccleugh to P-bad in Sc.	26 October – Peel 40451
Playfair in Dublin, Elridge Hotel, Kildare St.	26 October – Peel 40576.
Playfair to Peel-"acc.melancholy/foreign returns"	26 October – Peel 40577.
P audience with The Prince Albert, stays until 30/9	27 Ocober – RA QVJ 27/10/45.
P dines with Queen/Bedford/De la Warrs	27 October – RA QVJ 27/10/45.
H to G-need decision/Kane distillation/pacify	27 October – Graham Papers.
H to G-sends second paper from Pl/L/K	27 October – Graham Papers.
R.D.S. meeting-the potato blight	27 October – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Devon to Peel-the agricultural state of Ireland	27 October – NeC9486/1.
Kane to F-practical man	27 Oct - R.L.F.C.2/441/18Z14516.
P to H-do not call County meetings yet	27 October – Peel 40479.
H to P-requests Cabinet decision	27 October – Peel 40479.
Dr.Traill to P-has discovered solution for blight	27 October – Peel 40577.
Pr. George and Speaker, invited to D 3/11	27 October – Peel 40577.
Allin to P-unfavorable report from Ireland	27 October – Peel 40577.
Arthur, Edinburgh to P-palliative proposals	27 October – Peel 40577.
Brady,Dublin to P-O'Connell and corn law repeal	27 October – Peel 40577.
Hawkins, London to P-corn laws must be repealed	27 October – Peel 40577.
Moylan, Cork to P-blight exaggerated	27 October – Peel 40577.
P to Hope Johnston-will contribute Sc. Comm.	27 October – Peel 40576.
G sends bad news concerning potatoes in Scot to P	27 October – Peel 40451.
G sends P a mass of conflicting reports from Ireland	27 October – Peel 40451.
Second Report drafted	27 October – Peel 40577.
Kane to F-appointment of a practical man	27Oct - R.L.F.C.2/441/18/Z14516.
Kane to F-appointment of a practical man	27 October – H O 45 1080 C.
Lindley to Berkeley-requests opinion	28 October – Berkeley, Lindley.
P to Pusey-has read papers he has sent to him	28 October – Pusey D/EBP/C10/3.

H to G-will cease send abstacts now, as G at H.O.	28 October – Graham Papers.
P to G-Scottish Science Commission	28 October – Graham Papers.
Potatoes	28 October – The Times.
McSwiney to P-palliative proposals	28 October – Peel 40577.
Thompson, York to P-stop Ir. export of potatoes	28 October – Peel 40577.
Pl/L/K, practical men dine with Fremantle on 27	28 October – Peel 40476.
G forwards letters from Heytesbury to P	28 October – Peel 40451.
Lindley visits potato shops in Dublin	28 October – Peel 40577.
Lindley and Playfair interview Roper at R.D.S.	28 October – Peel 40577.
Ellenborough to W-publicity for solution to blight	29 October – W 2/133/101.
H to G-O.C.'s proposals/unfavorable reports	29 October – Graham Papers.
P to Playfair-he has ordered Consular returns	29 October – Playfair, Peel, 926.
Repeal of the corn laws	29 October – The Times.
Lindley to Pennefather-requests reports	29 Oct - R.L.F.C.2/441/18Z14464.
Jardine to P- fungal theory	29 October – Peel 40577.
Callanan to P-recipe for potatoes	29 October – Peel 40577.
Piercy, Limerick to P-there is no exaggeration	29 October – Peel 40577.
Pote to P- import potatoes South America	29 October – Peel 40577.
Woodland, Huddersfield to P-potatoes in S.America	29 October – Peel 40577.
Sir George Clerk to P-the Belgium Commission	29 October – Peel 40577.
Fr sends P favourable reports and a Science report	29 October – Peel 40476.
Graham in London	29 October – Peel 40451.
P,G,W,A,Lincoln,Chancellor,Queen,Albert-dinner	29 October – RA QVJ 29/10/45.
G sends further reports from Ireland to P	29 October – Peel 40451.
Pl/L/K send report to H	29 Oct - R.L.F.C.2/441/18Z14706.
Second Science Com. Report issued	29 October – Peel 40577.
Ellenborough to P-open the ports at once	29 October – Peel 40473.
Gurney, Norwich to P-unfavorable report Norfolk	29 October – Peel 40577.
H to G-needs Cabinet advice before deputation	30 October – Graham Papers.
Clare to H-fear of revolt/ bad reports/priests	30 October – Graham Papers.
Berkeley to Lindley-foreign reports, letter to Ir.	30 October – Lindley, Berkeley, f80.
R.D.S. meeting-the potato blight	30 October – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Apprehended dearth of food-leading article	30 October – The Times.
Pennefather to Kane-forwards returns and proposals	30 Oct - R.L.F.C.2/441/18Z14574.
P to Ellenborough-has sent Pl/L to Ir.	30 October – Peel 40473.
P to Aberdeen-orders Foreign Returns	30 October – Aberdeen 43065.
Morris, Dublin to P-establish Commissaries	30 October – Peel 40577.
Murray to P-Scientific proposals	30 October – Peel 40577.
Usborne, Limerick to P-prohibit distillation	30 October – Peel 40577.
G to W-has forwarded Windsor blight solution to Ir	31 October – W 2/133/109.
H to G-Clare letter/don't trust good reports	31 October – Graham Papers.
P to F- interview with Hill, details of Cabinet on Ir.	31 October – F, D FR Box 230 1.
Kane to Pennefather-acknowledges Returns	31 Oct - R.L.F.C.2/441/19Z14844.
Buccleuch to P-will be late at the Cabinet	31 October – Peel 40577.
Wickam, London to P-Indian Famine Relief	31 October – Peel 40577.
Cabinet	31 October – Peel 40577.

Cabinet	1 November – Peel 40577.
Mansion House Committee meet-31/10	1 November – P40476, 40577.
Fremantle has an interview with Kane-Cork	1 November – Peel 40476.
Kane to Pennefather	1Nov - R.L.F.C.2/441/19Z15020.
G to P- favorable resident magistrate papers	1 November – H O 45 1080 C.
Herbert memo. on potato blight and Pl/L/K.	2 November – Herbert,2057F8 IM31
G to H-Clare's letter confirms beliefs	2 November – Graham Papers.
H to G-M.H.C. have requested deputation interview	2 November – Graham Papers.
Berkeley to Lindley-agrees with report of Pl/L/K	2 November – Lindley,Berkeley, f81
P to F-kilns, Pl/L/K/ Jones/McGregor/H/F meeting	2 November – F F DR Box 230 I.
Wood, York to Peel-Chairman Excise Board	2 November – Peel 40577.
P to Mahon-cancels D dinner on 3/11	2 November – Peel 40577.
P asks Ripon to attend future Cabinet meetings	2 November – Peel 40466.
H to G-sends his written answer to the deputation	3 November – Graham Papers.
P to Playfair-sends letter from Lewis, Irish statistics	3 November – Playfair, Peel, 528.
Stanley to John Browne-mocks Pl/L/K	3 November – D, DER 176/2/f. 297.
P to F-pay Pl/L money, Kane and rallying Science	3 November – F D FR Box 230 I.
P to F-encourage fishing in Ir.	3 November – F D FR Box 230 I.
Apprehended dearth of food-leading article	3 November – The Times.
G to Heytesbury-form Scarcity Commission	3 November – NeC 9224/1.
Pennefather to F-distillation, precedents, outrages	3 November – F D FR Box 230 I.
Stanley memo. on Ir.	3 November – D, DER 290/27/5/18.
Stanley to G-memo. on instructions to Commission	Undated – Graham Papers.
P to Goulburn-purchase of grain from Barings	November – Goulburn 304 Box 42.
Buckland's lecture in Oxford appears in the Press	3 Nov – R.L.F.C.2/441/20Z17030.
Curtin, Liverpool to P-ideas on the blight	3 November – Peel 40577.
Duke of Portland to P-blight is serious - to Cabinet	3 November – Peel 40577.
Fremantle to P-must secure a supply of corn	3 November – Peel 40476.
Mansion House Committee present resolutions	3 November – Peel 40476.
Stanley to P-there is a large oats crop in Ir.	3 November – Peel 40468.
Lyons to Lindley-potato blight	3 November – NeC 9165/1.
Pl/L to Lowth,Meath,Westmeath and Kildare	Prior to 4 November – P40578.
Playfair resides with Dep. Lt. Of Westmeath	Prior to 4 November – P40578.
H to G-returns P's list of questions with answers	4 November – Graham Papers.
H to G-adopt Monteagle's suggestion-Tr. officials	4 November – Graham Papers.
G to Lindley-St.Helena report,notify public	4 November – Graham Papers.
P to F-sends letter from Buckland-machine to K	4 November – F D FR Box 230 I.
G to Ellice-the potato blight is serious	4 November – Graham Papers.
Lord Glengall to P-blight is abated	4 November – Peel 40578.
Lord Jocelyn, India Board to P-exaggerated	4 November – Peel 40578.
P to Buckland-grating machine sent to Kane	4 November – Peel 40578.
Fremantle to P-Science Report printed today	4 November – Peel 40476.
Pl/L/K/F/H/McGregor/Jones VR Lodge meeting	4 November – Peel 40476.
Third Report drafted and sent to Peel	4 November – Peel 40578.
P visits Sir Richard Seringi	4 November – Peel 40578.
P/L/K Conference with Heytesbury	4 November – Peel 40578.

P proposes to go to Galway, Connaught, Belfast	4 November – Peel 40578.
Langley on the potato crop in Prussia	4 November – The Times.
P warns Queen of differences in Cabinet	5 November – RA QVJ 5/11/45.
H to G-will form Com./Pl/L/K report	5 November – Graham Papers.
Berkeley to Lindley-lime not a cure/boiling/turnips	5 November – Lindley,Berkeley,f82.
Buckland on the potato disease	5 November – The Times.
Hewetson to P-Indian Corn	5 November – Peel 40578.
Lord Clare to Pennefather-unfavorable accounts	5 November – Peel 40578.
Reade, Clare to P-potato crop- this letter sent to G	5 November – Peel 40578.
Playfair in the country	5 November – Peel 40476.
P writes to Queen – Ir. reports better	6 November – RA QVJ 6/11/45.
G to H-answers to P's questions indicate no rush	6 November – Graham Papers.
Aberdeen to G-objects to re-armament	6 November – Graham Papers.
R.D.S. meeting-Pl/L/K present	6 November – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Famine crisis	6 November – The Times.
Scott to P-Constabulary info not trustworthy	6 November – Peel 40578.
MacDonnell to P-official of previous Ir.famine	6 November – Peel 40578.
Buckland to P-palliative proposals for blight	6 November – Peel 40578.
Mahony to P-heads of bill for Employment	6 November – Peel 40577.
Fr to P-Buckland's machine not yet arrived	6 November – Peel 40476.
Playfair audience with Fremantle	6 November – Peel 40578.
H to G-L asks to leave/Clare letter	7 November – Graham Papers.
Berkeley to Lindley-thanks L for potato samples	7 November – Lindley,Berkeley, f83
P to F-favorable-Bessborough,Glengall,Dunraven	7 November – F D FR Box 230 I.
P to F-asks F to have interview with Pl on statistics	7 November – F D FR Box 230 I.
H to G-do not remove Orange magistrates in North	7 November – Graham Papers.
P to G-reports what said at Windsor-Cab positions	7 November – Graham Papers.
P to G-sends letter from F on Kennedy	7 November – Graham Papers.
Apprehended dearth of food-leading article	7 November – The Times.
T to P-forwards Hewetson's letter on Indian Corn	7 November – T.P.L.B. 5.
G to Heytesbury-call for info from Lieutenants	7 November – NeC9225/1.
Summary of Mansion House Committee letters	7 November – NeC9275.
P to Buckland-read Hall's account of Indian famine	7 November – Peel 40578,169.
Third Science Commission Report issued	7 November – Bourke II b,20.
Queen to P-returns favorable letters on Ir.	7 November – Peel 40440.
Lindley leaves for London (or on 8/11)	7 November – P40578,174.
W to G-forwards satisfactory report on Ir.	8 November – W 2/134/36.
P/A dine with Queen	8 November – RA QVJ 8/11/45.
H to G-speed is necessary, must act now	8 November – Graham Papers.
Power to P.L.Commissioners-met with Pl/K today	8 November – H O 45 1080 B.
Herbert to G-at Wilton today until 14/11	8 November – Graham Papers.
H to P/G?-unfavorable accounts	8 November – Peel 40479.
Bullen (Royal Ag. Soc) to P-has seen Pl/L/K	8 November – Peel 40578.
G returns Playfair's letter	8 November – Peel 40452.
Kane and Playfair see Roper's plans	8 November – Peel 40578.
Fourth Science Commission Report issued	8 November – Bourke II b,23.

Playfair has interview with Power	8 November – Peel 40578.
Fr sends P news of the Science report on bog water	8 November – Peel 40476.
Sutton to F-sends palliative proposal for Pl/L/K	8 Nov – R.L.F.C.2/441/19/15402.
P audience with Queen – Ir.reports/defence	9 November – R.A QVJ 9/11/45.
H to G-not forgotten proposed Ir.legislation (10/8)	9 November – Graham Papers.
Hooker to Lindley-Stanley has a good opinion of L	9 November – Lindley, Hooker f483.
H to G-Pl/L/K's proposal of bog water	9 November – Graham Papers.
Sir George Clerk to P-panic subsiding	9 November – Peel 40578.
G sends letters from Heytesbury to P	9 November – Peel 40452.
Fremantle to P-more favorable accounts	9 November – Peel 40476.
Greville (Edinburgh) to Lindley-agrees with Pl/L/K	10 November – Lindley,Grevillef359
P to Playfair-see F and H for permission to leave Ir.	10 November – Playfair, Peel, 876.
P to Stanley-returns Browne's letter, L interview	10 November – D, DER 129/4.
Official Circular-Potato crops	10 November – NeC 9208/1.
G and P and Goulburn interview Lindley	10 November – Peel 40578.
Consular Returns for Europe	10 Nov – R.L.F.C.2/441/20Z17964.
Redington to F-palliative proposals	10 November – NeC 9172/1.
A audience with Queen-defence/ corn laws	11 November – RA QVJ 11/11/45.
Herbert note on corn laws, A, Brussells	11 November – Herbert2057F8VIIK.
H to G-all reports unfavorable/bog water	11 November – Graham Papers.
G to H-mocks bog water/seed report good/K appt.	11 November – Graham Papers.
P to G-letters from F, send to Goulburn, Cabinet	11 November – Graham Papers.
G to Cabinet ministers	11 November – Graham Papers.
G to Stanley-sends memo. of Lindley interview	11 November – Graham Papers.
P to F-L and D.M., Routh/L interview on 10/11	11 November – F D FR Box 230 I.
R.D.S. meeting-the potato blight	11 November – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Apprehended dearth of food-leading article	11 November – The Times.
Goulburn and Peel meet	11 November – Peel 40445.
H to P/G?-unfavorable accounts	11 November – Peel 40479.
Dillon Croker to F-forwarded to P,G-blight stopped	11 November – Peel 40578.
G sends P accounts from Scotland	11 November – Peel 40452.
G to Windsor Castle 11-15 November	11 November – Peel 40452.
Jones to F-forwards letter concerning the blight	11 November – NeC9174/1.
P to G-G to interview Pl with Twisleton, R.Ag Soc.	12 November – Graham Papers.
G to P-will consult Twis/Pl on instructions to Com.	12 November – Graham Papers.
P to F-sends F reports saying blight exaggerated	12 November – F D FR Box 230 I.
Buckland on the potato disease	12 November – The Times.
Kane to Pennefather-potatoes	12 Nov – R.L.F.C.2/441/19/15664.
Wharncliffe to P-no danger of Scarcity	12 November – Peel 40578.
Goulburn interview with Dep. Gov. Bank of Ir.	12 November – Peel 40445.
Fifth Science Com. Report issued (Kane and Pl)	12 November – Bourke II b,23.
F to County Lieutenants-asking for info.	12 November – NeC 9177/3.
Military reports to W-potatoes bad, grain good	13 November – W 2/134/45-47.
G dines with Queen, stays until 15/9	13 November – RA QVJ 13/11/45.
H to G-can not remove Enniskillen at present	13 November – Graham Papers.
P to G-sends note from Pl in Liverpool	13 November – Graham Papers.

Chadwick to Phillips-sends Power's potato report	13 November – H O 45 1080 B.
R.D.S. meeting-Kane present	13 November – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Article on potatoes	13 November – The Times.
Young to P-forwards letter regarding Pl/L/K	13 November – Peel 40578.
Goulburn has interview with Baring	13 November – Peel 40445.
H to G-outrages in Roscommon and Tipperary	14 November – Graham Papers.
F to G-Blakeney advises against military reduction	14 November – Graham Papers.
P to G-extract of H's letter sent to Wharncliffe	14 November – Graham Papers.
Critical account of the 'Potato Commission'	14 November – The Times.
Playfair in London / to see Twisleton that day	14 November – Peel 40578,379.
Military report to W-one third potatoes blighted	15 November – W 2/134/49-52.
H to G-do not reduce Ir.'s military force	15 November – Graham Papers.
P to G-letter from Pl and Goulburn, when Cabinet?	15 November – Graham Papers.
Lindley and Playfair memo. of interview with G	15 November – H O 45 1080 B.
Potatoes	15 November – The Times.
Kane to Pennefather-palliative proposals	15 Nov - R.L.F.C.2/441/19Z15808.
Kane to F-palliative proposals	15 Nov - R.L.F.C.2/441/19Z15966.
P at Drayton Manor	15 November – Peel 40452.
G interview with Lindley, Playfair and Twisleton	15 November – Peel 40452.
Playfair to Derbyshire	15 November – Peel 40452.
Playfair to have an interview with P and G on 19	15 November – Peel 40452.
Lindley and Playfair produce memorandum for G	15 November – Peel 40452.
Glengall to W-priests inciting rebellion, oats good	16 November – W 2/134/54.
Printed copy of Buckland's speech on potatoes	16 November – Peel 40578
Arbuthnot informs P-Wellington deaf at Cabinets	16 November – Peel 40484.
Fremantle to P news of K's report on potato seed	16 November – Peel 40476.
G to F-aware of importance of the military in Ir.	17 November – Graham Papers.
H to G-blight grows unchecked despite precautions	17 November – Graham Papers.
P to G-will meet on 18/11,circulate H,F,Pl,L letters	17 November – Graham Papers.
G to H-the military force in Ir.	17 November – Graham Papers
Goulburn sends P letters from Baring	17 November – Peel 40445.
Berkeley to Lindley-pamphlets, agrees with Pl/L/K	18 November – Lindley,Berkeleyf86
Herbert to G-Pl/L/K, favorable Ir. Reports	18 November – Graham Papers.
Disease and potatoes in Ireland	18 November – The Times.
Kane to F-palliative proposals	18 Nov – R.L.F.C.2/441/19Z16066.
Kane to Pennefather-returning Constabulary Returns	18 Nov – R.L.F.C.2/441/19Z16060.
Monteagle to P-fever in Ireland	18 November – Peel 40579.
Dublin A.M. Roman Catholic Bishops on 18	14 November – Peel 40476.
G to Herbert-Cabinet to be decisive	19 November – Herbert, 2057 F4 59.
H to G-accounts from provinces more favorable	19 November – Graham Papers.
G to Stanley-will call on S before Cabinet, H letters	19 November – Graham Papers.
Scarcity of food	19 November – The Times.
Lord Westmeath to F-farina grinders	19 November – NeC 9180.
Council, P audience with Queen – Ir. reports	20 November – RA QVJ 20/11/45.
R.D.S. meeting-Kane present	20 November – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Twisleton arrives in Ireland on 19	20 November – Peel 40476.

The Scarcity Commission meets	20 November – Peel 40476.
Fremantle sends P mixed reports of the blight	20 November – Peel 40476.
P leaves Windsor Castle-daughter seriously ill	21 November – RA QVJ 21/11/45.
Berkeley to Lindley-Limerick favorable report	21 November – Lindley,Berkeleyf85
Apprehended Scarcity in France	21 November – The Times.
Kane to Pennefather-palliative proposals	21 Nov – R.L.F.C.2/441/19/Z16428.
P to Monteagle-Paisley and fever	21 November – Peel 40579.
G sends P returns from Scotland-¼ of crop lost	21 November – Peel 40452.
Article on Potatoes	21 November – The Times.
H to G-favorable accounts/overview of relief ops.	22 November – Graham Papers.
F to G-will send info. on drainage and fishing	22 November – Graham Papers
Lord John Russell's Letter to the City Electors	22 November – Peel 40579.
Hope Johnstone M.P. to P-Scottish investigation	22 November – Peel 40579.
Mason, Belfast to P-seed potatoes	22 November – Peel 40579.
F to G-Jones and Mulvany at work on drainage bill	23 November – Graham Papers.
Berkeley to Lindley-Dublin Nat His Soc.	24 November – Lindley,Berkeleyf87
Article on the Scarcity of food	24 November – The Times.
G to Aberdeen-conciliation of R.C. in Ir.	24 November – Graham Papers.
H to G-outrages recommencing in Provinces	24 November – Graham Papers
G to H-perplexed at varying reports from Ir.	25 November – Graham Papers.
Cabinet on Commission instructions	25 November – Graham Papers.
Sir George Clerk to P-Indian Corn	25 November – Peel 40579.
Buckland to P-seed potatoes	25 November – Peel 40579.
G to H-Cabinet will meet next Tues/needs info.	26 November – Graham Papers.
H to G-no Scarcity before February	26 November – Graham Papers.
Cabinet on Commission instructions	26 November – Graham Papers.
G to F-our decision (to call Parl.) rest on Ir. reports	26 November – Graham Papers.
Berkeley to Lindley-Irish paper on potatoes	26 November – Lindley,Berkeleyf88
P to Parkes-evidence Lords committee on drainage	26 November – Parkes, 34.
G to Heytesbury-the details of the Commission	26 November – NeC 9226/1.
Buckland to P-potato disease	26 November – Peel 40579.
Statistics on importation of Indian Corn	26 November – Peel 40579.
Cabinet meeting (Peel memorandum)	26 November – Peel 40579.
G to Lindley-P requests report on Blamire letter	27 November – Lindley,Grahamf335
Berkeley to Lindley-the blight under microscope	27 November – Lindley,Berkeleyf89
P to G-approves of instructions to Commission	27 November – Graham Papers.
H to G-failures in money markets in Dublin	27 November – Graham Papers.
R.D.S. meeting	27 November – R.D.S. proceedings.
Article on potatoes	27 November – The Times.
Buckland on the potato disease	27 November – The Times.
G to Heytesbury-Commission details	27 November – NeC 9227/2.
P to Queen – differences in the Cabinet	28 November – RA QVJ 28/11/45.
H to G-answersG's two questions on potato crop	28 November – Graham Papers.
H to G-outrages, favorable reports of potatoes	28 November – Graham Papers.
F to G-market prices for Pot risen/Pot. are keeping	28 November – Graham Papers.
Lord Alvanley to P-to meet to discuss Ir. on 7/12	28 November – Peel 40580.

G sends letters from Heytesbury to P	28 November – Peel 40452.
G and P meet in the morning	28 November – Peel 40452.
P to Stanley-requests interview on 30/11	29 November – D, DER 129/4
Stanley to P-agrees to interview, St.Helena account	29 November – D, DER 129/4
Devon to P-land bills	29 November – Peel 40580.
Gregory to P-asks for interview on 30	29 November – Peel 40580.
Ripon sends memoranda on repeal to P	29 November – Peel 40466.
P sends Wellington memoranda on repeal	29 November – Peel 40461.
G has an interview with Stanley	29 November – Peel 40452.
Stanley has an interview with P on 30	29 November – Peel 40468.
F to G-favorable accounts of the potato crop	30 November – Graham Papers.
F to his uncle-very uneasy about state of Ir.	30 November – F D FR 230 I.
Pl/L/K to H-report	30 Nov - R.L.F.C.2/441/19Z15036.
Brougham to Peel-Bess says blight is exaggerated	30 November – Peel 40482.
P writes to Ripon-he must make up his mind	30 November – Peel 40466.
Goulburn to P-repeal will not help Ireland	30 November – Peel 40445.
Goulburn out of London on 1/12	30 November – Peel 40445.
Wellington sends P memorandum on repeal	30 November – Peel 40461.
W memorandum on Corn Laws	Undated – W 2/194/15.
Ellenborough send P method of using potato starch	30 November – Peel 40473.
Herbert memo. on the corn laws	November – Herbert 2057 F4 58.
Goulburn-memo. on potato failure	November – Graham Papers.

P to F-P's interview with Gregory M.P.on 30/11	1 December – F, D FR Box 230 I.
Wharncliffe to P-memo. on Cabinet meetings	1 December – Peel 40580.
Sir George Clerk to P-Scottish potato Returns	1 December – Peel 40580.
G sends P an Irish box inclusive of Twisleton letter	1 December – Peel 40452.
Apprehended dearth of food-leading article	1 December – The Times.
G to Twisleton-received potato report, Fever in Ir.	2 December – Graham Papers.
Griffith to F-potatoes favorable, Galway and Mayo	2 December – H O 45 1080 C.
P and G meet in Downing Street on 1/12	2 December – Peel 40580.
G sends P a letter from Twisleton	2 December – Peel 40580.
Buckland to P-potato disease	2 December – Peel 40580.
Arbuthnot to P-P to meet W at back door	2 December – Peel 40580.
Prince Albert to Peel-must read Spectator 30/11	2 December – Peel 40440.
Stanley returns Wharncliffe's letter to P	2 December – Peel 40468.
Pusey's R.A.S.E. potato report sent to Pl	3 December – R.A.S.E. BXIV – 1.
P to Queen-hopes he has solved Cabinet problems	3 December – RA QVJ 3/12/45.
H to G-Routh arrived on 2/12, favorable reports	3 December – Graham Papers.
Buckland to P-the gravity of the situation	3 December – Peel 40580.
Fremantle to Peel-murders in Ireland	3 December – Peel 40476.
P sends to G a memorandum on the coercion bill	3 December – Peel 40452.
Dombrain to Lucas-potatoes	3 December – NeC 9305/1.
Apprehended dearth of food-leading article	3 December – The Times.

R.D.S. meeting-Kane present	4 December – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Apprehended dearth of food-leading article	4 December – The Times.
P to Ellenborough-problems with starch method	4 December – Peel 40473.
P to Queen-differences in the Cabinet	5 December – RA QVJ 5/12/45.
Berkeley to Lindley-critical of Buckland's lecture	5 December – Lindley, Berkeley f90.
Lindley to Kane-appointments to Agricultural Com.	5 December – HO 45 1080 A.
H to G-sent P's suggested bill to pacify gentry to F	5 December – Graham Papers.
P to Playfair-can use Consular Returns in lectures	5 December – Playfair, Peel, 529.
P audience with Queen – send for Russell	6 December – RA QVJ 6/12/45.
P dines with Queen	6 December – RA QVJ 6/12/45.
P audience with Prince Albert and Queen	7 December – RA QVJ 7/12/45.
P dines with Queen	7 December – RA QVJ 7/12/45.
H to G-panic amongst landed proprietors general	7 December – Graham Papers.
Buckland to P-the food supply of Ireland	7 December – Peel 40580, 302.
P audience with Queen, leaves for London	8 December – RA QVJ 8/12/45.
G to H- no hope Cabinet unanimity	8 December – Graham Papers.
F to G-favourable reports of potato crop,	8 December – Graham Papers.
G to H-desires the draft for Proclamation Bill	9 December – Graham Papers.
Kane to Pennefather-palliative proposals	9 Dec - R.L.F.C.2/441/20Z17470.
Council	10 December – RA QVJ 10/12/45.
Twisleton to G-memo. on Fever in Ir.	10 December – H O 45 1080 D.
H to G-will be forced to employ coercion	10 December – Graham Papers.
Article on potatoes	10 December – The Times.
Queen receives Russell	11 December – RA QVJ 11/12/45.
P to Lord Egerton-corn law repeal	11 December – Peel 40580,205.
R.D.S. meeting	11 December – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Russell audience with Prince Albert	12 December – RA QVJ 12/12/45.
R.D.S. meeting	12 December – R.D.S. Proceedings.
Russell and Lansdowne audience with Queen	13 December – RA QVJ 13/12/45.
Playfair's lectures to R. Ag. Soc./week ending	13 December – Literary Gazette.
W to Croker-potato blight in Ireland exaggerated	14 December – W 2/134/133.
P asks Wellington if anyone else will form a govt.?	14 December – Peel 40461.
Wellington informs P-no	14 December – Peel 40461.
G to H-Lucas' letter	15 December – NeC 9228/1.
Russell/Lansdowne audience with Q.will form govt.	17 December – RA QVJ 18/12/45.
G to H-returns Clare's letter, reply to Lucas' letter	17 December – Graham Papers.
F to G-coercive laws needed for Ir.	18 December – Graham Papers.
R writes to inform Queen-can not form a govt.	19 December – RA QVJ 19/12/45.
Herbert memo. of Grey conversation	19 December – Herbert 2057 F4 54.
G to Twisleton-P and G agree with Fever measures	19 December – Graham Papers.
Green, Wexford to P-blight caused by man, not God	19 December – Peel 40576.
Russell audience with Queen-resigns office	20 December – RA QVJ 20/12/45.
P audience with Queen-accepts office	20 December – RA QVJ 20/12/45.
Twisleton to G-unfavorable accounts, Kilkee	21 December – Graham Papers.
P meets Cabinet on 20/12-Somerset not present	21 December – Peel 40440.
G to P-sends information for Gladstone	21 December – Peel 40452.

G to see Stanley on 22 December	21 December – Peel 40452.
G to H-the state of crime in Ir. justifies coercion	22 December – Graham Papers.
H to G-distress in Kilkee/outrages	22 December – Graham Papers.
P to G-do not allow Stanley to influence Gladstone	22 December – Graham Papers.
Lincoln to Gladstone-forwards letters on Scarcity	22 December – NeC 11678.
Fremantle informs P of his desire to leave Ireland	22 December – Peel 40476.
G asks P to ensure that G returns his papers	22 December – Peel 40452.
Council	23 December – RA QVJ 23/12/45.
P audience with Queen	23 December – RA QVJ 23/12/45.
P dines with Queen	23 December – RA QVJ 23/12/45.
H to G-impending revolution	23 December – Graham Papers.
G to Netherby	23 December – Peel 40452.
P to H-details of his resignation/Albert's note	23 December – Peel 40479.
W to A-difficulties of his position in the Lords	23 December – W 2/135/25.
H to G-Mansion House Committee calling for aid	24 December – Graham Papers.
P to G-24/12 Ellenborough interview/ Oregon	25 December – Graham Papers.
Buckland to Playfair-fungus important in the blight	25 December – Playfair, 111.
H to P-pro corn law repeal	25 December – Peel 40479.
Ellenborough to P-open the ports immediately	25 December – Peel 40473.
P to Sir George Clerk-requests customs info	25 December – Peel 40581.
Sir George Clerk to P-sends info on the markets	26 December – Peel 40581.
Aberdeen to P-great distress in Belgium	26 December – Peel 40455.
G sends letters from Heytesbury to P	26 December – Peel 40452.
G to be in London on 30 December	26 December – Peel 40452.
G to be in Windsor on 31 December	26 December – Peel 40452.
G sends P the weekly average Returns	26 December – Peel 40452.
P to G-modifications to old Irish Insurrection Act	27 December – Graham Papers.
S. Fremantle to O'Brien-draft of drainage bill for G	27 December – Graham Papers.
G to P-has written to H requesting various bills	28 December – Graham Papers.
F to G-Law/Outrage/Drainage/Tenant bills	29 December – Graham Papers.
P,Herbert,Lincoln dine with Queen	30 December – RA QVJ 30/12/45.
P audience with Queen	31 December – RA QVJ 31/12/45.
P,G,Gladstone,Lincoln dine with Queen	31 December – RA QVJ 31/12/45.
H to G-F is resigning due to lack of Att.Gen in Parl.	31 December – Graham Papers.
G sends letters on Potato seeds from H and F	31 December – Peel 40452.

Appendix Two

Monthly Statistical Summary of Scarcity Commission Meetings[1]

	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
Total Nom.	8	20	18	15	25	23	26	25	27	13
Lucas	7	20	15	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Routh	0	18	15	15	24	23	26	25	27	13
Kane	7	18	10	10	23	23	25	23	23	7
Twisleton	8	18	17	15	25	18	23	25	27	13
McGregor	8	17	16	10	4	4	2	2	1	1
Dombrain	7	20	16	9	5	4	4	0	1	0
McKenna	7	17	17	9	5	4	3	2	1	0
Jones	6	11	14	5	4	3	3	2	2	1
Av.length[2]	155	177	187	170	230	260	217	268	249	228

Percentage Attendance Rates

	Could Have Attended	Attended	%Attended
Lucas	55[3]	47	85.5
Routh	190[4]	186	97.9
Kane	200	169	84.5
Twisleton	200	189	94.5
McGregor	78	65	83.3
Dombrain	78	66	84.6
McKenna	75[5]	65	86.7
Jones	78	51	65.4

Notes

The Commission sat from 20 November, 1845 to 15 August, 1846.
Routh attended his first meeting on 3 December, 1845.
Lucas attended his last Commission meeting on 20 February, 1846.
The sub-committee (Routh, Kane and Twisleton) met for the first time on 24 February, 1846.
The Commission met 200 times.[6]

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[1] The following information is based on the minutes of the Scarcity Commission found in the Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers (CSORP), in the Relief Commission (RLFC) papers found in the National Archives in Dublin, in the Newcastle Papers in Nottingham University Library in Nottingham and in the Graham Papers in the British Library in London.

[2] The average length of each meeting is given in minutes. Where the length of a meeting is not provided in the Minutes, the length of the shortest meeting in the month is used.

[3] Lucas last attended at the Commission on 20 Feb. 1846. The Commission was officially remodelled the next day. Thus he could only have attended 55 meetings up to 21 Feb. 1846.

[4] Routh was not in Ireland to attend the first 10 meetings of the Commission.

[5] McKenna last attended a meeting of the Commission on 14 July 1846. He does not appear to have been available in Dublin to attend the following three full meetings of the Commission.

[6] This figure includes full and quorum meetings.

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