

## **‘A PROVED AND LOYAL FRIENDSHIP’: THE DIARY OF W. LLEWELYN WILLIAMS MP, 1906-15**

William Llewelyn Williams (1867-1922) was a native of Brownhill, Llansadwrn in the Towy valley, born into a family of notable Independents.<sup>1</sup> Two of Williams's uncles were prominent Welsh Congregational ministers. He was privately educated at Llandovery College and, the holder of a highly prestigious open scholarship, at Brazenose College, Oxford, where he graduated in history and was one of the founders of the patriotic Oxford Welsh society *Cymdeithas Dafydd ap Gwilym*. There were expectations at this early stage in his career that he might well enter the established church, but Williams's true interests clearly lay in other directions, and in 1889-90 he spent a short stint as a schoolteacher at Canterbury. In March 1891 he was then appointed the first editor of the Barry based *South Wales Star*. He then moved on to edit the Swansea based *South Wales Post*, and in June 1894 he accepted a new position as assistant editor of the highly influential Cardiff newspaper the *South Wales Daily News*, a pillar of the Liberal cause. During these heady, exciting years Williams was a warm supporter of the Cymru Fydd movement, and it was he who was primarily responsible for the establishment of its first branch on Welsh soil, established at Barry in 1891. He was to be elected its first chairman in the following February. Williams was also an avid supporter of the early political career of David Lloyd George, soon to be elected the Liberal MP for the highly marginal Caernarfon Boroughs constituency in a by-election in April 1890. Williams, however, grew very disillusioned at the lack of sympathy for Welsh nationalist aspirations and ideals at each of these south Wales centres Barry, Swansea and Cardiff. Consequently in 1897 he moved on to become the chief sub-editor of the London *Star*, edited by the distinguished journalist T. P. O'Connor to whom Llewelyn Williams occasionally refers in the diary entries printed below.

But Llewelyn Williams soon began to grow disenchanted with journalistic work and veered back toward politics. It would seem that his deeply entrenched personal ambition was to be elected to parliament. He continued to support the burgeoning activities of the Cymru Fydd movement, became actively involved in the proceedings of the Royal Commission on Land in Wales and pressed for the advancement of the campaign for the disestablishment of the Welsh Church. He came close to being chosen as the Liberal candidate for the Swansea Boroughs constituency in 1894 and for Cardiganshire in the following year. He still remained close to Lloyd George with whom he toured Canada in September 1899. But Williams's failure to be selected as a parliamentary candidate and the conspicuous collapse of the Cymru Fydd movement at the beginning of 1896 saw him look to a new career as a lawyer. In 1897 he was called to the bar from Lincoln's Inn and he was later to become a bencher of the Inn. He developed, too, his undoubted literary talents, continuing to publish extensively in both English and Welsh. His acclaimed volume *Gwilym a Benni Bach*, also published in 1897, contained a number of short stories of much charm for young children. Llewelyn Williams was seriously considered as a potential Liberal candidate for Merionethshire following the tragic premature death of Thomas Edward Ellis MP in April 1899 and again at the general election of September-October 1900 after O. M. Edwards, Ellis's very temporary successor, had resolved to retire from political life. Williams's name was mooted, too, as a possible Liberal candidate for the Gower division.

Eventually, in the general election of January 1906 held swift on the heels of Campbell-Bannerman's formation of a Liberal government the previous month, W. Llewelyn Williams was elected the Liberal MP for the Carmarthen Boroughs constituency. The course of events, however, did not proceed smoothly. When Williams had originally been nominated as the Liberal candidate for the Carmarthen Boroughs division in January 1904, it was against the sitting Liberal MP Alfred Davies. Although Davies was eventually to withdraw his name on grounds of ill-health in the autumn of 1905, not all local Liberals were happy to endorse the nomination of Llewelyn Williams as their candidate.<sup>2</sup> Rumours spread that a rival Liberal candidate might well be nominated against him. In the event, he faced only a sole Conservative candidate in the person of the Hon. Vere Ponsonby whom he was easily to defeat by a record majority of 2094 votes. At this point Llewelyn Williams began to keep a diary of the political events in which he was involved. This was donated to the Library in 2006, together with a relatively small group of his correspondence and papers, by His Honour Judge T. Michael Evans of Swansea, a member of Llewelyn Williams's family. Although he had previously kept a fairly regular desk diary for the period January-September 1895 focussing on political events, his attempt to secure the Liberal nomination for the Swansea District and his friendship with Lloyd George, this practice would seem to have lapsed during the intervening years. When he became an MP, however, Williams wrote very occasional lengthy entries about the novel political world into which he had entered. These have been printed below, beginning with the first entry on his election victory in the Carmarthen Boroughs in January 1906 and ending with a lengthy entry for 26 November 1915 reflecting with great sadness and pathos on the breakdown of his long friendship with Lloyd George in the wake of the necessity to introduce military conscription at the height of the First World War.

Although there is cause to regret that Llewelyn Williams did not turn to his diary more often, there is a great deal of interesting material here. Especially fascinating are the entries giving Lloyd George's accounts of Cabinet meetings – he had entered the Cabinet for the first time as the President of the Board of Trade in December 1905 – and his opinions of his fellow Cabinet ministers and the burning political issues of the day. The entries also give Williams's own views on a number of fellow Liberal MPs, including many of those who represented Welsh constituencies, and on various debates in the House of Commons, notably those on the 1906 Education Bill. There is also much useful material on the interminable debates on disestablishment between 1912 and 1914 to which Williams, making good use of his legal expertise, made a major contribution. By the end of May 1906, in Williams's view, Winston Churchill had proved myself 'an unqualified success as Under-Secretary for the Colonies' so that he would 'shortly be promoted to Cabinet office'. 'He well deserves his promotion, though it will be difficult for him to get another office which will give him such a chance'. His admiration for Lloyd George remained unbounded: 'George has been winning golden opinions at the Board of Trade. I was assured the other day that he is the most diligent and capable administrator the Board has ever had'.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, subsequent entries refer regularly to the progress of Lloyd George's career, notably his promotion by Asquith to be the Chancellor of the Exchequer in April 1908 and to important events in his personal life such as the tragic death of his adored eldest daughter Mair Eluned at just seventeen years of age in November 1907.<sup>4</sup> There are numerous references to the deeply rooted differences over public expenditure which wracked Asquith's cabinet and the preparation of the famous 'People's Budget' in 1909.

It is, however, a cause for great regret that Llewelyn Williams did not turn to his diary between 13 September 1909 and 12 February 1914. As he himself readily admitted when resuming the entries:

I greatly regret my omission, for the years have been full of incident, and I have been in a position to know much of what was going on behind the scenes. The four years have witnessed one general election, the passing of the Great Budget, the crippling of the power of the Lords by the Parliament Act, the Insurance Act, Home Rule, and Disestablishment. I am all the more sorry that I made no notes at the time as to the various incidents in connection with the Welsh [Disestablishment] Bill, because I took a somewhat prominent part in the fight, and knew as much as anyone of what was going on.<sup>5</sup>

These early entries for 1914 discuss primarily developments in Ireland and the progress of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill through the House of Commons. By August, Williams, horrified at the implications of the outbreak of the First World War, recorded ruefully in his diary, 'Now war has broken out between this country and Germany. A war is the negation of Liberalism. *Inter arma silent leges*. Already the Government has become autocratic. No discussion is possible in Parliament. The Government remain in power with the support of Tory votes'.<sup>6</sup> Like many conviction Liberals, he had disapproved strongly at the encroachment of state control and the wartime attacks on civil liberties. The diary then jumps for a whole year: 'All is changed. The Liberal Government is gone, and has given place to a Coalition Government in which the leading spirits are Asquith, Lloyd George, and Balfour. Haldane has gone, and is in acute controversy with Lloyd George'.<sup>7</sup> The remaining entries focus primarily on the moves towards the introduction of military conscription in 1915-16 and the breakdown in the long and close friendship between Llewelyn Williams and Lloyd George.

The final entry – that for 26 November 1915 – begins, 'These entries have been mainly concerned with my relations with Lloyd George. Alas! It seems as if there will be no more of them'. Williams was obviously cut to the quick by these events, 'He looks the other way if our eyes chance to meet in the House, and I hear from friends that he is assuming all the airs of a man with a grievance. I wrote to him, but he sent no reply. Mrs George ceased to call to see my wife, after twenty years of intimate friendship. Upon my wife writing to her Mrs George called once to tea, but no more. My wife is never called to attend committees at Downing Street, and it is evident that the word has gone out that we are to be tabooed'. Towards the end of the lengthy entry, a note of intense bitterness is evident, 'In spite of many defects which are too patent to be unnoticed, I have followed and loved him for a quarter of a century. Now, I fear, it is all at an end. He is still scheming and fighting and succeeding. He is of the War Council of five. He rides roughshod over his opponents. Men like Simon cannot stand up against him. But my heart is sore because of our lost friendship. ... I never thought he would have so lightly thrown away a proved and loyal friendship'.<sup>8</sup> There is again certainly cause for regret that there are no further entries after this point. It would have proved extremely interesting to have diary entries penned by Williams for later years, especially information relating to the final cementing of the rift with Lloyd George in 1916 and his ejection from political life at the time of the 'Coupon' general election in December 1918 when he failed to secure nomination as a Liberal candidate. Fascinating, too, would have been Williams's personal reflections on the February

1921 by-election in Cardiganshire when he re-surfaced as the Independent (Asquithian) Liberal candidate, but failed to secure election to parliament. He died prematurely in April 1922 at the age of just 55 years. Alas, it seems most unlikely that further diaries will come to light.

J. Graham Jones

*National Library of Wales*

### **17 January 1906**

Polling day at Carmarthen and Llanelly.<sup>9</sup> Poll declared 12 o'clock at Carmarthen Town Hall. Figures

Llewelyn Williams	3902
Hon. Vere Ponsonby	<u>1808</u>
Majority	2094

As the numbers of electors on the register is only 6272, my majority is over one-third of the whole electorate, and therefore the highest in all Wales. I question if the majorities even in the City of London bear the same proportion to the electorate.

After the declaration I proposed a vote of thanks to the Returning Officer, and congratulated my opponent on the straight forward and gentlemanly way in which he had fought the contest. Seldom has there been an election so entirely free from personal rancour or personal bitterness. The crowd insisted on carrying me shoulder high to the Ivy Bush Hotel, and nearly killed me in the process. I arrived breathless and exhausted, and only succeeded in getting away from the madly excited crowd by promising to address them from the balcony of the Hotel. This I did very briefly, and then to bed.

### **18 January 1906**

Neli, Tom and I went up to see grandfather, and found him hale and well, though greatly aged. In the evening went to Llanelly where the whole [town] turned out to give us a popular reception and a torchlight reception. The streets were lined with quite 20,000 people, cheering and shouting madly. The enthusiasm all through the election has been exhilarating and unprecedented; but the procession through the town amazed and dumbfounded me. I am told that it was the biggest popular demonstration that ever took place in Llanelly. I spoke a few words from the Athenaeum Balcony, and I addressed a meeting of my supporters at the Liberal Club.

The marvellous outburst of enthusiasm, so far from exciting me, has left me saddened, for I feel quite unworthy of it all. One feels that one can do so little, and one fears the poor people expect so much. It has, at all events, driven all cynicism out of men's nature, and made me determined to do all I can to serve Wales and her dear people faithfully and loyally, with courage, honesty, and what skill Providence has blessed me. The coming years should be fruitful ones for Wales, and I am glad to be given the chance of taking a part in the good work.<sup>10</sup>

### **19 January 1906**

Went to Bangor and spoke for Lloyd George twice, - but just missed him himself at the two places. Compared him to Mordecai, who will give his people authority to 'rebuild the walls of Jerusalem'.<sup>11</sup>

## 20 January 1906

[Lloyd] George returned by 1400 majority. Have promised to speak for Brace (South Glamorgan) and Ivor Herbert (South Monmouth).<sup>12</sup>

## 8 February 1906

George sent for me to Board of Trade. Found him just returned from Cabinet meeting, and still quivering with excitement. He spoke freely, though not in detail. Cabinet discussed Chinese Labour in South Africa, and evidently majority at one time inclined to temporise. George and Burns urged that the 16,000 coolies then on their way should not be allowed to land: but all the rest, including Campbell-Bannerman, against breaking contracts.<sup>13</sup>

Today repetition of scene. Haldane, Milner's spokesman, George exclaimed contemptuously, 'And that rascal, Winston, has sold us! Just think of it! Here he is fresh from an astounding success at the polls, owing largely to popular aversion to Chinese Labour, and his first act almost is to lead Elgin astray to write reams in justification to the Cabinet!<sup>14</sup> He can talk the shibboleths of the party, - no one quicker than he! - but he lacks convictions!'

'But what of Elgin?', I asked. 'Elgin? Oh, he is a straight and strong man, but he lives on Ben Nevis - '.

'In the Observatory among the clouds?'

'Yes', laughing, 'and looking above the heads of mortal men! He is an aristocrat who knows nothing of popular feeling or of the change that has come over English public life. He stares and smiles satirically when he hears mention of the people!'.<sup>15</sup>

'But Asquith - '.

'Oh, Asquith!', impatiently. 'Asquith is all brains. He sees both sides of every question, and for a time does not know, and does not care, which side he adopts. But once he decides he becomes a strong partisan, and is a very difficult man to tackle. He is always delivering judgement, - and woe to the prisoner in the dock!'.<sup>16</sup>

'But Morley surely - '.

'Morley is all right, but he is as timorous as a woman. He said not a word - yes, once, when Campbell-Bannerman was speaking, he said, 'But *can* we?'. I was aghast. '*Can* we?'. 'No. Campbell-Bannerman is the only *man* in the crowd'.<sup>17</sup>

'Did you take part yourself?'

'Burns and I were going to, and going to speak strongly. But Campbell-Bannerman interposed, and I crumpled them up in a few sentences! He has the right instincts, and he is a man of genuine convictions'.

I mentioned that he came out first of all as a Radical against the official Liberal candidate for the Stirling Boroughs.

'Well, he remains a Radical, - the only [one] besides Burns and myself in the Cabinet. He saved us today from rushing headlong into disaster in South Africa. He spoke quite simply, but there was a note of conviction in his voice that brought tears into my eyes. The first time such a note has been heard in that awful place! After he spoke, no one ventured to stand up to him. Haldane put in a timid little plea, but the old man lowered his brows and pretended not to understand the point. *He* understood, but he has been doing some thinking since that 16,000 business. He is slow, but he is strong, - the strongest man in the Cabinet. Grey is the only man who can stand up to him, and he was away. It is not a great Cabinet. I turned to Herbert Gladstone and said to him, 'My God, do these fellows think that the country has given us a thumping majority in order that *we* should be in office? If we don't *do* something, we shall be

kicked out as ignominiously as the Balfour crew'. 'Who is going to do it?', asked Gladstone. 'There are 200 new men in the House', said I, 'and don't you forget it! He was incredulous, but they will have to amend their ways if they wish to avert disaster'.

'How does Burns shape?'

'Oh, Burns is a fine, manly fellow, perfectly straight and really conscientious. He and I have worked together very cordially'.

'Well, I am glad Campbell-Bannerman is turning up trumps'.

'Yes: so much so that I am beginning to doubt my judgement, for I thought Rosebery would have been the better man for Prime Minister'.<sup>18</sup>

We spoke of other things. He did not want his biography written for Fisher Unwin, and agreed with me that at all events I was not the man to write it. 'You are essential to me in the House', he said, 'but if you wrote my "Life", our real relationship would be obscured, and your usefulness would be diminished'. He thought the Welsh Members could get Disestablishment if they pressed for it, but he agreed again with me that it would never pass the Lords, and that it was questionable whether it was good tactics to press for its introduction at all under the circumstances. Then Clement Edwards was announced, and I left.<sup>19</sup>

### **10 February 1906**

Have written 'editorial notes of the month', and two leaders, 'Welsh Ministers' and 'A practical policy' for J. Hugh Edwards's *Welsh Review* which appears on March 1. There is no doubt room for a first-class Welsh Review, but is JHE the man for the task?<sup>20</sup> A really well conducted and vigorously written 'review' would be of great service to Wales in the coming years.

### **12 February 1906**

Dined with George at Wandsworth. Talked of Education and Disestablishment. On Education found George rather nearer the secularist position than his public declarations would imply. Has great sympathy with the secularists, but thinks their views would not be popular with the majority of Free Churchmen or Anglicans. Referred to Philip Snowden's article in the *Daily News* where, after taking up the secularist position, he goes on to advocate Bible teaching.<sup>21</sup> I pointed out that Henry Richard and Edward Miall had always argued in favour of secularism, and expressed the view that the religious controversy would always be with us unless and until the State frankly abandoned religious teaching in the schools. George told me that Acland and Birrell came to see him at Brighton a few days ago. Haldane had been advocating the retention of the 'dual system' in the Cabinet. George told Birrell that if the Cabinet took up that line, he would resign. Birrell said, 'I stand or fall with you in this matter. If you go, I go'. At the next meeting of the Cabinet, Haldane withdrew, and said that he had only wanted to present the Church case. So the dual system is to go. I asked how Asquith is behaving. George said, 'Admirably. He is very decent to me, and is evidently thinking of the reversion to the leadership'. Fowler, he said, is very strong on the education question, though in favour of under one in national education.<sup>22</sup>

As for Disestablishment, he repeated his opinion that we could get our Bill if we wanted it, but it was very doubtful if it was good policy. Wanted me to attend the Welsh Members meeting on Wednesday. Suggested we should go in for a constructive policy of 'devolution' for Wales (on the line of my article), and a Commission to inquire into the endowments of the Church in Wales.

Went up to the House at midnight to take my seat. Found a crowd of over a hundred members waiting for admission. When the doors were opened, a most undignified rush for seats was made. I managed to secure the third seat on the third bench below the gangway.

### **13 February 1906**

Took my seat. It is curious how the number 13 has affected me. I was nominated on January 13, by 13 nominations. I secured 3900 votes, - three times 13 hundred, - the extra two being my proportion of four doubtful votes. And now I take my seat on February 13.

There was a great crush, and nearly one-third of the House had no seats. Wilfrid Lawson proposed Lowther as Speaker in an admirably conceived speech, simple, humorous, and marked with real good feeling. Stuart-Watley seconded in a more ambitious and well-phrased speech. Lowther 'submitted' himself to the House. His speech was not as polished as Gulley's in 1895, but he has a well set-up figure, an excellent voice, and he is evidently in touch with the House.<sup>23</sup>

Campbell-Bannerman and Akers-Douglas and Keir Hardie congratulated the Speaker-elect.

### **14 February 1906**

Attended the Welsh Members' meeting at 4 o'clock. George, McKenna, and Herbert Lewis were present. Everything went well until Vaughan Davies moved a resolution in favour of approaching the Prime Minister with regard to Disestablishment. The discussion was heated and even acrimonious. D. A. Thomas and Ellis Griffith took up a hostile attitude, and hinted distrust both of the Welsh Members of the Government and of Campbell-Bannerman. They found little or no support. George, S. T. Evans, and I spoke in favour of delay, and nothing was done.<sup>24</sup>

Took my oath as member. Nearly 450 members have done so today.

### **6 March 1906**

Have been away at Barry, Llanelly &c. The St David's Day celebration at Llanelly was the finest I have ever attended. In the afternoon 1600 schoolchildren foregathered in the Market Hall, some 400 of them acting as orchestra (violin) and the rest as choir, and rendering Welsh national airs with great spirit and effect. In the evening took the chair at public meeting, attended by 3000 people. The Vicar and I both spoke, - I on the necessity of keeping alive and extending the use of Welsh. Cranogwen, in proposing a vote of thanks, pointed out the change that had come over Wales in her time. The Liberal candidate she first remembered was a squire who could only patter a few broken words in Welsh. Now they had a member who spoke for 45 minutes in pure Cymraeg without a word of English, and then she gave a list of 'beautiful idiomatic phrases' I had used!<sup>25</sup> The Vicar was also very complimentary, and said it was the best Welsh he had heard on the platform!

Yesterday, a reception was given by the Liberal ladies at the Market Hall, which was also a great success. The visit to Llanelly was most enjoyable.

Sunday, March 4, I spent at Kidwelly. I met a policeman and asked him the way to Chapel. He told me, but added that the best preacher was to be found in another chapel. He addressed me by name.

'Oh, you know me?', I said.

'Yes', was the reply, 'I used to be stationed at Llanelly'.

'Were you there during the election?'

‘Yes: it was *grand*. – But we are disappointed you have not made your maiden speech’.

‘Well, it is rather early times yet’, I apologised. ‘And, you see, the Liberals being in power, we must not waste time in talk’.

‘But we sent you there to talk, and you *can* talk. I was at three of your meetings and they were *grand*! I am looking at the paper every morning to see the report of your speech in the House of Commons’.

‘Well’, I replied, ‘I must really try and satisfy you’.

He was mollified. ‘Don’t be too eager, too’, he added. ‘If there is no time to speak, you could *pair*!’.

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But it is extraordinary what importance constituents attach to a member speaking in the House. At the reception on Sunday, quite fifty people asked me when my maiden speech was to come off. Parliament is not a month old, and they were disappointed because their member had not broken the ice. What a revolution since the old silent days!

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## 12 March 1906

Made my maiden speech on Free Trade. Sir James Kitson moved an amendment in favour of Free Trade. After two or three had spoken, I rose but failed to catch the Speaker’s eye. Then Balfour challenged a division on a minor issue, after a somewhat stormy scene between him and J. C. and Campbell-Bannerman in which Campbell-Bannerman got decidedly the best of it. ‘Cease this foolery’ cried the old man, ‘and let us get to business!’. The House roared with delighted approval, though some of the older members seemed shocked. It is remarkable how Campbell-Bannerman has captured this House. It is *his* House even more than the last was Balfour’s. It may suffer in form thereby, but it will gain in sincerity. The new House is impatient of the dialectical juggley of Balfour, and the insincere sophistries of Chamberlain. It likes the blunt and homely directness, the ready humour, and the readier sympathy of Campbell-Bannerman.

I rose after the division at 7.20, and succeeded in catching the Speaker’s eye. The House began to empty, - the dinner adjournment being at 7.30. I began to speak amid the din of retreating feet, and I could hardly hear the sound of my own voice. I was quite cool when I rose, but the indifference of the House, the scurrying figures, the general buzz of conversation, and the idea that I was making my first speech, proved nearly too much for me – I became confused and excited, and for a moment I did not know what I was saying. Somebody on the other side shouted, ‘Speak up’. It acted like a tonic, and I regained my self-command. In a minute or two I gained the attention of such as still lingered in the House, - not more than two hundred or so, - and then came the adjournment for dinner.

I resumed at nine o’clock, and spoke till 9.30. The House, almost empty, when I started filled up as I went on, till I had the pleasure of addressing a crowded House at the close. I am assured on all hands it was a success. George sent me a note to say it was ‘penigamp’, and he afterwards told me Birrell and Campbell-Bannerman both said it was excellent. Robson told me it was the most powerful presentment of



the Free Trade case ever put in his hearing to the House. Sir Gilbert Parker, Sir Howard Vincent, and Sir Edward Clarke on the other side, and a score or two of members on our side, came up to me in the Lobby, and congratulated me.

There were two draw-backs, however. Though the House was full, the press gallery was almost empty, and in many of the papers all that is said is that 'Mr Williams continued the discussion'. But there is an excellent report in the *Times*, and very nice notices in the *Western Mail*, *S. W. D. News*, *Liverpool Daily Post*, *Manchester Guardian &c.*

The other drawback was that I was followed (after a long and tedious oration from Philip Snowden) by F. E. Smith, the young Liverpool 'local'. He came to the House with a reputation, and he immensely added to it by his first speech. It was, *omnium consensu*, the most brilliant maiden speech heard for a generation. I thought the witticisms were occasionally thin and forced, and the real thought shallow: but the speech was fresh, sparkling, and excellently delivered. Smith's only difficulty will be to live up to the level of his maiden effort. But it effectually wiped out all recollection of my speech for the time. Lloyd George followed in a very laborious and ineffective 'official' reply. He was evidently ill at ease, and did not make the best use of his material. Balfour listened with evident interest and sympathy, and I thought he really did his best to help George along.<sup>26</sup>

### **13 March 1906**

The debate came to an abrupt end, after a somewhat dreary discussion. I received many letters from the constituency, and I have no doubt scores of people are more satisfied now that their member has 'broken his duck'!

### **27 March 1906**

I went down to the House to ask the Whips to find me a pair, as I felt unwell. Found Lawson Walter on his feet, introducing the Trades Disputes Bill.<sup>27</sup> I was staggered to find that the Government don't propose to restore the anti-Taff Vale decision, and though I had only that morning received a Treasury brief from Walton, I roundly stated that I could not support their Bill in that form. I thought poor Walton looked very sick, because I question if he likes the Bill which he had to introduce. The speech itself was a fine Parliamentary performance. Though my intervention has done me no good in official quarters, it has, I think, greatly helped me in Llanelly, and especially among the Labour element.

### **12 April 1906**

A very unpleasant incident has occurred. George consulted me more than once about the Disestablishment Commission, and submitted names to me.<sup>28</sup> I suggested alterations in the list, which he provisionally adopted. He asked me who should be secretary. I mentioned Lleufer Thomas, but was uncertain if he would act. I offered to find out, and George agreed. At Cardiff Assizes I saw Lleufer and asked him in strict confidence if he was disposed to accept, if offered, the Secretaryship to a Royal Commission. I understood him to decline, and the matter dropped.<sup>29</sup>

Since then George has been in communication with the Archbishop, but asked his Grace for the present not to mention the matter to the Welsh Bishops. The Archbishop came to see George one day, and complained of the restriction placed upon him. 'I have just received a letter from the Bishop of St David's informing me of the proposed Commission - a fact which was disclosed to him at the Cardiff

Conference by a Welsh Member'. [On March 23 I wrote what I thought of it in the April number of the *Welsh Review*.]<sup>30</sup>

George assures me that the only Welsh Members who were in his confidence were S. T. Evans (one of the proposed Commissioners), Frank Edwards and myself.<sup>31</sup> F. E. [Frank Edwards] is above suspicion. When Evans was approached, he said that Lleufer came to him at Cardiff and asked him what this Commission was to be about, and that he had been told of it by me. The inference therefore was that I had blabbed to St David's, whom I had long talks with at Cardiff.

I lost my temper, and my answer was more forcible than relevant. Lleufer now assures me that he only asked S. T.'s opinion as a friend as to whether he ought to take the secretaryship, - and that was ten days after I had spoken to him, and after the Conference was past and gone.

### **9 May 1906**

John Dillon, speaking on the Second Reading of the Education Bill today, said that he had listened with interest to the views expressed by the Labour members, because they sent their children to the public elementary schools. I interposed that George sent his children there, - which rather nonplussed Dillon for the time.

Robson came up to me afterwards and asked me if I thought George would like it to be generally known that he sent his children to the Board School! This from an English Liberal, and one who is supposed - and rightly - to be one of the best Radicals in the Government. I told him George, so far from objecting, would have been the first to proclaim the fact himself, had he been present. For one cannot help admiring the entire absence of snobbishness and pretence in him. His accession to office has not altered him, or given him the slightest indication of 'swelled head'.

The incident impressed me with the fundamental difference between the Celtic and English democracy. The Englishman desires personal liberty above and beyond all else; as long as that is secured, he does not mind what class distinctions prevail. The educated Englishman - however 'democratic' his sentiments - invariably recognises the distinction which exists between him and the illiterate workingman. 'Thy speech betrayeth thee' is true of every Englishman. The trained ear can not only classify Englishmen into grades of society by their accent, but could almost allocate them to their respective schools or colleges. The idea of the equality of man is nowhere present in English society. Neither rich nor poor recognise its existence.

To the Welshman, on the other hand, the dignity of his own personality is supreme. There is not the same keen sense of the value of personal liberty or of the equality of individuals before the law. 'Law' is a thing which he does not understand or respect as the Englishman does. But in social converse he insists on equality of treatment. I have been often 'sirred' by Welshmen when I addressed them in English. Immediately I turned to Welsh, their speech became familiar, and a new sense of equality arose. The same trait, I am told, is observable in Spain. Spaniards are the proudest race in Europe; but strangers have been amazed at the familiarity which obtains between all classes. The highest spot in Welsh social life is the absence of snobbish class distinctions. I wonder if this will survive the process of Anglicanisation through which we are passing?

### **10 May 1906**

After eighteen vain attempts, I succeeded in catching the Speaker's eye at 9 o'clock in the evening on this, the fourth, and concluding night, of the debate on the Second Reading. I came down on Monday with a really good speech. But others were called

before me, and they said all I had meant to say. On Tuesday I prepared another, which lasted me till Wednesday night. Then I prepared another, which I succeeded in letting off tonight. It contained one suggestion, which has never before been made, and whose fate I shall curiously watch. It was that clause four of the Bill should be made mandatory as regards 'religious teaching', but that the ordinary teachers should not be permitted, under any circumstances, to supply religious instruction. – At eleven we divided, and the second reading was carried with over two hundred majority.

When I look back over the debate, the outstanding feature seems to me now to have been Chamberlain's speech on the third day. He began by making a purely party speech, but as he went on, he deviated into occasional sincerity. He showed us a glimpse of his own old self. We, Radicals below the gangway, cheered him with real enthusiasm, while his own party listened with increasing glumness. He seemed to be carried away for the moment by the rising tide of conviction, and he stated in clear terms that teachers should not be subjected to tests. Such a storm of cheering as broke out when he said this I have not heard in the House. For the moment Chamberlain quite regained his old ascendancy over the House. Balfour has not done so. He is not listened to even by his own side, and the impatience of our side is somewhat too clamant now and then.

The best defence of the Bill was made by Asquith, in his cold, cogent, unemotional way. George delivered the best speech I have ever heard from him in the House, - somewhat crude in parts, and lacking in dignity of form, but sincere, pointed, and touched with the real eloquence of conviction. Birrell is our Pius II, - the wordly man of letters become Pope. He is the guardian of the spiritual interests of the children, - or thinks his official position requires him to be. He has been called a Nonconformist, and as that designation is useful just now, he tolerates the title. He is in himself both statesman and philosopher, and he regards religion as Gibbon said these did. Sometimes he is led away almost to scoff openly at things which duller men regard as sacred. I notice that immediately he does so, there is a responsive gleam in Balfour's eye on the other side of the table. The two men have much in common. They care little for religion; what little faith they have in anything is centred on education. They have a profound contempt for sectarian differences which neither understands, - though Birrell realises their strength more than Balfour because his father was a Baptist Minister. They could easily construct a scheme, which would be satisfactory to themselves, but which would rouse the hostility of every sincere Tory and Liberal – the chief danger to the Bill lies in this fatal facility of Birrell. He has no convictions in the matter, and therefore no sheet-anchor. His tendency will be to drift with each cross-current that meets him, without rudder or compass to direct or guide his course. His colleagues leave him at one to steer the bank as he wills. The responsibility is his, and they are glad to heap it upon his shoulders.

Redmond, as usual, was excellent. So, indeed, were T. P. O'Connor and Dillon. But the most impressive speech from the Irish benches was that of Tim Healy. I cannot say that it impressed me greatly, but everybody else was wildly excited about it. It was too laboured an oration, I thought. The changes from grave to gay were too sudden and too violent to be artistic. The argument was inconsequential, and the manner often provocative. He ended up by suggesting that as he could not spell or parse to do a rule of three he had a clearer vision than anyone else of 'the Christ to come'. Such obscurantist teaching is distasteful to me. It is not true, and I greatly question the sincerity of the speaker. Still, as a Parliamentary effort, the speech was an unqualified success. The Irish did not cheer it, though John Redmond laughed at some of the jibes.<sup>32</sup>

### **28 May 1906**

Tonight the first clause of the Education Bill was passed in Committee. The discussion has been trivial, except on Maddison's secularist amendment. Only sixty-three of us went into the Lobby, though our numbers would have been doubled or even trebled if members had the courage of their convictions. One really excellent speech was delivered by Masterman. I confess it surprised and delighted me, for I had taken him to be a somewhat indecisive and pedantic person. He did not score as big a success as F. E. Smith in his maiden speech, but he showed far greater qualities of mind and thought.

The opposition to the Bill seems to me to have been very feebly conducted, and even unworthy of the occasion. I shall be surprised if it does not pass through the House [of Commons] pretty much in its present form, if the Government so wills it. The only fear is the pliability of Birrell. He would be strong enough when he is convinced. It is his lack of conviction that may wreck the Bill.

'Tommy' Lough made a most mischievous speech on the Maddison amendment which was cheered to the echo by the Tories and listened to in startled silence by our side. The Nonconformists in the country are beginning to be roused, and if something is not done, the Bill will be lost long before clause four is reached. The danger is not Parliamentary, but in the country. I have only been surprised that the Nonconformists have not been up in arms long ago.<sup>33</sup>

### **30 May 1906**

The House met for adjournment over the Whitsun recess. The first two laps of the Session are over, and as I look back, I feel that much has happened since February 13. What reputations have been made and lost, what new figures have emerged from obscurity, what old personages have dropped out.

The great unknown of the Parliament was [the] I.L.P. group. They are only thirty men, but thirty men in permanent opposition are formidable. Keir Hardie, by a majority, of one was elected their leader. The minority hate him as heavily as he hates them. MacDonald the Secretary and Keir Hardie the chairman are hardly on speaking terms. There are thirty other Labour men who are also Liberals. These men hate the I.L.P. with as much fervour as Healy hates Dillon, or O'Brien [and] John Redmond. The I.L.P. return the hate with interest. All the same, the Labour group have proved themselves capable Parliamentarians. They have not turned out quite so well as I had at first anticipated. Some of them have not 'worn' well. Walsh has subsided; Brace talks too much; Snowden talks too long and windily; Keir Hardie lacks charm of voice and manner and character. But in MacDonald, Henderson, and Shackleton they possess three sensible, capable, and honest men, who will make their mark.

The Tories are still in a state of collapse. There has hardly been any real opposition as yet. There have been efforts at obstruction, but so feeble and so futile that it has met only with derision and contempt. F. E. Smith, who went up like a rocket, has come down like a stick; Balfour and Chamberlain are so inconsiderable that they can almost be ignored as far as the House is concerned; Wyndham is clever, amiable, and popular, but he drinks too much, and were it not that he is one of the handsomest men I have ever seen, his appearance would be repulsive sometimes after dinner as he lolls, in drunken stupor, on the Front Opposition Bench; Lord Robert Cecil is acute, but he has no force; Meysey Thompson rants and poses, but he has

nothing to say, and says it; while the rest of the Tories – the Rutherfords, the Carliles, the Fells, are simply bores and nothing else.

On our side, Herbert Paul began brilliantly, but he has spoken so often that (though he has never spoken badly) he is losing his hold over the House – Sam Evans has been active throughout the Session. He also began well, and his action in talking out Woman's Suffrage was a considerable achievement which brought him to the front. But, unfortunately for him, Lawson Walton fell ill, Robson was said to be about to have the Attorneyship, and the Solicitorship would be vacant. Sam Evans thought this was his chance, and he began to act as the apologist-in-general for the Government. It mattered not what the Bill or motion was, once let the Government be attacked, and Evans became at once their champion. He was placed on two Royal Commissions, and two Select Committees, and their mutual admiration became so marked as to excite attention. Of all unofficial members I should say S. E. has occupied more space in Hansard than any one else this Session. But, good speaker though he is, he is losing the ear of the House, which distrusts more than anything else a 'lawyer on the make'. His last few interventions – especially last night when he was the direct cause of a 'scene' which prevented the passage of the Government's Bill to establish the Police Commission – have been singularly unfortunate.

Perhaps the most successful unofficial Ministerialist member has been Dr. Macnamara. He has delivered four or five speeches of great force and effectiveness. Belloc has made one good speech, but he has on the whole belied the expectations that were formed of him.

Also my own personal experience, I think I am more than satisfied with the position in which I find myself. I am greatly interested in the House and all its doings. Its eccentrics – Lupton, A. C. Morton, Galloway Weir etc. – I love to see and watch, its changing moods are as fascinating as the clouds on an autumn day, the chat of the Lobby and the confidences of the smoking room, the rough and tumble of the division lobbies, and the general clubbable air of good-comradeship that prevails are also delightful. I am all the more satisfied as I find my membership, though it entailed an initial expenditure, has had a most satisfactory influence on my professional income.

It is rumoured that Winston Churchill – who has been an unqualified success as Under-Secretary for the Colonies – will shortly be promoted to Cabinet office. He well deserves his promotion, though it will be difficult for him to get another office which will give him such a chance. Ripon, it is said, is shaky over the Education Bill, and may retire. If so, Crewe will succeed him as leader in the Lords, and room will be made for Churchill in the Cabinet.

George has been winning golden opinions at the Board of Trade. I was assured the other day that he is the most diligent and capable administrator the Board has ever had.

John Burns today had a tussle with Keir Hardie and his lot over the Unemployed question on the adjournment. The I.L.P. were plainly spoiling for a fight. Barnes, Will Thorne, Keir Hardie, Shackleton, and Will Crooks were hostile and occasionally almost offensive. Burns delivered a slashing combative reply. He would have nothing to do with 'doss-house economists', with popularity-hunters, or with 'pauper compounds', as he termed Labour Colonies. A sturdy, courageous, straight speech, which earned the unstinted approval of Tories and Liberals, but which will create trouble, I fear, between the Government and the I.L.P. On the whole, the I.L.P. have been reasonable up to now. A few more such speeches, and they will become active opponents, and perhaps obstructionists.

On reviewing the situation, one can not help being stuck with the fact that the Government have strengthened their position since February.

### **12 June 1906**

Today is the beginning of the Government's decline. Birrell has justified suspicion, and has begun to make concessions. Today he agreed to introduce an amendment compelling – in effect – all local authorities to take over structurally fit voluntary schools, even if unnecessary. This will create a storm in the country, if not a crisis in the House. Naturally John Redmond jumped at the offer and clinched the bargain. The only ray of consolation lies in the fact that both Chamberlain and Balfour were inclined to cavil at the concession. But the Government's trial has begun, and I greatly mistrust Birrell's strength and soundness. Sam Evans spoke well.

### **20 June 1906**

The names of the Welsh Church Commissioners are out, and I had a long talk with George, McKenna and Herbert Roberts in George's room about preparing our case. George very keen on getting a lawyer to do the work and to represent our side before the Commissioners. Herbert Roberts suggested his cousin J. O. Thomas, whom I remember at New College. George suggested T. J. Hughes, Bridgend. I suggested (1) Lleufer Thomas, and (2) W. J. Evans, private secretary to David Davies, Llandinam. I was commissioned to see Lleufer, and to offer him £500 and expenses, on condition of his giving up his whole time to the work.

Walked with George to Victoria. Told me that there had been great trouble in the Cabinet on Education Bill. Campbell-Bannerman was always cordial and straight, Fowler helpful, Morley loyal, and John Burns quite dependable. Asquith was uncertain, Buxton 'a man who ought never to be in the Cabinet on his merits', malicious and mischievous, Gladstone a nincumpoop 'who had never made a sensible suggestion or shown the slightest initiative', Birrell cared for nothing but getting the Bill through anyhow, and Ripon very Catholic.

Clause iv to be amended. Right of appeal to Education Board, but (1) no part for 4/5 schools, (2) wishes of parents to be ascertained by ballot, and (3) no 'mandamus' of local authority by Board of Education. If an authority is 'pigheaded', the Board is to treat the school as an ante-1902 voluntary school. I hazarded the opinion that these amendments would greatly popularise the Bill on our side. Clause iv, as it stood, was as much as even moderate men could stand; to make it mandatory would be to court certain disaster. The auditors would, I thought, take the sting out of the objections of Pecks [?] and Sam Evans.

Birrell, I remarked, was ageing greatly. 'Yes', said George, 'he is very sensitive and is almost breaking down. Very little more, and he would throw up the Bill and retire from the Cabinet'.

George told me a queer story. On Tuesday, the question had arisen what was the right interpretation of the '2 days facilities' in clause 3. Did it mean that *only* on 2 days a week was religious instruction to be given, or could it mean that while each child in the school could only be taught twice a week, the person would have the right of entry on five days and could divide the children into classes so that he need not do the whole work on two days? Sam Evans said it meant the first; Robson and Birrell the second. Upon enquiry, Morant told George that the clause had been expressly drafted so as to mean the second. But who gave the draughtsman his orders? The Cabinet had decided the other thing. George suspected Morant of deliberate treachery; but since the Welsh Revolt, George hates Morant and thinks him capable of

anything. – It is curious how George is making his ascendancy felt in the Cabinet, for he seems to be consulted about Education as much as Birrell.<sup>34</sup>

## **22 June 1906**

Find Gladstone has appointed a monoglot Englishman to be Chief Inspector of Mines in the Swansea District in spite of the proviso in s. 39(1) of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887. Have given notice of a question on the subject. It is abominable that a Liberal Home Secretary should deliberately ignore a provision passed by a Tory Government. But it is only in accordance with Gladstone's feeble conduct generally. He is generally recognised as the weakest member of the Government. His management of the Work Comp. Committee has been extremely falous, and no one seems to care what he says or thinks. I asked him three months ago to nominate a capable young Welshman for the examination for an Assistant Factory Inspectorship. There are only two Welsh-speaking inspectors out of five in South Wales. He promised: but has not done so. I spoke today to Herbert Samuel about it, and threatened him with the Welsh Members if he did not. He seemed frightened; but with a fool for a chief, he may be able to do nothing.

The Welsh Members this week have shown signs of 'bucking up'. Last week I approached Ivor Herbert, with the suggestion that half-a-dozen of the new Members should agree to work together, as it seemed impossible to get the whole Welsh party to do anything. He agreed, and last Monday he and I, Sidney Robinson, David Davies, and Brace dined together and talked matters over. Next day the Welsh party met. Herbert and I spoke strongly about our inactivity and the need of continued action. Our remarks were well received, though George followed me with a carping speech. We agreed to meet on every day when a new 'compartment' of the Education Bill is reached. It is to be hoped that this will bring about some change for the better. At present, Sam Evans is the only one of the Welsh Members who speaks. Of late he has changed his role from being a universal champion of the Government to that of general critic. People imagine that he is speaking for Wales and the newspapers treat him as the Welsh leader. As a matter of fact, neither as apologist nor as critic did he speak for Wales. Welshmen are, I believe, satisfied with the Education Bill and on the whole with the Government. They want greater watchfulness on the part of Welsh Members, but they don't wish us to be captious or uncritical.<sup>35</sup>

## **4 February 1907**

I have entered nothing in this note book for six months or more. Not that politics have been uninteresting. Indeed, the events of the Autumn Session have been quite exciting. The rejection of the Education Bill (in effect) and of the Plural Voting Bill (in terms) by the House of Lords has raised questions of momentous importance. But I have been too busy with my practice at the Bar to take any intimate interest in these matters. My professional work has doubled during the last four or five months, and it is difficult – and indeed impossible – to attend to two exacting professions at one and the same time.

The first breach in the Cabinet ranks took place in December when Mr Bryce was appointed Ambassador to the United States. Mr John Ellis also resigned the Under-Secretaryship of India on the ground of ill-health. Lloyd George told me the last day of the Session that McKenna was destined for the Education Office. His words have come true. Birrell has gone to the Irish Office, and McKenna promoted to the Education Department. The two new men introduced are Macnamara and Hobhouse – excellent appointments.<sup>36</sup>

A fortnight ago George told me that a hitch had occurred over the proposed establishment of the Welsh branch of the Education Department. Birrell was pledged to it; Marchant Williams had written in October last, at my instigation, to Morant to ascertain his views. Morant replied most satisfactorily. I had some difficulty in convincing George that, assuming the Lords destroyed the Welsh National Council proposal in the Education Bill, it would be well, by an administrative act, to establish a separate Welsh Department. I strongly urged the same view on the Government in one of the closing discussions on the Lords' amendments to the Bill. As long as Birrell remained at the Education Office, all went well. But with the advent of McKenna, who is a Welsh member, difficulties arose. Several Welsh Members, including myself, had been asked to suggest names for the first and second posts. I suggested: 1<sup>st</sup> post, Sir Isambard Owen, Professor Henry Jones, Professor Anwyl, O. M. Edwards; 2<sup>nd</sup> post J. H. Davies and Lleufer Thomas.

The week before last George wrote to me from Newcastle, asking me to meet him at the National Liberal Club on the 24<sup>th</sup>. I went, and there he told me what had occurred. McKenna insisted on one of two things: *either* the Welsh Under Secretary should be a man known to and trusted by him or a man trained in the department, *or* the Welsh Department must remain under Morant. I protested that such a policy was a breach of Birrell's promise, and that from the Government's point of view would be disastrous. Morant's name stinks in the nostrils of the Welsh C. C., and if it were known that the Welsh Department is subject to him, it would be suspect from the first. Both George and Herbert Roberts (who was also present) agreed. But what could be done? Said George. We agreed that all of us must try and see and influence McKenna: but then he is likely to be stiff-backed just at first. George urged me to take the first post at £1500 a year. He said McKenna would give way if I took it. But I refused point-blank to the great satisfaction of Roberts who was evidently chagrined at George's suggestion. I said I had worked too hard and too long at both bar and politics to give them up now when I was entering into the fruits of my labours.

And so the thing remains to this day. McKenna, it seems, is not yet 'in the saddle', and will not be admitted to his new post till the King returns from Paris at the end of this week.

In the meantime Wales is agitated over the question of Disestablishment. The Church Commission, under the chairmanship of L. J. Van Williams has turned out to be a veritable fiasco. The Lord Justice insists on excluding 'hearsay evidence' which includes, he says, historical evidence. He is constantly rude to Sam Evans, Principal Fairbairn and Henry Jones. Poor Frank Edwards dares not open his mouth. Sam Evans has long since threatened to resign; if he does, the others will follow. Lleufer has not been a success as counsel. He lacks energy, decision and force. Our evidence is badly prepared, and all 'higgledy-piggledy'. The chairman wastes an enormous deal of time with long and involved questions. He is the only one of the Commissioners who is allowed to travel beyond the 'terms of reference'. A suspicion is being engendered that these are merely dilatory tactics, and that the real object is to postpone disestablishment.

An agitation, which threatens to become formidable, has been started in Wales. The Adullamites – Ellis Griffith, D. A. Thomas, Alfred Thomas, Ellis Davies – are on the war-path.<sup>37</sup> George has been making vehement speeches against the Lords, and in the Cabinet meeting last Friday he insisted that our first duty is to pare their claws. He was supported by Grey, Haldane, Burns, Tweedmouth and Buxton; against him were Fowler, Birrell, Herbert Gladstone.<sup>38</sup> A committee of eight was appointed to inquire and report. Before the meeting I wrote a letter to George



embodying my views. I amplified it on Saturday and sent it to the *Manchester Guardian*, and the *South Wales Daily News* who publish it today. The policy advocated is this: (1) if the Government decide, as I think they should, to go for the Lords at once, Wales ought not to insist on a measure of Disestablishment being introduced before we go to the country. But (2) if the Government decide in favour of 'filling up the cup', then we, as Welsh members, should insist on a definite promise from the Government that Welsh Disestablishment shall be the chief measure of the third Session. I added a few words in defence of George, who has been most outrageously attacked by disappointed politicians in Wales. He is keener on doing things for Wales now than ever, and it is hard that he should, under the circumstances, be wounded in the house of his friends.

### **16 February 1907**

Last Saturday I received a telegram from George from Belfast asking me to dine with him the following day (Sunday). I went. We dined at Gallis's, and George told me a great deal of what had been taking place in the recent Cabinet meetings.

First as to his visit to Belfast – the first made by a Liberal Minister for over twenty years. The Whips, it seems, had asked him to go, and he had reluctantly consented. Then Moore KC, the new Ulster member, had publicly threatened to 'Birmingham' George if he went. The Whips and the Cabinet became alarmed. They feared a riot, ending in bloodshed, would result. Pressure was brought to bear on George to cancel the engagement. He refused. Birrell, in quite a friendly way, brought the subject up in the Cabinet. At first, everybody urged him not to go. But on his remaining resolute, they gave way, and George was jubilant over the result. The whole thing passed off peaceably, and the meetings were a triumphant success. This, George thought, would greatly strengthen his position in the Government. 'I was not going to be warned off after promising to go', he said. Birrell said that the police were quite willing he should go, because they wanted to show off what they could do! Mrs George was very nervous on Friday, so my wife told me. They went together to a theatre, in order to pass the time till the news came that everything was all right.

Another matter he mentioned was that the King had been complaining to Campbell-Bannerman about his speeches against the Lords. The first complaint was about the speech he made at my Llanelly meeting in September last. When Campbell-Bannerman spoke to him about it, he promised he would not refer to them again till they had done some mischief. Immediately they destroyed the Education Bill, he was unmuzzled, and 'went for' them again with similar results. George however absolutely refused to be dictated to, and Campbell-Bannerman, I gather, did not press the point. 'If it is not an item in our programme', said George, 'I shall of course defer to your wishes, and make no mention of it, but if it is, I am not going to submit my speeches to the King or anyone to be censored'. The result is he is in deep disgrace at Court, and was not asked to the last ministerial dinner. 'If he only knew', said George, 'it was a great relief to me not to have to go to dine with that d\_\_\_\_\_ Jew!'

I asked what was determined about the House of Lords. The cabinet, it seems, are very divided. The only men who backed George were Grey, Haldane, Burns and Tweedmouth. Asquith was away. Fowler thought the country would be with the Lords; Morley was nervous, Birrell hostile; and the Prime Minister by no means decided. A Committee of eight was appointed on which George served, and after much discussion, they agreed to recommend that a phrase should be incorporated in

the King's Speech. When the matter came up subsequently before the Cabinet, the members of the Committee seemed to be horrified at what they had done, and tried to back out by saying that they had not been unanimous, but this the Lord Chancellor and Morley demurred at, and the fateful sentence was put in. There is no doubt that this was the most popular thing in the Speech, and Campbell-Bannerman's contribution in the following debate was quite first-rate.

On Tuesday the Welsh members met, and Ellis Griffith came there breathing fire and slaughter. George immediately rose, and said that there was no idea of postponing Disestablishment – the whole opposition collapsed!

On Thursday (February 14), the names of the two Welsh Education officials were announced, Owen Edwards as Chief Inspector, and Alfred Davies of Liverpool as Permanent Under-Secretary. Davies will make an industrious and painstaking official, but he is a small man, of a somewhat pettifogging spirit, and will stimulate no enthusiasm. Owen Edwards, I think, will give immense service to Welsh Education. It has got into a rut, the freshness, enthusiasm, and romance which marked it ten or twenty years ago have faded where they have not disappeared. But Owen is an idealist. He has deep convictions, he has ideas, he dreams dreams and sees visions. I hope – and believe – he will be able to infuse a new spirit into the dry bones of Welsh educational officialdom. He is, and will, not be a great administrator: his knowledge of men is limited, he has never taken part in the rough and tumble of life; I doubt if he will be able to get much out of his subordinate officials. But he will attract and stimulate all the enthusiasts in Wales, and I shall be greatly disappointed if his acceptance of office will not mark the beginning of a new and golden era in Welsh education.<sup>39</sup>

### **8 November 1907**

It is many months since I have made any entry in this book. The Session was long and dull, and I was busy with Bar work. I have had little therefore to record.

Last night my wife and I dined at Galli's, and there met some friends who were going to the Opera where a new singer, Tehazzini, is making a stir. We determined to go too if a seat were available. I telephoned from the National Liberal Club and found there was a box undisposed of. I took it and was just staring in a cab for Covent Garden when Lloyd George came along. He joined us, and we spent the evening together. The new star is a star indeed: - quite the most natural singer I have ever heard. Her notes were produced with so little appearance of effort that one could only compare her to a nightingale. Its quality, I thought, was more sympathetic than Patti's, and the lady is a great actress, capable of intense dramatic emotion, as well as a great singer.

Lloyd George was somewhat depressed. The day before he had settled the great railway crisis on the basis of 'peace with honour' for both sides. The tension has told on him, and he is low and run down. He spoke most highly of Bell. Of Lord Stalbridge he had a poor opinion: 'dull, stupid, slow, but most loyal once he gives his word'. It was queer to hear Lloyd George add, 'After all there is something fine about a good old English gentleman'. Lord Claud Hamilton, he thought, was an able man, with no grasp of details. The ablest man was Sir Arthur Henderson, but 'shifty'. He was delighted with his great diplomatic success, especially as even the Tory press showered eulogies on him. He showed me a letter from Haldane, in which he said that Lloyd George had greatly added to the 'prestige' of the Government. The Rev. Morgan Gibbon wired asking George now to turn his attention to the Welsh Church

Commission, where everything is higgledy-piggledy, mainly owing to the stupidity of the Chairman.

There is no doubt that his railway success has brought Lloyd George appreciably nearer the Premiership. I sent him a telegram, '*Henffych well, Brif Weinidog*', and I could see that his mind is already running in that direction. He is quite one of the conspicuous successes of the Ministry. Campbell-Bannerman told him at the end of the Session that his praises were in all men's mouths, and that no President of the Board of Trade had ever won the confidence of the commercial classes to such an extent. 'And I thought it my duty to tell the King so', added the canny old Scot. But Campbell-Bannerman is not well. He was visibly failing last Session, and George gives a poor account of him now. Should anything happen to him, it would be a bad business for the Liberal Party. He is the force that binds the Government and the party together. I suppose Asquith would succeed him: but what a contrast! Asquith has enough brains for three, but I doubt if he would be a successful Premier or even a popular leader of the House – Who else is there? Only Grey – most frigid of Whigs – and George. George's time is not yet: but who can tell what the next two or three years may bring forth?

Ramsay MacDonald, 'a conceited popinjay' according to George, has been criticising the railway solution. He is ever ready to find fault with George, and George is full of retaliation. 'These fellows', he said last night, 'must not be left alone. We must fight them'. Certainly no other course is open to me in my constituency, where they are active but numerically insignificant'.

We spoke of Bottomley, for whom I am appearing at his public examination as director of the Joint Stock Trust. Bottomley had asked me to use my influence, if the Registrar reported against him, to get the papers placed before the Law Officers before a prosecution was directed. I told George this, and he thought it a reasonable request. He seemed, however, to take a serious view of the matter, especially with regard to duplication of shares, which I thought had almost wholly broken down. He also said that Bottomley had induced one of the O. R.'s assistants to drink champagne with him and Hooley: he complained of Bottomley's foolish action in issuing a writ for libel against the O. R.; and of Bottomley's silly concluding remarks (the extension came to an end on November 5) that the O. R. had better celebrate Guy Fawkes day by making a bonfire of all the books. I quite agreed: I had even written to Bottomley the day before to the same effect. Bottomley has asked me to lunch with him at the Savoy today to talk matters over. I fear however nothing more can be done for him. I think little or nothing of the duplication of shares &c: but there was one incident in connection with the 'Joint Stock Operations' of his company which more than savoured of fraud. Bottomley however professes to be quite confident of the result. I wish I could share it: for I like the rogue, and am inclined to agree with what John Burns said to me (to my astonishment!) of Bottomley on Tuesday, 'There is no man who started life with a greater desire to be genially honest than Horatio Bottomley!'. All the same, I fear he will find himself in a tight corner.<sup>40</sup>

Talking of Bottomley led us to the law officers. Lawson Walton, it seems, is again very ill, and George spoke as if he would vacate his office very soon. Who will succeed? Robson will become Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General will be either Rufus Isaacs, Sam Evans, or Buckmaster. The Lord Chancellor at one time favoured Sam, so George says, not because he likes Sam, but because he dislikes Rufus as a Liberal Imperialist. George seemed to think Buckmaster would stand an excellent chance which means that George will back him for it. I have never seen George so determined to block the way of his opponents. The Disestablishment

agitation in Wales has somewhat embittered him against the prime movers Sam, Ellis Griffith, and D. A. Thomas. Sam he would be willing to get rid of by a judgeship: but the other two will get nothing if George can help it. He is utterly contemptuous of Ellis Griffith – ‘this poor weak creature’. Of D. A. [Thomas], he said, ‘He won’t get even the baronetcy he covets. He wrote to Campbell-Bannerman the other day, telling him he would have to criticise him keenly during the next few months, but that he hoped he would not take it in a personal way. I said to Campbell-Bannerman, “Well, are you prepared to pay his price? He isn’t worth it”. He has growled so long that he is looked upon as a professional grumbler. He has no following in Wales, and never will have’.

### **25 November 1907**

Yesterday morning, being Sunday, I was surprised to get a telegram from George from Manchester saying he was coming to see me at 7. He arrived about 8, with his left eye bandaged, for he had met with an accident while motoring near Lichfield. He had nothing very definite to say, but was excited over his efforts as peacemaker in the cotton crisis. Never has a politician in our times so rapidly changed the public estimate of him. Even a month ago, though politicians and those who came in touch with the Department recognised him as a success, the man in the street was still inclined to look upon him as an irresponsible [? monster ], who had won his way by what the Englishman detests most of all, ‘the gift of the gab’. Now all this is changed. I am not sure that he is not the most *popular* man in the Ministry, and he is looked upon as the rising hope of the Radicals and ‘pro-Boers’. Last week Campbell-Bannerman was taken suddenly ill at Bristol. When the news reached London, I was in Fleet Street and met two journalists. ‘I pray heaven’, said one of them, ‘S. L. H. of the *Leader*, ‘that the old man will last another twelve months. By that time Lloyd George will be ready to take his place’. When I told George this, he was evidently delighted, and I can see that his mind is more and more set in that direction. I told him that I liked Asquith, and I believed the popular conception of him was false, that he was a very loyal, straightforward, but somewhat diffident man. George agreed with a somewhat suspicious readiness.

I related my adventures at Windsor on the 14<sup>th</sup> when I went down with the Llanelly Choir, who sang before the King and Queen, and the German Emperor and Empress. Haldane and Tweedmouth were the Ministers in attendance, and they were both very decent to me. ‘Bobby’ Spencer (Lord Althorp) presented me, somewhat to the disgust of the Master of the Household, Sir C. Frederick, who had undertaken to do so. I told George how the Emperor kept talking to me after I had been presented, and I could not get away from him. ‘He did the same to me the night before at the State Banquet’, said George, ‘He is a very fine fellow, but an autocrat who despises the people. He discussed the railway strike with me, and told me how they managed such things in Germany. Immediately there is the slightest sign of disaffection on a railway, the prominent men, who are nearly always reservists, are called to the colours. And the King is not much better. Some people ascribe the credit of settling the dispute to him. He had no more to do with it than the Sultan. He was dead against the men, - said that it was a good thing the strike was averted, because the men would lose their pensions’. ‘Do you like the Queen’, asked my wife, ‘She’s all right’, was the reply, ‘but I can’t rave about her. She told me she had seen a photograph of me with Megan (his youngest child) in one of the illustrated papers’. Recently he added, ‘The B. P. are fools if they think there are any popular sympathies at Court’.

He talked a good deal of education and licensing. McKenna, he said, was in favour of 'contracting out' of the 1902 Act, and from what I gather that will be the lines of the next year's Bill. If so, there are troubles ahead.

### 30 November 1907

Poor little Mair Lloyd George died yesterday. She was quite well seemingly last week. On Monday she came back ill from school. On Tuesday the doctors were sent for. On Wednesday she was operated upon for appendicitis. Yesterday she succumbed. Such a sweet nice little girl of 17, the apple of her father's eye. I went down last night, and asked how his eye was. 'It is full of tears', he said brokenly. He has aged terribly this week.<sup>41</sup>

Presently John Burns came in, - a very kindly act. He and I came away together, and walked away together, and walked as far as Clapham Junction. He was very interesting as all brainy egotists are. I told him I thought it was very nice of him to call, - 'J.B.', he replied 'is not a bad sort. He is a real kind chap is J. B., though there are many who say he isn't'. He was anxious that George and he should work together in the Cabinet. 'Lloyd George has done very well *lately*', he said, with an emphasis on the adverb.

He gave me a full account of the last Cabinet meeting, which George had been unable to attend. 'You should have heard me', he roared out. 'I said to them that ten years ago we sent 38 millions on the Army and Navy: now we spend 62 millions, an increase of 24 millions. Give me, I said, 18 of those millions, and I will give to every man and woman of 65 not the miserable pittance of 5/- a week but 12/6: and you can spend the other 6 millions on your Dreadnoughts and what not. Why! says I, you keep a larger army in South Africa today than Wellington had under him of British troops to fight Napoleon at Waterloo. What!, says the old man, startled. True to you, says I, you keep 22,000 British soldiers in South Africa. They are not wanted, - we have given self-government, and there is now no disaffected class there, since the Australians have gone home. 'There is a good deal in what John Burns says', says Grey; 'Right ho', says Asquith: and the Old Man backed me up, as he always does. 'Why', says I 'you dare not go to the country unless you save on the Army and Navy in order to provide Old Age Pensions'. And they agreed, and we are bringing home half the troops from South Africa. George said to me he envied me my triumph. I wish he had been there to see'.

John is very proud of the Government. 'It is a marvellous Government', he said, 'and has a finer record than any Government that has ever been. We've cleared out Chinese Labour, we have done all we said we were going to do, and next year we shall do still better. The Old Man is first rate. He is a genuine Radical, and wants every Department to pile on legislation. But he has no policy, he does not work a week ahead'.

He is delighted with the coming 'Education Bill', with its 'contracting out'. It was useless to argue with him, and so we parted, he promising to give me a meeting at Llanelly next year.

While crossing the Common, he pointed out a pool of water. 'That is a 'istoric spot', he said. 'Forty years ago J. B. learnt to swim on his little belly in that pool!'. He seemed proud to think that there was a resemblance between his career and George's. 'Our careers are the romance of modern politics', he said.

## 5 December 1907

I came back last night from poor little Mair's funeral at Criccieth. We were very few present – only the family, Clark (Lloyd George's private secretary), Alfred Thomas, William Jones, and the two Herberts. George bore up very well on the whole, though he broke down badly occasionally. I spent Sunday with him, and it was the worst day I have ever had. Between his sobs, he said once, 'I never wanted to go to heaven before!'. I could not help laughing, and he joined in, hysterically.<sup>42</sup>

## 16 June 1908

Since my last entry, a great change has come over the surface of politics. Campbell-Bannerman is dead, and the Ministry has been reconstructed. Asquith is Premier, Lloyd George Chancellor, McKenna First Lord of the Admiralty, Runciman President of the Board of Education. The new men admitted into the Government are Sealy, Masterman, and young Acland, three excellent appointments, though many would have preferred Trevelyan to the latter.<sup>43</sup>

When it became known, weeks before his demise, that the working days of poor Campbell-Bannerman were over, there was a disposition among certain 'pro-Boers' to run George for the first place. The *Manchester Guardian* made itself the mouthpiece of the section that distrusted Asquith. George himself was under no delusions. He told me that when he was approached by the *Guardian*, he informed them that they could not do him a greater disservice. What should be done was to see that he became Chancellor [of the Exchequer]. He has succeeded. He now lives in 11 Downing Street next to the Prime Minister. He had taken a fine house at Chelsea, shrinking from returning to his old Wandsworth home, where he would be constantly reminded of Mair. I was somewhat surprised at his decision, for he must save. I really believe that his main motive was to ask Uncle Lloyd to come and stay with him at Gladstone's old house. I have not been there yet, but my wife tells me of little Megan queening it in Downing Street. What a romance it is!<sup>44</sup>

Asquith has scored all round. He has been over two months in power. Not only has he made no mistake, but he has attached the party to him in a way incredible to the doubters of March. He has shown himself to be in truth the leader of the House, - head and shoulders above all. He has more than justified the good opinions of his friends.

How well I remember a night in November 1898 when poor Tom Ellis, George and I dined together at Fascali.<sup>45</sup> It was the time when Harcourt, in his famous 'cross-currents' letter to Morley, had resigned the leadership. The question of succession lay between Asquith and Campbell-Bannerman. The three of us – George somewhat reluctantly – thought Asquith the man. We drove to see Cook at the *Daily News*. Cook was a friend of Asquith's, but he thought the time was not yet. Campbell-Bannerman had superior claims. Let him have his chance. He would fail, and within a year Asquith's turn would come.<sup>46</sup> But Campbell-Bannerman stuck to his post, and Asquith's chance was ten years coming.

Still, it is all the better that he should have waited. He is now supreme, with no rival near the throne. His authority is unchallenged. His enemies say that he comes to the House *vinos-us*: I have seen nothing of the kind.

Asquith introduced his Budget, and a great Liberal asset it is likely to prove to be. His Old Age Pensions Scheme is almost invulnerable. People may cavil at some of its details, but taken as a whole it is a great piece of democratic finance. True, it leaves his successor to find most of the money: but he has carefully abstained from tampering with remunerative sources of taxation.

The Licensing Bill, which most of us thought would gravely weaken the Government, has heartened and strengthened the party in the House and in the country. At first the Brewers frightened people with their clamour. We lost Peckham through it: we suffered at other by-elections; but the net result is to the good. The Bill will become law.

As for Education, McKenna's new Bill is as hopeless as its predecessor. But there seems to be every chance of a compromise being arrived at outside the House. I spoke strongly in favour of such a settlement on the second reading a month ago, and Nonconformists generally responding to the suggestion put forward by the Archbishop for an amicable solution.

One of the results is the coming into great prominence of the Bishop of St Asaph. He is always with George, and often closeted with Asquith. His Bill is extensively quoted, and he is almost 'the man of the moment'.<sup>47</sup> And the Archbishop of York is not well.

One of the interesting problems of the future is the attitude of the new Chancellor towards Tariff Reform. The Opposition openly claim him as one of themselves. Nor do I feel any great confidence in him as a Free Trader. I remember years ago, after Chamberlain's Glasgow speech, he told me that the next election would be doubtful, and the second would result in the triumph of Joe. His prediction has not become true. The last election was an overwhelming victory for Free Trade. Joe is *hors de combat*. But undoubtedly tariff reform is making some headway in the country. George, though in the House he makes Free Trade speeches, in private is by no means sanguine. He called at my house late one Saturday night last month. He hinted, more or less plainly, that in his opinion the next election would go against us, and once a Tariff were introduced, it would always remain. I believe that though at present he is a Free Trader he wants to hedge so that he may not be classed as irreconcilable. He is an opportunist. He does not believe in a politician perpetually out of office.

Another way of stating the same question is, Will he be loyal to Asquith? The two men at present are friendly. But George is ambitious, and he has Winston [Churchill] now at his side in the Cabinet. They are two restless minds, and if they cannot carry the Cabinet with them, they are capable of playing the part of Chamberlain in the Gladstone Cabinet of 1880-5.

Since February, Sam Evans has been Solicitor General. Lawson Walton died on the day the Government lost Mid-Devon. It was a fortunate coincidence – for Sam. Campbell-Bannerman dared not risk a by-election at Reading, and Rufus Isaacs, the leader of the English Bar, was passed over. When Asquith reconstructed the Ministry, it was freely rumoured that Sam would take a judgeship. But he is still Solicitor-General, doing all the legal work, and raking in all the fees!<sup>48</sup>

The story of his appointment makes a fine bit of comedy. Walton died on a Saturday. The following week not much could openly be done, till after the funeral on Wednesday. Alfred Thomas and Mabon called on Whiteley, the Chief Whip, on Sam's behalf. Whiteley referred them to George. They went. George told them that if Sam wanted his help, he must come himself and ask for it. Sam waited upon the great man at the Board of Trade, - I happened to telephone to George just at the time when Sam was in the ante-room. Sam spoke of this being his only chance, and called upon George to help a fellow-Welshman. George promised. This was on Wednesday. On Thursday George went down to Cardiff to receive the freedom. On

Saturday he returned. On Sunday I lunched with him at Henry's house. He had not been down to see Campbell-Bannerman, but he went on being reminded of his promise by me. On Monday Sam's appointment was announced. Since then, I have heard both Sam and Lady Evans say that he had never asked Lloyd George to help him, but that Campbell-Bannerman had spontaneously written to him on the day of Lawson Walton's funeral offering him the post.<sup>49</sup>

I have to record one little personal disappointment. Upon Sam's promotion I applied for the Recordship of Swansea. I was passed over in favour of Lloyd Morgan, on the ground of seniority in Parliament and at the Bar. The disappointment was not severe, though had I received the post it would have meant much for me on Circuit. Still, my practice is now so satisfactory that I can afford to wait.

#### **4 August 1908**

The Parliamentary Session has been adjourned till October 12.

Though Asquith has more than maintained his hold over his followers and the House, there are not wanting signs of gradual disintegration in the Cabinet itself. The third Session is supposed to be the critical one. The crisis is likely to be accentuated by a reconstruction of the Ministry. That cannot be said to be quite true in the case of the present Parliament. There was some grumbling at the promotion of Masterman, (due, I am told, to the nomination of the Labour party) and of young Acland. 'Tommy' Lough has never forgiven the Government for dispensing with his services, and on at least two occasions he has organized a revolt against the Government.<sup>42</sup> But, on the whole, the House has been curiously inert, if not obedient, and the Government's majority is as solid as ever. Indeed, George's complaint to me is that the Radicals are not insistent enough on economy.

But things are not going quite smoothly, I fancy, in the Cabinet itself. From hints that have been dropped to me, George and Winston seem to have made an alliance in favour of economy. Haldane, backed by Grey, and I suppose McKenna, want more armaments. George told me last week that Grey had recently asked him to lunch to meet Metternich, the German ambassador. George told the ambassador that if it came to a question of competition in shipbuilding, he would not hesitate to advise this country to borrow 100 millions, if needs be, for national defence. But, he added, he hoped such competition should and could be avoided. The ambassador told him things which showed that Grey had been too pro-French. Grey, it seems, reported the conversation to the King, and the King was well-pleased – so George was afterwards told by Mrs Keppel!

There is no doubt that this anti-military activity on the part of George and Winston hasten the signal for a very venomous campaign against them by the military party, though George believes that none of his colleagues is party to the manoeuvres. The Lobby has for weeks been ringing with vague and indefinite rumours about some scandal in which George is involved. The name of Mrs H., the wife of an English MP, is prominent. Last week the culmination was reached when the *Bystander*, an illustrated weekly, boldly announced that Lloyd George was 'in difficulties'. They actually mentioned his name, though not the lady's. George came to see me on Saturday before going off to Germany. I advised him to take no notice: but on second thoughts I rather repented of having done so. Yesterday I received a pathetic letter from him from Amiens. I wrote him a long reply, advising him I had seen Rhys Roberts, his partner, on Sunday, and had given it as my opinion that the paragraph was grossly libellous, unjustifiable, and would be withdrawn if the paper were threatened with an action. I advised Rhys Roberts to see Robson, the Attorney-



General. He did so yesterday, and Robson's advice was identical with mine. It is a very cruel and caddish thing to do, but it may 'clear the air'.

### 14 September 1908

I came back from my holidays last week and breakfasted with Lloyd George on Friday and Saturday at 11 Downing Street, the latter day with my wife. I had seen him the previous week at the Llangollen Eisteddfod. We had been corresponding regularly while he was in Germany, mainly about the libel. I urged him to take action. Robson, it seems, had advised against it. So had Rufus Isaacs, F. E. Smith, Sir George Lewis, and Winston. Under the circumstances, I advised George to take their advice and reject mine, though I had to admit that my opinion was more confirmed day by day.

Last Thursday George suddenly arrived at my house – 10.30, just when I was starting for bed. He had found that Sir Luke Fildes who is painting his portrait was a director of the Graphic Company which owns the *Bystander*. Fildes wanted an appointment. George refused because of his connection with the *Graphic*. Fildes then offered to see the manager, Carmichael Thomas, and the result was a humble offer of apology. Next morning, when I saw George, he was very 'cock-a-hoop', and for the first time since his dazzling success, his talk somewhat jarred on me. Asquith and he had been getting on famously, he said. So had Grey. His incursion into the naval armaments question while in Germany had in no way impaired their relations. Grey knew of it from the start, - indeed, it was at his invitation he had seen the German ambassador. Asquith had written him a 'charming' letter on his return. He was now in the inner circle. When he was at Criccieth the previous week, a foreign dispatch had been sent him from the Foreign Office, marked by Grey 'to be seen only by Asquith and George'. He boasted of the power of a Chancellor. All had to come to him. If he was a strong man, he could influence the whole policy of the Government in all directions. 'You will be able to say better next year whether I am a strong man or not'. He disclaimed wide ambitions. Sufficient for him to attain immediate success in his own department. 'Winston is different. He has made up his mind definitely to become Prime Minister. If that came my way, I should not refuse. But all I seek is to be master in my own house, - not to be interfered with in my own department'. I asked him how Asquith compared in this regard with Campbell-Bannerman. He said he interfered more than Campbell-Bannerman – a good deal more – though not with him. He instanced John Burns. 'What is John doing', I asked. 'Nothing!' was the laughing reply. 'But John is a strong man, - a stronger man than Asquith. Asquith is not strong enough to say, "This must be done, or – out you go". John is a strong man'. The only three in the Cabinet that counted were Grey, Winston, and himself, - with, of course, Asquith, but Asquith simply because of his office and his Parliamentary ability. 'He is like Balfour, with no personal following outside, but indispensable because of his prowess in debate. Long would make a better Tory leader outside the House than Balfour'. Of Winston he spoke with much admiration and even affection, - and yet with an undercurrent of contempt. They had been together at the Eisteddfod, but he had taken hardly no notice of Mrs George, and as for little Megan, he never gave her his hand or asked, 'Is this your little daughter?'

On Saturday he was full of the 'bachelor dinner' that Winston had given the night before to the Bishop of St Asaph (who performed the marriage ceremony Saturday afternoon), Hugh Cecil, Fred Smith, and George. The conversation was mostly about the Atonement! Hugh Cecil, he said, gave a far more liberal explanation

than George had expected. 'That is not the view I was taught', said George. 'No', replied Hugh Cecil, 'that was not the side of the truth that was emphasised then'. 'He is an ecclesiastic', commented George. 'I came home with the Bishop. Suddenly the Bishop stopped in the middle of the street and laughed aloud. 'Just fancy', he said, 'you and I coming up from Wales to hear a discussion on the Atonement!'. I asked if Winston had taken part. 'Taken part?' retorted George. 'Conversation is impossible when Winston is about. He runs along talking about everything and everybody. It becomes a monologue. He came to see me yesterday afternoon. Bryce had just come in – he is returning today to America – and we were settling down to a confidential 'crack' – two old pro-Boers. But Winston spoilt it all. Bryce would not trust him, and Winston talked for three mortal hours with amazing energy. But I lost my chat with Bryce'.

We were joined by an ex-MP named Chance. We began talking of the Catholic Procession which took place yesterday. Evidently it had been talked about at Winston's dinner. George was indignant at the 'intolerance' of English Protestants. 'Why, I said last night that the procession could take place in Carnarvon without danger, and the Bishop agreed'. 'Yes', I said, 'but Wales's history is different from England's. She has not had to fight for her independence of the Pope. England has done that for her. There has been no papal legate here since James II. Fifty years ago Vannutelli's reception would have been impossible. He is quietly and courteously received. Is not that evidence of our progress in toleration? Remember that what is objected to is the elevation of the Host in the public streets, - a thing forbidden by the Roman Catholic Act of 1829'. George made some demur, and Chance broke in quietly, 'I am an ardent Catholic myself, and I confess I consider the procession under the circumstances an unpardonable blunder'.

Before leaving I learnt why Chance called. He is 'hard-up', and had represented his case to George. With his usual kindness George had provided a job for him. He was to go to Belgium and study for three weeks their Justice and Old Age Pensions' Scheme, and report to the Treasury. It was a pleasure to see how Chance's face lit-up, and it was good of George not to wait till the poor man asked if there was anything for him.

I asked George how the Budget was getting on. 'I am busy at it. No more make-shift Budgets for me, and talks of nest-eggs! The last was a perfectly cruel and monstrous Budget. I don't blame Asquith – he was rushed into it. But the idea of taking away half the sugar tax, - and the nest-egg! – It was McKenna and Runciman that rushed him. Runciman out of loyalty perhaps, but McKenna, I am sure, wanted to make my position uncomfortable. He wanted the job himself, and at Nice last January he spoke of Asquith not lasting five years, and then -! My heavens, I could hardly believe my senses! McKenna!!

## **8 February 1909**

Once more I have allowed months to pass without an entry. The political situation has greatly changed. The Licensing Bill of the Government was thrown out by the Lords, and a great number of Radicals are clamouring for an early dissolution. One Sunday early last December I went to see George to urge upon him one of two alternative policies: either

- (1) Welsh Disestablishment should be included in the Government's programme for next Session: or
- (2) Dissolution in March or April.

I found him averse to both, but the following Sunday he asked me to supper at 11 Downing Street to meet Whitley and Neil Lewis, the Liberal Whips. I had to roar as loudly as I could and George finished up by startling them with the remark, 'If there is no Welsh Disestablishment, I shall have to resign in order to defend the Government's action from the outside and to keep Wales quiet'.

Last Thursday I dined with George and T. P. O'Connor at Galli's. A change had come over the spirit of the dream. Welsh Disestablishment was definitely in the King's Speech. The King's only adverse comment on the draft of the speech to Asquith was: 'I am against Welsh Disestablishment *unless the Nonconformists are in a majority*'. 'Crude, but shrewd' was George's comment to me. (T.P. was not told.) He might have added 'and ignorant'. George sent for Vaughan Williams's draft report, and sent the figures gathered by the Commission, showing a majority of three to one. 'Absolutely justified the appointment of the Commission', said George. T. P. said that if Parnell had lived he would have beaten the Irish 'rebels'. He took a pessimistic view of the prospects of Home Rule, and even seemed to acquiesce in Welsh Disestablishment being put in front of Irish Land next session.

Yesterday I spent with George at his Brighton house, placed at his disposal by Rendel. He talked much more freely than usual. Serious differences in the Cabinet over army and navy expenditure. For economy stand Lloyd George, Winston, Lord Morley, John Burns and Buxton. The Lord Chancellor backs them feebly, and Harcourt uncertainly. Gladstone says not a word. Cabinet has not divided on the question yet, though George talked of reviving the old Gladstonian practice of the early eighties. He told me that Morley had said to Asquith that he, Lloyd George and Winston were ready, if necessary, to resign as a protest. Asquith only threw up his hands in despair. We travelled back by the 5 train. Winston was in Downing Street when I called later with a memorandum which he was going to submit to the Cabinet tomorrow. He was much more affable than he has ever been to me before – evidently 'playing up' to the private members. He seems determined to carry out his protest even to the point of resignation, and George and Morley, I believe, will follow him, though not John Burns or Buxton. The Admirals are trying to hold the Government up. Lloyd George claimed to have discovered a policy which would divide the Big Navy School and enable him to win. He told me that when he explained it to Winston a week earlier, Winston was delighted and envious! They both asked me how many men were on Macdonald's committee on armaments. I said I thought 120.

The fiscal position is serious. Lloyd George said that the deficit would be more like £18,000,000. Asquith was a short-sighted financier. All his predictions falsified: his redirection of tea and sugar duty stand in the circumstances. His Budget scheme is ready, and about to be submitted to cabinet. The Big navy men are supporting it, except McKenna, who has said he will reduce the Taxation of Land Values to nothing. The Big Navy men are Asquith (the worst of all, in George's opinion), Grey (the most immovable), Haldane (fons et aigo), McKenna. George is torn between the natural desire to introduce Budget, and aversion to big expenditure.

The Budget speech will take five or six hours to deliver. The exposition of the financial situation and will take one and a half hours, and there are so many new sources of taxation that it is impossible to do it in less than five hours. Asquith has already been acquainted with the scheme. He told Montague, his private secretary, - so George said - that George had shown great sagacity and resourcefulness. George said he was going to prepare his speech at once, though the Budget is not due before April 4 or 5. All the Treasury officials, he said, were against him - Murray especially

– but he seems to get on with Sir R. Chalmers.<sup>51</sup> I told him that Chalmers had said of him to Warren of Magdalen that he was the quickest-witted he had ever served under, though he did not read minutes &c. Asquith quite approved of this practice, said George, for he told somebody that ‘this was George’s way of doing business; he picked the brains of those who *knew*, and then with his sagacity selected the best course.

George further told me that he was suing *The People* for libel, similar to that of the *Bystander*. He had received £150 from a South African paper. George Lewis is acting for him.<sup>52</sup>

On our way home I told him that I would not apply for a County Court judgeship in Wales, even if it became vacant. He seemed aghast at the very suggestion and said that I should not *think* of accepting anything under a puisne judgeship. Of course not now: but that I should take silk in three years or so, and after another five years, he (George) would insist on my being appointed if I wanted it. But this is in the far and distant future.

He talked much of little Mair, and said that he and his wife had been crying about her that morning. But time and work are having their effect, though his grief is far more poignant still than I expected it to be.

## **6 April 1909**

Last Sunday morning I received a telegram from Lloyd George at Brighton saying he was coming to see me at 6.30 that night. He came, full of troubles, and down in the mouth over everything. He seems to feel his defeat over the Big Navy question intensely, and from what he said I gathered that Winston, Morley, and he had been on the point of resigning at one time. He gave me to understand that Asquith had gone too far in his famous speech a fortnight ago on the Navy Estimates, and there is no doubt that the scare which has resulted has been largely attributable to the alarmist note in that speech. ‘In order to triumph over the economists in his own party’, somewhat bitterly said George, ‘he has raised a scare which may break up his Government’. Grey seems to be the most ‘dour’ of the Big Navy Men. He is obsessed, according to George, with fear of Germany. Everything the Germans do he views with suspicion, and he will not accept their explanation however frank and reasonable it may be. Asquith backs him up strongly, and though Lloyd George succeeded in getting the decision as to laying down four additional Dreadnoughts put off till July, he is by no means certain that he can stave off defeat. For the present he has succeeded. The Budget is to be introduced after Easter – probably on the 26<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>. If – as George is confident – it is going to be a big success, his position will be materially strengthened, both in the House and in the country, and he may be able to hold his own. Grey has been talking or hinting at the formation of a Moderate Party, and last week *Punch*, following the lead of the Tory journals, openly advocated the dropping of Winston and Lloyd George. At present I fear the Radicals are having the worst of it in the Cabinet. ‘It is becoming a Liberal Imperial Government’, said George, and things are tending towards a break-up. If Winston and George resigned just now, the Government would still be strong enough to go on.

Last night I dined at Downing Street. George had just come from a meeting of the Cabinet. Piecing together what he told me on Sunday and last night it would appear that things are in a bad way. McKenna, Runciman, and Harcourt have been opposing the Budget proposals strenuously and consistently. Yesterday for the first time Grey joined them. Asquith however is firm and loyal to his Chancellor. Haldane is silent. John Burns, though he counts for little, has not been helpful.

Sinclair evidently had a brush with George yesterday, and I gathered that George had treated him with scant ceremony. Morley does not like George's proposals, but he backs an old pro-Boer. Loreburn, Lord Chancellor, is feeble but well disposed.<sup>53</sup>

Grey, said George, though a strong and obstinate man, is not a good fighter. 'I had a skirmish with him some time ago over the Navy, and I hit out with such effect that he never spoke for six Cabinets'. But the opposition is becoming formidable and is gathering strength. I shall treat a good many matters as settled, though McKenna wants to treat everything as open. The Liberal Imperialists are beginning to see that if I get a good Budget I may spoil their game, and they are determined to spoil mine'. He spoke quite calmly of retiring from the Government in July, 'I can reckon on Wales, on the Labour party, and on the Irish. Dillon has intimated that he is only awaiting a signal from me and Winston'. Wales however is his stand-by, and that is good for Disestablishment. Yesterday it was decided unanimously at the Cabinet that the Bill would be introduced on the 21<sup>st</sup> by Asquith. There is no chance of its going through this Session, but it will get a second reading, and a hanging-up resolution will be carried. I asked what would become of Free Trade if the Government broke up. 'I care more for many things than Free Trade' was the reply. After a pause, 'for Welsh Disestablishment'. He then declaimed against militarism and said that the Liberals would have to sacrifice in the cause of international good-will. I agreed, but pointed out that a Protectionist Empire would be a standing menace to [the] peace of the world. Grey, according to George, is determined to drive the pro-Boers out, but Asquith 'who is a greater man' sees the folly of smashing up his party. 'Grey is a stolid, unimaginative Saxon. He was wrong over the Boer War; he is wrong now. He has an impressive manner, and the appearance of weight and wisdom. And that is all'. Rosebery was the only one of the Liberal Imperialists who showed any real insight at the time of the War.

Incidentally he criticised his predecessors at the Exchequer. Hicks, Beach, Ritchie, and Austen had left no tradition behind them. Harcourt had done one big thing over the death duties. Goschen had converted the debt – a considerable task, though, as events proved, it was a mistake. Gladstone was a great administrator, and he had, with skill, eloquence, and success, carried to its end the financial policy of Peel. But he had shown little or no initiative. His first Budget, which is still acclaimed as a great success, was in reality a failure. He had tried to abolish the Income Tax. He had failed, and it was lucky he had. He proved that no differentiation below earned and unearned incomes was possible: but events had shown he was wrong. 'The thing has been done, and no one at the Treasury would dream of going back upon it'. Peel was the greatest financier of England. He had only been four months at the Treasury, and yet he had revolutionised our whole scheme of raising revenue. 'He had advocated and carried out – and he a Tory! – the transference of taxation from trade to property'. It was quite a mistake to think that his conversion to Free Trade was sudden. He had been making for it for years. Pitt was the only financier who could be compared with Peel.

Only one note of diffidence. 'I wish I had had to bring in a humdrum Budget at the end of my first year at the Treasury. I haven't quite got the hang of the thing yet. I have changed my proposals a dozen times. I think my Budget will be good, but in another year I could have made quite certain of it'. Today and tomorrow the Budget will have to run the gauntlet of Cabinet criticisms, and then George goes to Dieppe to make his first preparations for his introductory speech.

## 12 July 1909

The Budget has been introduced weeks ago, - it has been three weeks in Committee. Lloyd George's introductory speech was long and tedious – the worst he has ever made in the House.<sup>54</sup> Since then he has greatly improved. He has fought his fight fairly and well, now and again lashing out, but on the whole moderate, courteous, and conciliatory. Not a sign of impatience has escaped him since the Committee stage has been reached, and he has studiously refrained from aggravating or even retorting upon the Opposition. Nevertheless, the Finance Bill makes but little headway. After three weeks in committee, there still remain two sub-clauses of clause 2 to be passed – and there are 75 clauses to the Bill.

Late last night (Sunday), Lloyd George turned up at my house. Though there were others in the room he commenced talking excitedly of the Finance Bill. What should he do? At the present rate of progress, the Bill would not be through before Christmas. That the party could not stand. The alternatives? Guillotine – or reform of procedure. He wanted my opinion. I plumped for the guillotine. People do not know the difference between the guillotine and ordinary closure (*Spectator*, for example). Reform of procedure = limitation of speaker to six, ten minute speeches, and no repetition. Felt this would be fatal, and said so: but George rather enamoured. Asked him what the cabinet would do. 'Oh, they don't like the Budget. In August Balfour, who wants it to pass, will offer to let the Bill through if we drop, say, the undeveloped land tax. Cabinet will want to accept. I'm d \_\_\_\_\_ if I do! Whips are against us – Peace and Fuller, and now they've shoved Partington in'. I told him he was master of the situation. 'I don't know. Asquith will back me over guillotine. So will Samuel. Perhaps Winston. But not Morley, or Grey, or Harcourt'. Asked if he thought the Lords would throw it out. Did not think it likely. Laughed at *Observer* article that morning telling Tories no choice between destruction of Budget and of themselves. 'What fools to say so!'. Went away saying if he resigned only Masterman would follow suit!

## 29 July 1909

Last Sunday fortnight Lloyd George again called at my house in Church Street on his way from his usual interview with Chalmers over the Budget. As his cab was waiting outside he did not enter into explanations, but asked me to come to breakfast next morning at Downing Street. I went. He wanted to have my view as to guillotine – whether the party would stand it. I said 'no'. I had been making inquiries and had found almost unanimous feeling against it. He said, 'Speaker wants it: Balfour really does not object'. I said our fellows were strong against it. 'But will they stick to it in August and September – all night sittings and all?'. I said I thought they would.

He then went on to complain of Whips. Pease had been called in the previous Wednesday to advise the Cabinet on another matter.<sup>55</sup> He volunteered the statement that the land clauses were so unpopular that the party would not remain in town [?] to vote for them. Grey then started a discussion about dropping them or a portion of them. Lloyd George said, 'If you drop them, you drop me'. 'I had a devil of a time', he added, 'I don't think a single member of the Cabinet, with the possible exception of Winston, would resign with me. Masterman perhaps outside the Cabinet would do so'. I told him the party would be shattered if he resigned, and that therefore he held a very strong position. This soothed him, which probably was all he wanted. He said that Grey had made up his mind that this should be a Liberal Imperial Government and that the eight Dreadnoughts would have to be laid down. I said, 'No one bothers

about Dreadnoughts now', and I thought he heaved a sigh of relief. Evidently there has been another tussle in the Cabinet, and George has had to give way.

### 13 September 1909 (Monday)

I returned last night after two days at Brighton with Lloyd George. The house is now quite charming, and the life in it almost ideal. There is no pomp or ceremony – the man in livery is gone. Only Mrs George, Megan and her nurse, Lloyd George, Neli and I, and all very quiet and simple.

On Saturday morning we (i.e. George, Villiers and the Chief Constable) went to the links, where T. P. O'Connor joined us, and was very amusing at lunch. Dillon and T. P. came on to dinner. Lloyd George was in great form. He had been interviewed by the [*News*] *Chronicle* on Rosebery's Glasgow speech. He had thought and puzzled over it, but had only been able to supply some commonplace comments. On the links however he called it a 'soft-nosed torpedo', and was as pleased with it as a hen after laying an egg! He told T. P. of it. 'It is great, Lloyd, me bhoy', said T. P. 'Don't shpoil it, now, by adding a wurrd. It'll smash the dhivil!'. And he laughed heartily. George was delighted with T. P.'s appreciation. It was only when, an hour or two later, T. P. spoke of a 'flat-nosed torpedo' that George's satisfaction began to fade!

Dillon had come to see George about certain concessions to Ireland over the licensing clauses. It seems that one of George's pledges was misconstrued by Herbert Samuel who had been left in charge of the Budget last week.<sup>56</sup> Tim had rasped out, and Dillon feared a serious situation might arise in Ireland. On Sunday morning Dillon and George went out for a walk on the cliff towards Rottingdean, T. P. and I following at a distance, discussing theology! I think the breach was healed.

George was 'down' on Herbert Samuel, as indeed the others were as well. An amendment had been put down in the Chancellor's name during his absence from town, which would have enabled grocers to sell 'small bottles'. There was an instant outcry. George saw it for the first time when he was on board Lipton's yacht. When he came back to town he discovered it was Samuel's fault, though the draughtsman was blamed. George put the draftsman right in the House, and took full responsibility himself. He half expected that Samuel would then get up and explain the inadvertence. But he sat mum all the time to George's great chagrin.

Last night we dined at Galli, and he talked very freely. He is very proud of the Limehouse speech, and of the effect it has produced. One and a half million copies of it have been sold. It impressed Lord Northcliffe, who told him that if they had known the sort of speech it was going to be, they would have given it verbatim in the *Mail*. The following week he put in a two-column article in the *Mail* cracking up the Budget. Grey, he said, was seriously disturbed by the speech, and told somebody – Winston, I think – that if more speeches of that sort were delivered there would be a split in the Cabinet. The King also wrote to George about it, and George wrote a reasonable defence, which elicited a very kindly reply. He had explained its provisions beforehand to the King. He told him that he could not tax tea and sugar, because they were used by the very poor. 'Quite right, quite right', said the King, 'you should not tax the poor'. George's estimate of the King is changing. He now speaks of him as 'a pretty big man, who has a real kind heart. If I could have his ear oftener, he would be all right. But Lady Saville says this to him, somebody else something else, and he begins to think the worst. That is where John Burns fails us'. Lately he had also been dining with the Prince of Wales. 'He is not the man his father

is', he said, 'I set myself out to show him that I was not the blatant demagogue I am represented to be, and I think the Prince was genuinely surprised and pleased as well'.

He is convinced of Asquith's loyalty, and repeated that but for him, the Budget would never have been got through the Cabinet. But of other help he had none. 'Sometimes Asquith decided in my favour against the weight of opinion in the Cabinet, e. g. the remission of Income Tax in favour of the fifth child. And yet that is what has never been challenged by anybody, except perhaps Rosebery, who does not understand the lower middle classes'. Runciman and McKenna and Harcourt were the most persistent critics, but there was no man who had the courage to 'bell the cat'. He thought Grey and Haldane were really hostile, but Asquith's support disarmed them. John Burns hated the Budgeteer, and so opposed the Budget. 'There is no one in politics who takes up such a personal stand on all political matters'. The Lord Chancellor was on the whole friendly, and at one point – the increment tax – he was responsible for having it included in this year's Budget instead of next. George wanted valuation first. 'Why wait?' said Loreburn, and it was decided not to wait.

Of the Development Bill George is very proud. The King has been delighted with it, and it is only the beginning of a very big policy. Next year, if George is at the Treasury, he says he means to advance still further. He has already three or four excellent ideas, he said, which were not revolutionary, but would make the Lords squirm. 'Of course', he exclaimed, 'the Budget makes for Socialism. In that Rosebery is quite right'.

Not only were the Cabinet hostile, but the Treasury officials were reluctant. Murray openly decried it; Bradbury [claimed] that it was impossible; Chalmers alone threw himself whole-heartedly into the business. 'The result is – it is, departmentally, Chalmers's triumph. Murray is never consulted. Clarke I offered a job worth £1200 a year. He refused. He wanted to remain with me. I told him I might fall out. He said he would take his chance'.

George was of opinion that there *might* be a speedy election, but he was not sure. 'It is all we could do to get Asquith up to dissolving it if the Lords threw out the Budget. If they don't, Asquith will never do so. He has no courage. But I shall do my best to get him to dissolve anyhow'. He thinks that if we have an election soon the Government will come back with a smaller but still sufficient majority. 'But there will be a split. It is in the second term of office that splits occur. It is quite on the cards that Haldane and Grey may join Balfour to establish a Free Trade Imperialist party. In that case I shall have to draw nearer the Independent Labour Party and the Irish. Winston is perfectly frank with me. He will go with me as far as he agrees to, but he will join another combination when it suits him – after giving me due warning'.

He told me that Sir Ernest Cassel came to see him about the Budget, to which of course he is opposed. 'You were hard on Rothschild', he said, 'but I could not help laughing'. 'If Rothschild', said George, 'had come to me, I should have gone out of my way to try and meet his objections. But once he appeared on a political platform, his influence was gone. He has ceased to be the financial adviser of Governments. You, Sir Ernest, are different. You have not associated yourself publicly with party. I'll do the utmost I can to meet you'. And Sir Ernest went away with the ambition fired of being Rothschild's successor as confidential financial adviser of the Government. 'He is a strong, coarse Jew' was George's comment on him.<sup>57</sup>



### 13 September 1909

**P. S.** Speaking of the possibility of a split, George spoke somewhat bitterly of Grey's foreign policy. 'He simply carries out Harding's instructions', he said. 'He has really failed – failed to bring about a genuine friendship with Russia, to reform the Congo, to arrange matters in Macedonia, to bring about better relations with Germany. Germany has given us numerous chances during the last twelve months. We have availed ourselves of none of them. Why should we help France to steal Morocco? Then the King loathes the Germans – I fancy the Kaiser must have behaved badly to him when he was Prince of Wales. The result is that we have to spend millions on Dreadnoughts which we should devote to social reform. The radicals must back me up next year in the disposal of the surplus'.

### 12 February 1914

Over four years have gone by since I made my last entry. I greatly regret my omission, for the years have been full of incident, and I have been in a position to know much of what was going on behind the scenes. The four years have witnessed one general election, the passing of the Great Budget, the crippling of the power of the Lords by the Parliament Act, the Insurance Act, Home Rule, and Disestablishment. I am all the more sorry that I made no notes at the time as to the various incidents in connection with the Welsh Bill, because I took a somewhat prominent part in the fight, and knew as much as anyone of what was going on.

We have now just entered upon a momentous session, when Home Rule and Disestablishment will automatically become law in June next under the provisions of the Parliament Act. The Tories are furious and desperate; threats of civil war are rife; and the real question is whether we shall have Home Rule by consent or not.

Last Saturday (February 7) I accompanied Lloyd George to Walton Heath. I heard that Sidney Buxton was to succeed Lord Gladstone in South Africa, that Samuel was to go to the Local Government Board, Burns to the Board of Trade, and that Masterman was to join the cabinet. We found Masterman and Mcnamara [*recte* Macnamara] playing golf – the latter went home with Lloyd George to tea, and I concluded that he was likely to succeed Masterman as Financial Secretary to the Treasury. I was told that T. P. [O'Connor] and Dillon were going to stay the night with George, so I returned with Ellis Griffith in Sir George Riddell's car.

On Sunday went to Downing Street. Accompanied Mrs Lloyd George to Jewin [Chapel] to hear [John Williams], Brynsiencyn, and returned to supper at Downing Street.<sup>58</sup> Had a chat with George. He is full of the Irish problem, and evidently working hard for the temporary exclusion of Ulster. He says the King is working and pressing for a compromise. Something must be done. I felt aghast at his proposal, and asked 'What do the Irish leaders say?'. 'I talked to T. P. [O'Connor] and Dillon last night', he said, 'till 11.30, and I think I made an impression on them. Of course the real difficulty is Devlin. I quite appreciate his position. He can't throw over his friends in Belfast, but on the other hand the difficulty is pressing. T. P. and Redmond are coming here tonight at 9.30. I wanted to have Birrell here as well: but they would not have him. It makes it awkward for me, but there it is'. Later on, after Redmond and T. P. had left at 11 o'clock, I found George jubilant. 'Is it all right?', I asked. 'Yes: we have had a most satisfactory interview', said he, with a gleam of triumph in his eye. He may win over the leaders. But what of the rank and file in Ireland? What of the Catholics of Ulster?<sup>59</sup>

On Tuesday (February 10) Parliament met, and the first two days were taken up with a debate on Long's amendment calling for an immediate General Election.

The Prime Minister's speech was to me most depressing. Walter Long had talked rank treason for forty-five minutes, but the Prime Minister said no word of protest or rebuke. He promised to *initiate* proposals for a peaceful settlement of the Irish question. He was listened to, almost in silence, by his own side, though the Tories were also uneasy. Yesterday Carson delivered one of the most powerful speeches I have heard in the House – a great utterance, though marred by one or two acrid touches. Still, he seized on the weakness of our position – a weakness caused entirely by our own surrender of the impregnable position which we occupied last week – with a skill of a superb advocate. He showed us no mercy, though in his most significant passage he appealed to his fellow-countryman – Redmond – to win and not to force Ulster. Lloyd George and Bonar Law wound up the debate. It became clear that George had had his way, and that a settlement is going to be attempted on the lines of the exclusion of the four countries of North East Ulster.<sup>60</sup>

I asked Dillon what he thought of the situation. He was cautious, but the impression left on my mind was that the Irish leaders would not object, if they could get their followers to do so. Indeed, Dillon acknowledged that he had been won over by the representatives of Lloyd George. For my own part, I view the situation with regret and apprehension. George's amazing luck may come to his rescue once more, but his policy seems to me to be disastrous. He reckons without the rank and file in both countries, who have been taught to look on Ireland as 'one and indivisible'. Will the Nationalists of Ireland forswear their old ideal of 'Ireland a Nation'? I can hardly believe it. If they do, I shall confess that I have been grossly deceived as to the meaning and purpose of the Nationalist movement. And if – as I think – the exclusion of Ulster be impossible, what remains? The Government will have given up their strong position for nothing, and they lack the moral sanction for the coercion – if needs be – of Ulster.

### 15 February 1914

Yesterday I motored to Walton Heath with Lloyd George, the Lord Chief [Justice], and [Robert] Donald of the [News] *Chronicle*.<sup>61</sup> On the way down we discussed only the Irish situation. G. was plainly uneasy, though trying to appear confident and cheerful. He was wrath with Donald for an article in Friday's *Chronicle*, and he became snappish when I told him that in my view the exclusion of Ulster was impossible. I had had a long talk with T. P. [O'Connor] the previous day. T. P. was portentous with Cabinet and other secrets. The King, he said, was pressing hard for a settlement. Asquith had offered the following terms of 'Home Rule within Home Rule' to Bonar Law:

1. Ulster to have control of police
2. control of education
3. patronage
4. right of veto of fiscal legislation which affected herself.

The Tories had rejected these terms, which in T. P.'s view were worse than the exclusion of Ulster. I don't agree, with the possible exception of 4. T. P., like Dillon, said that he was keeping an open mind over exclusion, but I told him roundly that I did not believe he would ever be able to carry an Irish Convention. He was rather staggered by this blatant remark, and then he asked Mond and me if we could not get a hundred or more 'stalwarts' to petition the Prime Minister not to alter the Bill. 'It isn't our business', retorted Mond, 'What is good enough for the Irish is good enough for us'.<sup>62</sup> I told Lloyd George this, and he was much put out, and referred to it several times. He was rather angry with me at first for saying that at present everybody was under the

impression that the Government did not regard the inclusion of Ulster as 'fundamental'. If therefore the Government did not propose exclusion, the Tories would assert that it was not done owing to the dictation of the Irish. Even if the Bill therefore became law, what sanction would the Government have for the coercion of Ulster? The action of the Government made an early appeal to the country imperative – at least before the Home Rule Act was put into operation. The Lord Chief [Justice] agreed, and stated that the Government could by an Order in Council delay the operation of the Act for twelve months. Suppose therefore the Session ended in August, the Act need not be enforced before the following August, which would enable the Government to pass Plural Voting and have the election in June 1915. Lloyd George listened attentively but said nothing. It was clear however that he looked upon this as a way of escape in the last resort. He told me several times that matters were very critical, that the 'Old Man' – as Asquith is called – is very nervy, and if he is discouraged, is quite capable of chucking up the sponge. T. P. said that the Old Man had offered terms to Bonar Law without consulting anyone, and that George did not even know till sometime afterwards that he had done so. George himself told me that last Monday he had had his first and only 'stand up fight' with the Prime Minister in the Cabinet. Asquith wanted to publish the whole of the terms he was prepared to offer on Tuesday. He was supported by the whole of the Cabinet except George, McKenna and Samuel. George insisted, and he shook Winston and Grey. The Prime Minister then said that as the Cabinet was not united he would not persist. George told McKenna, whom we met in the golf house with his wife and Archibald Williamson, that the Prime Minister was not convinced that the right tactics had been adopted, and was very pleased he had given way. So were all the rest, except Harcourt. The more one hears of what is going on behind the scenes the more hopeless the situation seems to become. Plot and counter-plot, intrigue and manoeuvring for position, are the daily tasks of Ministers, and there is grave danger that the Government will die, as the last Tory Government did, of 'too much tactics'. I could not help envying the serene detachment of the Lord Chief [Justice], who was as simple and unaffected as ever, and though he professed to regret the House of Commons, I could not help feeling that he greatly enjoyed his new position.

### **18 February 1914**

On Monday last the Welsh Disestablishment Bill came on for discussion in an amendment to the Address. Lloyd George on Saturday had told me I ought to speak – indeed, he put it out of the question that I should not do so. I read up the old debates on Sunday and Monday, and I was surprised to discover how little I had known the real story of the Parliamentary fortunes of the Bill. I feel great regret now that I did not make entries here of the details of the fight when the Bill was in Committee in 1912-13, for I took a somewhat prominent part in the discussions. I drifted into such discussions, for I had no idea at first of doing anything of the sort. And when I found myself in the thick of it, I never thought of looking up the past debates. Now that I have done so I realise how much better I would have done if I had known the real position. It is only another lesson to prove the necessity of being in constant and intimate touch with events if one wishes for a Parliamentary career. In fact, it is next to impossible for a professional man to keep *au fait* with all that is going on.

On Monday the debate was languid and satisfactory, and I felt increasingly that I could not take part. Balfour got up about 6.15, and it was evident that he was going to be the last speaker on the Tory side. I asked Brynmor to find out if Ellis Griffith, who was busily taking notes, was going to reply. The answer was that he

was. I thereupon tore up my notes, and took no further interest in the debate from the personal point of view. Balfour spoke for less than twenty minutes. When he sat down, to my astonishment Ellis Griffith did not get up. I thereupon rose, and to my consternation the Speaker called upon me. I have never felt so nervous in my life before either in or out of the House. I have read the account of my maiden speech nearly eight years ago, and I can find no trace in that account of the acute misery which I experienced on Monday. First of all, there was the sense of following Balfour, who had been at his best and airiest. And, secondly, there was the consciousness that I had made some successful speeches last year which I had to live up to. My throat was parched and my tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my mouth. I was uneasily conscious that I was palpably and painfully nervous: but I went on. Since then I have been assured on all hands that it was the best speech I have ever made in the House – which it wasn't – and no one seems to have detected that I was at all nervous. My friends praised the way in which I replied to Balfour point by point: but when I think of what I *might* have said and did *not* say, I am filled with remorse.

As to Home Rule, we are still marking time. A great deal will depend on the results of the four or five by-elections which are raging.

### **9 August 1914**

I much regret that I have not written down from day to day my record of this momentous Session, which is destined to be the last Liberal Session in which I shall be engaged. For now war has broken out between this country and Germany. A war is the negation of Liberalism. *Inter arma silent leges*. Already the Government has become autocratic. No discussion is possible in Parliament. The Government remain in power with the support of Tory votes. Today the *Observer*, which a short time ago called the Cabinet a collection of criminals, describes Asquith, Grey, Kitchener, Churchill, and George the greatest group of statesmen that has ever guided the destinies of this country.

Last Monday Grey made a memorable speech in the House. It was in effect a declaration of war against Germany, and the Government's *apologia*. The two immediate causes were said to be:

(1) The French fleet was kept in the Mediterranean because she relied on the friendship of England, and consequently the northern coast of France was exposed to the attack of the German navy.

But Grey also stated a. that it was expressly understood under the *entente* that the disposition of the respective fleets did not imply any obligation on the part of either power, to come to the armed support of the other in case of war; and b. Germany had expressed her willingness to respect the coast towns of France if we remained neutral.

(2) Germany would not guarantee the neutrality of Belgium.

I took part in the debate, and asked why the Government did not approach Germany and *offer* our neutrality if these two points were conceded.

Lloyd George called me down to speak to him after I had finished (he was on the Front Bench while I spoke). He said

'It's curious you should have raised the point for it's the very thing I pressed at the Cabinet and carried by a 2/3 rds majority. If Germany had accepted, we should be kept out of the war'.

I said I could not understand why Germany was so mad as to refuse.

He replied that the Berlin people had completely lost their heads.

With that I was satisfied, and thought the statement would be borne out by the dispatches in the White Paper.

Tuesday night I met John Burns at the National Liberal Club and we taxid home together. He told me that he had resigned, and so had Morley and Trevelyan. He was under the impression that Beauchamp would also go, and he said that Simon had resigned on the Sunday.<sup>63</sup> 'I nearly got them all round to non-intervention. Lloyd George told me afterwards that he had been very much touched by my arguments. I received today charming letters from Haldane and Asquith. I am sorry for Asquith, and wish I could take a little of the weight off his shoulders. But he has allowed himself to be dragged along by Winston'. As we parked, he said that he had read my speech, and agreed with every word of it. I thought it curious, if Lloyd George's story to me was true.

On Thursday Asquith made what is called a great speech in the House. For my own part it left me utterly cold. Its passion was forced, he shouted like an Old Bailey advocate, and he was more concerned to inflame passion against Germany than to put the case fairly before the country. We heard nothing from him about the French navy being left in the Mediterranean &c, but his points were:

(1) Germany's refusal to respect the neutrality of Belgium. (See No. 85 in the White Paper, the despatch of Sir Edward Goschen July 29.14 containing his report of his fateful interview with Bethmann-Hollnegg).

(2) Germany's proposal to annex the colonies of France while guaranteeing the integrity of France itself.

The Prime Minister became quite dithyrambic in his denunciation of this 'infamous proposal'. But he quite forgot to tell the country that his proposal was made on Wednesday, July 29, and did *not* lead to a declaration of war by England. He also forgot to relate the story of Germany's proposals on the following Saturday, August 1, as given by Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen in the White Paper (No. 123).

He (the German Ambassador) asked me (Sir Edward Grey) if Germany gave a promise not to violate Belgian neutrality we would engage to remain neutral. I replied that I could not say that \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ I did not think we could give a promise of neutrality on that condition alone.

The Ambassador pressed me as to whether I could not formulate conditions on which we would remain neutral. He even suggested that the integrity of France and her colonies might be guaranteed.

I said that I felt obliged to refuse definitely any promise to remain neutral on similar terms, and I could only say that we must keep our hands free.

The truth is that Grey did his level best to prevent the outbreak of war, but he did not lift a finger to keep us out of it after it had become inevitable. He felt that he *must* go to war in support of France, in spite of his and Asquith's repeated protestations that the country was not committed to any such undertaking. If they were only to tell the country frankly that we *had* to support France, the war would be as popular in this country as it is today. But owing to the insincere declarations of non-entanglement, both Grey and Asquith have had to state the many reasons for this war. The talk about 'the rights of small nationalities' is fudge, and is used to salve the conscience of Lloyd George &c. Small nationalities *may* benefit by our intervention,

as they did in the time of the Napoleonic Wars: but to say that we have gone to war for *them* is all fudge and fustian – I did not speak, though I had prepared some things to say, because the House was in no mood for criticism, but voted £100,000,000 in three minutes!

I issued a manifesto on Friday to my constituents. Lloyd George came up to me while I was having lunch in the House of Commons and I gave him a copy. He hardly glanced at it. His eye caught the words ‘Prince of Peace’. He said jeeringly, ‘Prince of Peace? Well, he has passed a moratorium for the present!’. I refused to join in the laughter that followed. He was on the point of returning the document to me, but thought better of it and put it in his pocket. But I doubt if he’ll glance at it again. So changed is he from the old pro-Boer days! He is now surrounded by flattery and adulation, and is becoming a Society pet like Joe during the Boer War. He likes it, and if he emerges unscathed, he is a bigger man than he promises to be just at present. He is said to be the most Jingo spirit in the Cabinet, and he is certainly the most callous – apparently – or perhaps the right word is ‘gayest’ – occupant of the Treasury Bench.

The funniest – in the literal sense of the term – thing is the behaviour of the Irish. John Redmond on Monday delivered himself of some transparent flapdoodle. He told the Government they could take every British soldier for Ireland, and the Irish would themselves guard their own coasts. The Tories cheered themselves hoarse, and some of them had tears in their eyes. John Redmond has become a popular hero, and it looked as if Home Rule would pass slick through on a surging wave of patriotism. But Caesar had to be reckoned with. John Redwood wanted Asquith to prorogue, not to adjourn, Parliament yesterday. Asquith was willing, but wanted to consult Carson. On Thursday, Asquith, John Redwood and Carson met Joe Devlin that Carson’s language was painful and free. He thumped the table, he cursed and swore, and he ended up by saying that if Home Rule was put on the Statute Book, he would call out the Ulster Volunteers to fight the King’s soldiers. Asquith as usual got frightened, and tomorrow Parliament is to be adjourned for a fortnight and then (presumably) prorogued. To this he has been brought by the united bullying of Irish, Welsh, Labour, and radicals. But we are not out of the wood yet. Tomorrow we are to have a debate on the adjournment, and a whip has been telegraphed to all Radicals to attend. All are asking if Carson and Bonar Law will kick.

On Monday I applied for the Recordership of Cardiff, vacant through the death of B. F. W. I have, since I took silk, divided the work on circuit equally with B. F. and at the last Assizes I did more work than all the rest of the circuit silks put together. I knew that if I spoke against the war, I should imperil my chances, but for that very reason I felt bound to intervene. I should have never forgiven myself if I had not done so. On Friday it was announced in the House that Brynmor had been appointed Recorder, and I had the usual consolatory letter from McKenna.

**March:** I was appointed Recorder of Cardiff.<sup>64</sup>

### **8 August 1915**

It is a year since I have made an entry in this book. All is changed. The Liberal Government is gone, and has given place to a Coalition Government in which the leading spirits are Asquith, Lloyd George, and Balfour. Haldane has gone, and is in acute controversy with Lloyd George. Morley said to Robertson Nicholl about it, ‘It’s a fight between the whale and the sword-fish. I back the sword-fish’. For weeks the Northcliffe press has been running [Lloyd] George and decrying Asquith. Garvin in

the *Observer* plainly intimates that unless Asquith goes in for conscription, he must resign before Parliament meets in October!

Yesterday week, July 31, I went to spend the week-end at Walton Heath with Lloyd George. He has been the centre of extraordinary movements during the last few weeks, and he has become the darling of the conscriptionists. I made two strong speeches in the House against Conscription, the last on Thursday, July 29, in reply to Josiah Wedgwood. The Tories yelled themselves hoarse, and the Radicals were delighted. Massingham in the *Nation* described it as a speech 'of singular power and grace of diction'.<sup>65</sup>

I was evidently brought down to Walton to be talked over. At first I was reasoned with. Did I know the extent of the German casualties? Did I know that Russia had lost 1½ million prisoners, that the French casualties were equal to those of the Central Powers, that Russia had collapsed, and would be of little use for a twelve month, and it, therefore, behoved us to take the bigger part of the burden? I pointed out that this country had done more than either France or Russia: I mentioned the Fleet, the Loan and the 3 million volunteers. I was switched off. 120,000 engineers had joined the colours. I asked how conscription would help that. 'It would stop it for the future'. I replied that surely it could be stopped without conscription. It only wanted a little intelligence on the part of the War Office, and if the War Office could not be trusted, why did we entrust so vast a thing as Conscription to them? Then the inequality of sacrifice was dwelt on – 'here are my two boys with the Colours &c'. I did not retort that the two were on the Staff, and that while others who had joined later were at the front, Dick [Richard Lloyd-George] and Gwil [Gwilym Lloyd-George] were still at home drawing their £300 a year. However George saw that I was dead against conscription and that I was not moved by his arguments. He then assured me that he had never advocated conscription in the Cabinet. I told him that I had been assured to the contrary by Massingham and Gardiner. He roundly stated it was 'a lie', that all he had said in favour of conscription had been said publicly. He added that he was in favour of compelling men to join the Colours for Home Defence so as to relieve others for service overseas, and he was emphatic that the war should end in general disarmament so that conscription with him would only be a temporary war measure.

I put it to him that he had no support that was reliable. Balfour was said to be against it, and Bonar Law would never cordially work with a man who (if Northcliffe had his way) would lead the Tories. Curzon is already, I gather, at daggers-drawn with George, Kitchener is hostile, Grey is not on the old cordial terms, and Simon is an unknown quantity. He was bitter about McKenna. Winston, he said, was the only man who had *welcomed* the war, he thought that the war was his opportunity. He hardly spoke to George during the first few weeks, and in the Cabinet he would pointedly address himself only to Asquith, Kitchener and Grey. Now he is different. He is down on his luck. 'The Dardanelles fiasco has broken him', said George, 'and as Violet Asquith told me, he is like a motor-car at the front door - all the machinery rattling, but he doesn't move. I alone was against sending the naval expedition by itself. Now, he comes to me every day. He is the only member of the Cabinet I see. But how can I trust him?'. I pointed out to him that his backing in the Commons was bad – Dalziel, Mond, Griffith, Markham, Wedgwood, Chiozza-Money &c. 'Pioneers are always a scratch lot' he said. But, I asked, how was he going to succeed. 'By the strength of my own right arm' he replied.

I implored him to be patient, and not to rush things. He was certain of the Premiership within the year, if he waited. He might get it in any case, but if he got it

through the Northcliffe gang, he would break with his old friends, and would be the unhappiest man in the world.

On Sunday morning Annie Kenny, the militant suffragette and a friend, called, and had a long talk with Lloyd George. Presently he introduced me to them. 'OK', said Kenny, 'you are the man that made that *wicked* speech in the House last Thursday'. I said I did not believe, as she did, in force. She began shouting out that the allies were doing more than we were. Lloyd George fled – looking very shame-faced. I said I had not come down to argue, but to have a little rest. And so she went.<sup>66</sup>

Then Northcliffe rang up. He has a cottage at Crowboro and wanted to see Lloyd George. We were due to picnic at Beachy Head with Sir John Murray. We called to see Northcliffe on the way. He had a long talk *solus* with Lloyd George on the lawn in front of the house. When they joined us, Northcliffe said to me, 'That was a perfectly wicked speech of yours'. I said, 'I begin to think it was good, for you say the same thing of it as the suffragettes'. 'I see' said Northcliffe looking at Lloyd George. 'that he wants converting'. 'Yes', said George looking very uneasy 'a great deal of converting'.<sup>67</sup>

That night we again had a long talk. I thought George was more reasonable, not so jumpy. He was evidently ashamed of Northcliffe and asked me not to mention the call. I wonder how far he has committed himself. I fear he has gone too far to recede. Mrs Lloyd George told my wife that he was vexing lest I might so far commit myself as to stop my career and chance of a judgeship. In any case she hoped nothing would interfere with our friendship &c.

On Tuesday I went to the Eisteddfod at Bangor, where I presided on Wednesday. Lloyd George came on Thursday and had a magnificent reception. His coming made a difference of £500 to the takings. On Friday Professor [John] Morris Jones, with whom I was staying, motored me over to Criccieth.<sup>68</sup> The three of us went out for a long walk, and a delightful time we had. Lloyd George was at his best – the old Lloyd George of ten and twenty years ago, altogether winning and charming. He had forgotten all the twistings and turnings of politics and all the sordid plots and intrigues. He showed us the haunts of his youth, the names of Dewi Wyn and Robert ap Gwilym Ddu, &c. We recalled their best lines and we tried to cap each other with tales of the old bards, preachers, and characters that we knew. No one could have believed that this was the same man as had been consorting on Sunday with Kenny and Northcliffe, and all that vicious crew. When we returned to the house, we found Muspratt ex-MP there, who told us that he had sent the first lot of poison gasses to the front, and that he was now busy at it making more which were far worse than anything the Germans had had. Incidentally, Lloyd George stated that weeks ago he had sent tons of high explosives to Rumania.<sup>69</sup>

He is certain that the war will last another two years. 'It is a war of materials', he keeps on saying. Why worry then about conscription? It takes a year to make a rifle, he told Muspratt. Then he explained that the machines and factories will take ten out of the twelve months to build. He forgets that he told me that last October he got a committee of the Cabinet appointed to order more guns and munitions. He also showed me a Memo which he had circulated among the Cabinet dated December 31 1914 in which he predicted that Russia would suffer for want of munitions and inveighed against the 'Stupidity' of Van Dannop, the Master Gent of the Ordnance. I wondered if he had shown this also to Dalziel, and if it was the reason why Dalziel attacked Von Dannop in the House? I see that Dalziel has been speaking at Kirkaldy.



‘The voluntary system is fine: *but* if the Government say compulsion is wanted \_\_\_\_\_’ &c.

I am for the first time genuinely anxious about Lloyd George. In spite of all, I am greatly attached to him – more perhaps today than ever. I have never doubted his luck or his success till now. It would be a tragedy if after so great a career and with such prospects he were to mar all now through restlessness or impatience. The rank and file of the Liberals distrust him because of his connection with Northcliffe; the leaders hate him. He knows and feels this, and it may be that he, like Chamberlain, will join the enemy in a huff. He is always talking of the way in which Joe was treated in 1886. ‘He was kicked out as they are trying to kick me out now. The only difference is this. There was no question in Joe’s case of treachery against mischief, for Gladstone crabbed him in every way. Asquith on the other hand has been supremely loyal to me, and I could not, without being treacherous, go against him. When the Coalition Government was being formed, Bonar Law came to see me and said, “There are only 3 possible PMs – Asquith, Balfour, and you. Asquith is not energetic enough, Balfour is out of the question, I am ready, and so are my friends, to serve under you”. I said, “No, Asquith is the only possible P.M.”. I related all the conversation, except just this passage, to Asquith. I have been and shall always be perfectly loyal to Asquith’.

I hope and believe this will be so. Fortunately the time for making a decision [is] not likely to come soon. Asquith, Balfour, and Kitchener are all in favour of the continuance of the voluntary system. It is a curious reflection, as A. G. Gardiner told me the other day, that these three should be the custodians of the Liberal tradition of England, and Lloyd George their opponent! Lloyd George told me that in 1910 he had proposed a Militia, of 1½ millions, and also that he had never been a party man! The Liberal press, with the exception of the *Nation*, has been indulgent to Lloyd George but in private both journalists and Radical MPs are bitter. My one consolation is that Lloyd George has hitherto known when and where to stop. He passed the Munitions Act, but when the South Wales miners struck, he refused to apply it. When he discovers how opposed the people are to conscription, it will give him [a] pause.

### **Hotel Metropole, Folkestone 22 August 1915**

I have been down here for over a week with Bryn who is convalescent after his operation. Yesterday Lloyd George came down to the Grand, with Davies, his secretary, and Sir George Riddell.<sup>70</sup> Bryn and I lunched with them, and they came and dined with us. We asked Sir Edward Evans to be of the party. I had written to the *Daily News* a reply to Colonel Arthur Lee’s speech on Conscription, and the letter had appeared on Friday last. The first thing that Lloyd George spoke of was my letter. He was not angry, but it was evident that he was not pleased. During the day I had several talks with him about Conscription, especially in his room *tête-a-tête* in the afternoon. We had motored to Caesar’s Camp, and walked back, and George went to rest. I put on record what we said now while the matter is fresh in my mind, because George threatened to remind me of the conversation in twelve months hence.

First of all, I found George had altered his tune about conscription since I was at Walton [Heath] a fortnight ago. Then he was not only convinced of its necessity, but he was actively eager to bring it about himself, intriguing with Annie Kenny and Northcliffe. Now he is still convinced of its necessity, but is inclined to ‘ca’canny’. I think he is aghast at the ineptitude of Northcliffe, though he still talks of him as a remarkable man, who has a great gift of penetrating insight as well as special sources

of information &c. He speaks of him having been always right about the war – about munitions, Russia &c. He gave the cabinet information months ago about Russia, but the Cabinet pooh-poohed it. But he went on to say that Northcliffe is no politician, that he had made every conceivable mistake in advocating National Service since May, and George was especially perturbed about Milner coming in to the agitation. ‘He is the only public man to whom I have never spoken’. He was very bitter about Massingham, ‘that anaemic tapeworm’ whom he described as my leader. ‘Massingham is not my leader’, I retorted, ‘for the first time since I have been in political life I am my own leader’.<sup>71</sup> He winced at this. On several occasions he became very warm, but I kept my head. He described something I said as ‘the sort of silly pap which some Radicals regard as principle’. I had my revenge later on. He spoke of Conscription as necessary in order that all might take an equal share in the war. ‘That’, I said, ‘is the sort of inaccurate stuff which Northcliffe takes for statesmanship’. On another occasion he took credit for having been the first Cabinet Minister who had taken a pessimistic view of the war. I said the first to do so was John Burns, who predicted to me on August 4 that it would be a three years war, that there would be conscription in England before the end, and that it would end in a stalemate. I urged that in any case it was not George’s business to force on conscription. The word lay with Kitchener. ‘Don’t you think I know that?’, was the impatient reply. ‘But Kitchener is always six months too late. He is used to the East where time does not count. He has never been to time yet about anything since the war began. You mark my words – next year Kitchener will propose conscription, and the country will have to accept it. But it will be six months too late!’. I said I failed to see how conscription would benefit anybody just now. We already had more men than we could equip. ‘There are 120,000 munitions men with the colours. Since June I have been trying to get them back to work. I have had 5000!’. I said, ‘Why not tell Kitchener that you *must* have them? That is in your Department. If he says, “I can’t spare them”, tell him you must have them, or else you’ll refuse to be responsible for munitions and that you’ll make a clean breast of it to the House when it meets. The mere threat will suffice’. Lloyd George looked surprised. ‘Why, that is exactly what I am doing!’. He added that conscription would assist in another way, by keeping the recruiting agents off necessary men. I suggested that in this again he could have his way. ‘Use the National Register, and forbid recruiting in certain areas or from certain classes of workers. If Kitchener objects, tell him that you insist. Let Kitchener then take the country frankly into his confidence. Let him say that recruiting from certain trades &c is forbidden, but that he wants 300,000 or 500,000 men from outside. If he fails to get them within a given date, it will be for him to propose compulsion. *Your* task is confined to munitions’. ‘That is what I propose to do’, he replied, but I could see that he was disappointed at the suggestion that he should confine his energies to munitions. Later on in the evening he received a telegram from Woolwich. ‘It was only yesterday’, he said, ‘that Woolwich Arsenal was delivered over to me. I sent a dozen people down to bring order out of chaos, for I could do nothing with them before. Now I find (flourishing the telegram) that there are 600,000 shells stored there – high explosives among them – which are badly needed at the front. They are going to be sent out at once. My orders are that the men should work night and day till they are all packed and sent. By Tuesday I hope they’ll be all on their way’. Of controlled establishments he said there were already 560, while new National Arsenals (12 I think) are to be proceeded with. He was very pleased with the way the national munitions factories are working. He was full of reproaches of all sorts against Kitchener, and bitter about the Welsh troops at the Dardanelles. My brother-

in-law Major Jenkins and a dozen friends of mine have been wounded there. 'It's a shame!', said George, 'Kitchener dug out a man, Stopford, who was invalided out five years ago. He was not fit to lead such an expedition. What was the result? Ian Hamilton says in his dispatch that the Welsh 'broke' in his hand, a disgrace, the first blot on our Escutcheon! Stopford has been superseded, but the mischief is done and the casualties are frightfully heavy. But Kitchener thinks nothing of a man unless he is sixty-five. I asked him to give the Welsh Command, created by Ivor Philipps, to Evans his substitute. 'He is not senior enough', he replied. But Evans is 59!

The news from Russia had greatly depressed him. 'I have just been reading a dispatch from Buchanan our ambassador', he said, 'It is full of warning. Russia is hopelessly beaten. She has no munitions. She blames us. Vickers Maxim promised 600,000 fuses: not one had been sent. And rifles: not one has gone. The Russians can't imagine that a munitions factory is not in Government hands: and they blame us. The Court is pro-German. Half the Duma is in favour of a separate peace'. He became more and more excited and vehement. 'I told you a fortnight ago, three weeks ago, that Warsaw would fall. You said I was too pessimistic'. I corrected him. I said I had accepted his prediction, but that he was too pessimistic as to the results of Warsaw's fall. 'Kovno has fallen. Is that a bad thing?', he exclaimed excitedly. 'The other fortresses are falling one after another. Is that a bad thing? I make you a prediction – Petrograd will fall. What will you then say? Will you still say I am too pessimistic? I'll remind you of this conversation twelve months hence. I tell you, you and the Radicals have failed the country in a great crisis. We shall be beaten, if we don't adopt conscription, *beaten, beaten!* And it will be said of us that for the sake of a fad, a wad, a shibboleth, we allowed the enemy to win. Already Kitchener is talking of a 'bad peace'. If Russia stops, and we don't have conscription, I shall be in favour of stopping too. It would be murder to send our gallant fellows to their death'. And then he seemed to 'think aloud'. 'Little did I think that I should pray that a son of mine should be wounded! 'That seemed to me to reveal his inner mind. He is obsessed with the idea that *his* boys should be fighting while somebody else's boys are not. And that thought colours and distorts all his thoughts. He is unbalanced and in a really dangerous frame of mind. But I think he is not going to lead a crusade in favour of conscription. He is appalled to find how far he has severed himself from his old friends. Every Liberal newspaper is against him. Sir Edward Evans told him in so many words that conscription at present would mean his insurrection. 'It's a bitter thought – a hateful thought – to me', he said in his bedroom, and there were genuine tears in his eyes 'that I may have to live for the rest of my life with fellows I have always fought, with whom I have nothing in common, and all whose habits of thoughts and customs are hateful to me. I know them, and I know the People, and I love the People'. This is what has kept him straight. 'And I am a Liberal', he said somewhat pathetically, 'though you, Llew, don't think so'. 'Well', I said, 'I know you are a genuine democrat'. I could not say more remembering what he told me at Walton Heath that he had 'never been a party man'. As to the personalities of the business, I gathered that Asquith is strong against Conscription. 'He is a master of all the party platitudes'. Grey is also against it. McKenna, it seems, is not only strong, but he is 'intriguing' against George. Simon is also sturdy, and Henderson and Harcourt and Runciman. I said that I understood Balfour was against. 'He has never told me so'. I went on to say that Bonar Law had been against it, but was now wavering. 'You seem to know more about my colleagues than I do myself'. 'It may be so', I replied, 'You must remember this is a Coalition Government, and each member has his reservations'. He flared up at this. 'It's a National Cabinet', he

replied. 'Well', said I, 'Whitaker told me that three Cabinet Ministers came to him and asked him to pass his amendment to the Registration Bill to a division. 'Good God!', exclaimed George, throwing up his hands. 'And they accuse me of intriguing'. He implied that Curzon and Lansdowne had advocated conscription.

Late in the evening he had a telegram from Lord Reading and Lord Cunliffe from Boulogne saying they were crossing over to Dover today (Sunday). He wired to tell them that he would meet them at Dover with a view to bringing them over to Folkestone. I think they will all motor to London today.

I said to them at parting in the afternoon, when the hottest part of the encounter was over, 'Well, I hope you will believe me that I am taking this line because I think I must, believing as I do that conscription at present is not only unnecessary but absolutely fatal'. He softened at once. 'My dear Llew', he said, 'there's no need to assure me of that. I know now and always that you are true to our old friendship'.

### **19 September 1915**

Parliament met last Tuesday. On the previous day Lloyd George had published the 'Preface' to his book on war speeches, in which he plainly advocated Conscription. On the Friday before, he sent a telegram to a Conscriptionist meeting which was addressed by Chiozza Money. His sudden decision to force the issue took me by surprise after his chastened mood at Folkestone. I fancy that what happened was this. On Thursday week he attended the Trade Union Congress at Bristol. He made a characteristic speech, half wheedling, half bullying, and ending up with a reference to the fact that he had been brought up 'in a workman's home'. He carried the Congress for the time. He returned to town full of exultation, I have no doubt, and thought that he had only to make a few speeches to carry the country as he had swept the Congress. He is surrounded by a coterie of men to whom his word is law and who never dream of contradicting or arguing with him. Acting on rash impulse, the following day he sent his wire to [? Chiozza] Money, and ordered the preface to be published on Monday, tho' the book was not published till the following Thursday.

He has undoubtedly precipitated the crisis. No one talks of anything else except Conscription. The three days during which Parliament has been sitting have been given up to this topic and nothing else. Lists have been appearing in the papers of Conscriptionists and Antis in the Cabinet. Balfour is the only Tory anti: Lloyd George and Winston the only Liberal Conscriptionists. The debates in the House have been well sustained. With the exception of Dillon and J. H. Thomas, there have been no vehement speeches, and no attempt at recrimination or rhetorical appeal. The subject has been discussed on its merits, and there is no gain-saying the fact that the Antis have so far had the best of it. J. H. Thomas's speech created a profound sensation. He bluntly asserted that the agitation was one directed against Asquith. The Conscriptionists cried out, 'No, no!'. 'Well', he related, 'then put your protest into practice'. He went on to say that if Compulsion was introduced the Railway Men would strike. I followed on the same side. I called attention to the Quakers and others who opposed all war. What was to be done with them? What would Lloyd George have said if Milner had proposed Conscription during the Boer War, when he was of military age? Was passive resistance to the payment of rates to teach the Church Catechism a good thing and passive resistance to being forced to shed blood treasonable? My speech was directed to Lloyd George for the only thing that will make him pause is the fear of actual physical violence. He has always shrunk from that threat. He was converted to Women's Suffrage, not by argument, but by the

violence of the Suffragettes. – Winston was the only Cabinet Minister on the Front Bench while I was speaking, and had one or two ‘digs’ at the Dardanelles Expedition. He came to me afterwards and said: ‘When I said at Dundee that we were within a few miles of victory, I did not mean that we were within a few days of victory. I wanted to emphasise the significance of distance at the Dardanelles compared with the Western or Eastern front. I would say today that we are within two miles of victory. You said I was primarily responsible for the Dardanelles expedition. I was for the Naval Expedition, but not for the land expedition. I have only a collective responsibility for it. Your speech was powerful. I summarised it in my mind as follows, “War is Hell. Inconclusive peace is worse. But worst of all is a quarrel with a Quaker.”!’. I thought he looked bad and unwholesome. He *smelt* of ill-health. He will not make old bones.<sup>72</sup>

Everyone knows now that Lloyd George is the leader of the Conscriptionists. It has been an awful shock to the Liberals everywhere. The corridors and lobbies of the House, and the smoking rooms of the clubs are full of dismay and denunciation. Chamberlain is recalled. Gardiner, who yesterday wrote a pathetic ‘Open Letter’ to George in the *Daily News*, had a long talk with me on Tuesday. He described it as ‘a nightmare, a tragedy’, and was very bitter about Lloyd George. He thought he was party to the intrigue; so did Massingham. I told them – separately of course – that I had seen a good deal of George during August, and that I could give them my solemn assurance that that was not true, that George was absolutely loyal to Asquith, though he was determined to run conscription. The mildness of the personal comments about George in the *D[aily] N[ews]* and the *Nation* this week is at least partly due to this. But the letters I get from Wales are heartbreaking.

## **26 November 1915**

These entries have been mainly concerned with my relations with Lloyd George. Alas! It seems as if there will be no more of them. At the end of September Lloyd George suddenly wrote a letter to the press bewailing the ‘clatter and racket’ which disturbed the deliberations of the Council chamber. I wrote a letter to the press pointing out that the Conscriptionists were the people who had been guilty of ‘clatter and racket’, and that so far from objecting Lloyd George had sent a telegram to Leo Chiozza Money at a Conscriptionist meeting, and that his ‘preface’ was a deliberate incentive to bring the force of public opinion to bear upon the Cabinet. Since the appearance of this letter, George has taken no notice of me. He looks the other way if our eyes chance to meet in the House, and I hear from friends that he is assuming all the airs of a man with a grievance. I wrote to him, but he sent no reply. Mrs George ceased to call to see my wife, after twenty years of intimate friendship. Upon my wife writing to her Mrs George called once to tea, but no more. My wife is never called to attend committees at Downing Street, and it is evident that the word has gone out that we are to be tabooed. Arthur Lee, with whom I had a controversy in August is Ivor P’s successor at the Ministry of Munitions and Chiozza Money has succeeded Whitehouse as private secretary. I wrote to Riddell, thinking that he might interpose his good offices, but Riddell who is George’s man pure and simple, though personally friendly and cordial, is blandly unconscious of the difference in our relationship.

Two things have given me a new interest in life. I have finished my treatise on ‘The Court of Great Sessions in Wales’ – the most laborious task I have ever undertaken, and my wife’s niece, Elinor Jenkins, is publishing a volume of ‘War Poems’ next week. They are very remarkable, especially for so young and

inexperienced a girl. Yesterday I wrote a critique for the *Western Mail* to appear when the book is published.

Last night I had an unusual experience. Sir John Simon had read out a paragraph from a Russian paper on the previous day stating that 'in newspaper circles *here*' Northcliffe was strongly condemned for his attacks on the Government. *The Times* promptly replied that this was 'a dishonest answer', as the para-question had 'been telegraphed to Petrograd', and did not represent Russian feeling. I thought this attack [ ] and proceeded to put down a question about it. As I was on my way to the Table I met Simon behind the Speaker's Chair. I thought I ought to tell him. As he was speaking to another man at the time I said, 'I should like to see you for a moment'. 'Come to my room', he said, 'I want to see you too'. Presently I went, and found that he wanted to see me on this very matter. He was engaged in dictating a letter to the *Times* which appeared in today's issue, in which he admitted that the paragraph had been telegraphed by a Paris correspondent and 'here' meant Paris and not Petrograd. I told him I meant to put down a question. He assented, but asked me to raise the question on the adjournment next Tuesday as well – as he wanted to tell something about Northcliffe. I agreed to do so, and put down a question.

What struck me greatly was the timorous doubts and hesitations which assailed Simon. His letter had been so written and rewritten, corrected and further corrected, that the manuscript looked like crow's feet. When dictating from this document to his shorthand writer, he paused and stammered and hesitated, saying, 'I must be very careful how this is worded', and he looked as worried as a debtor on the verge of bankruptcy. He asked my opinion once or twice, and I ventured on certain amendments which he eagerly accepted, but all of them I find are omitted from the *Times* letter this morning. I had never come into intimate contact with Simon before, and the spectacle which he presented was somewhat painful.

For the first time, perhaps, I did full justice to the magnificent daring of Lloyd George. As I glance back in memory over the clouded days of his amazing career – as I knew him twenty-four years ago – when he was glad to take payment from me for speaking at meetings in South Wales, when he was even poorer than I, his intrepid fight against the 'old fogies' in Wales, his fight against the Liberal Government in 1894 and 1895, against the official gang in Wales in 1896-98, against the Jingo spirit during the Boer War, against the Education Act 1902-1905, against all his opponents in the Cabinet since 1906, not to mention his serene courage in private troubles, I begin to realise the secret of his success. His courage is unflinching. He never quailed before any man, though many a man quailed before him. I think I can claim that I am the only man who constantly and consistently stood up against him when I thought he was wrong. Many a time in [the] old days did he admit this thankfully, for saving him from some rash folly. But now it seems a friendship which started at Pontypridd in August 1891 has been discarded like an old glove. I have felt it bitterly. I have not slept for nights on end except fitfully and uneasily. The French say that in love are loves and that the other permits himself to be loved. Is the same true of friendship? In spite of many defects which are too patent to be unnoticed, I have followed and loved him for a quarter of a century. Now, I fear, it is all at an end. He is still scheming and fighting and succeeding. He is of the War Council of five. He rides roughshod over his opponents. Men like Simon cannot stand up against him. But my heart is sore because of our lost friendship. 'Alas! They had been friends in youth' – it is a haunting line. I never thought he would have so lightly thrown away a proved and loyal friendship. But great men are above such foibles. *Vale atque vale.*

- 1 The fullest biographical account of W. Llewelyn Williams is J. Graham Jones, 'The journalist as politician: W. Llewelyn Williams MP (1867-1922)', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 37 (2002), 79–98. On the split between Williams and Lloyd George over the introduction of military conscription in 1916, see also idem, 'Lloyd George, W. Llewelyn Williams and the 1916 Conscription Bill', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 31 (1999–2000), 173–87. This theme is developed further using the diary entries printed here in J. Graham Jones, 'W. Llewelyn Williams MP (1867–1922) and the First World War', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 42 (2006), 84–103. For a recent helpful, brief overview of Williams's life, see the article by Kenneth O. Morgan in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 59 (London, 2004), 333–35. There is a typescript biography of Williams by Revd J. Semour Rees in NLW MS 18645C, and typescript transcripts of materials relating to him, also collected by Rees, in NLW MS 18646C. Papers concerning Williams, collected by T. J. Evans, are also to be found in NLW MS 19483E.
- 2 *Carmarthen Journal*, 10 November 1905.
- 3 Llewelyn Williams's diary entry for 30 May 1906.
- 4 *Ibid.*, diary entries for 30 November and 4 December 1907.
- 5 *Ibid.*, diary entry for 12 February 1914.
- 6 *Ibid.*, diary entry for 9 August 1914.
- 7 *Ibid.*, diary entry for 8 August 1915.
- 8 *Ibid.*, diary entry for 26 November 1915.
- 9 There is a full account of the 1906 general election campaign in the Carmarthen Boroughs constituency in the files of the *Carmarthen Journal* and *The Welshman*. See also J. Graham Jones, 'W. Llewelyn Williams and the Carmarthen Boroughs election of 1906', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 43 (2007) (forthcoming).
- 10 See the reports in *The Welshman*, 19 January 1906, and the *Llanelly County Guardian*, 25 January 1906.
- 11 Lloyd George was standing for the fifth consecutive time as the Liberal candidate for the Caernarfon Boroughs, previously a very marginal constituency. This was the first occasion on which he was fairly certain of re-election, partly because he had recently been appointed by Campbell-Bannerman to be the President of the Board of Trade in the new Liberal Cabinet formed in the previous December.
- 12 William Brace (1865–1947), who was standing for the first time as the 'Lib-Lab' candidate for the South Glamorgan constituency in 1906. He was later to be elected the Labour MP for Abertillery in 1918. Major General Sir Ivor John Herbert (1851–1933) was to be elected the Liberal MP for Monmouthshire South in 1906 and continued to represent the constituency until he was created Baron Treowen in June 1917.
- 13 John Elliott Burns (1858–1943), Liberal MP for Battersea, 1892–1918. When Campbell-Bannerman formed his administration in December 1905 Burns was offered the presidency of the Local Government Board, thus becoming the first working man ever to achieve cabinet rank. He remained in this position until March 1914 when he was appointed President of the Board of Trade, a post from which he resigned in August 1914 on the outbreak of the First World War. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman (1836–1908) was the newly elected Liberal Prime Minister.
- 14 Richard Burdon Haldane, Viscount Haldane (1856–1928), Liberal MP for Haddingtonshire from 1885 until he was created 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Haldane in 1911. He had become Secretary of State for War on 8 December 1905, remaining in the position until June 1912. He was then Lord High Chancellor, 1912–15 (and again in 1924). Alfred Milner, Viscount Milner (1854–1925), the former governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner of South Africa, later appointed civil administrator of the Orange River and Transvaal colonies. Currently out of office. Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874–1965), had recently achieved ministerial office for the first time as under-secretary at the Colonial Office. Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1906–08, President of the Board of Trade, 1908–1910, Home Secretary, 1910–11, First Lord of the Admiralty, 1911–15, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1917.
- 15 Victor Alexander Bruce, ninth Earl of Elgin (1849–1917), the former Viceroy of India who had recently been appointed to the Colonial Office by Campbell-Bannerman in December 1905.

- 16 Herbert Henry Asquith (1852–1928), recently appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer. Liberal Prime Minister, April 1908–December 1916.
- 17 John Morley, Viscount Morley of Blackburn (1838–1923), who had recently reluctantly accepted the position of Secretary of State for India in the Campbell-Bannerman government.
- 18 Archibald Philip Primrose, fifth Earl of Rosebery (1847–1929), the former Liberal Prime Minister.
- 19 Allen Clement Edwards (1869–1938), Liberal MP for the Denbigh District, 1906–January 1910 (defeated). Later the Liberal MP for Glamorganshire East, December 1910–December 1918, and the National Democratic Party MP for East Ham South, December 1918–November 1922.
- 20 John Hugh Edwards (1869–1945), a prominent Welsh politician and writer. A future Liberal MP for Mid-Glamorgan, 1910–18, Neath, 1918–22, and Accrington, 1923–29, and a future biographer of David Lloyd George. The article ‘Welsh Ministers of State’ appeared in *The Welsh Review*, Vol. I, no. 1 (March 1906), 4–5, ‘A practical policy in Welsh politics’ *ibid.*, 14–15, and ‘Wales: notes of the month’, *ibid.*, 22–26. All three pieces were published anonymously, but all were clearly the work of W. Llewelyn Williams.
- 21 Philip Snowden, Viscount Snowden (1864–1937), the Labour MP for Blackburn and a national Socialist figure alongside Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald.
- 22 Sir Arthur Herbert Dyke Acland, thirteenth baronet (1846–1927), a former Liberal MP for the Rotherham division of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1885–1900, and the vice-president of the committee of council on education in Gladstone's fourth ministry, 1892–95. From 1906 he chaired the consultative committee of the Board of Education. Augustine Birrell (1850–1933), the Liberal MP for Bristol North, 1906–18, was appointed President of the Board of Education, December 1905–February 1907, when he was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland where he was to remain until he resigned from the government in April 1916.
- 23 James William Lowther (1855–1949), originally elected Speaker of the House of Commons in June 1905, was indeed re-elected to the position on 13 February 1906, and remained Speaker of the House until his resignation in April 1921 when he was created Viscount Ullswater. The proceedings of the re-election of the Speaker are available in *Parliamentary Debates*, 4<sup>th</sup> series, Vol. 152, cols. 4–11. According to Philip Snowden, in congratulating Lowther on his re-election, the Prime Minister Campbell-Bannerman ‘betrayed a nervousness which was painful to see’ (Philip, Viscount Snowden, *An Autobiography* [London, 1934], 122).
- 24 Reginald McKenna (1863–1943), Liberal MP for Monmouthshire North constituency from 1895 until he was defeated in the new Pontypool division in 1918. Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1905–07, President of the Board of Education, February 1907–April 1908, First Lord of the Admiralty, 1908–11, Home Secretary, 1911–15, Chancellor of the Exchequer, May 1915–December 1916. John Herbert Lewis (1858–1933), Liberal MP for Flint Boroughs, 1892–1906, and for Flintshire, 1906–18. Junior Lord of the Treasury and a Liberal Party whip, 1905–July 1909, Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, 1909–15, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, May 1915–October 1922. Matthew Lewis Vaughan Davies (1840–1935), Liberal MP for Cardiganshire, 1895–1921 when he was created Baron Ystwyth. David Alfred Thomas (1856–1918), Liberal MP for Merthyr Tydfil, 1888–January 1910 and subsequently for Cardiff until December 1910. Created Baron Rhondda in January 1916 and Viscount Rhondda in June 1918. President of the Local Government Board, 1916–17, Food Controller, 1917–18. Ellis Jones Ellis-Griffith (1860–1926), Liberal MP for Anglesey, 1895–1918, Recorder of Birkenhead, 1907–12. Samuel Thomas Evans (1859–1918), Liberal MP for Mid-Glamorganshire from February 1890 (by-election) until he was appointed President of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court in March 1910, Solicitor-General, January 1908–March 1910.
- 25 Cranogwen was Sarah Jane Rees (1839–1916), a prominent poet and editor and a schoolmistress by profession. She was the editor of *Y Frythones* from 1878 until 1891, a well-known magazine for women, and she was the founder of the Temperance Union of South Wales.
- 26 Llywelyn Williams’s maiden speech is available in *Parliamentary Debates*, 4<sup>th</sup> series, Vol. 153, cols. 1001–07. ‘The long and tedious oration from Philip Snowden’ is printed *ibid.*, cols. 1007–14, and the speech by F. E. Smith *ibid.*, cols. 1014–23. Lloyd George’s ‘very laborious and ineffective “official” reply’ follows, cols. 1023–35. Frederick Edwin Smith, first Earl of Birkenhead (1872–1930). In 1906, against the tide of the Liberals’ landslide victory, he narrowly held his Liverpool seat. His maiden speech on 12 March 1906 referred to here by Llewelyn Williams — one of the most celebrated political débuts in parliamentary history —



- was a masterpiece of impudent satire which made him a star overnight. He was shrewd enough not to try to repeat this first success, but followed it with a sequence of brilliantly argued speeches employing his forensic skills to portray the Liberal government's legislative programme as a series of cynical sops to the various sectional interests which made up its support. His speech on the 1906 Trade Disputes Bill was regarded as the classic exposition of the case against intimidatory picketing and the legal immunity of trade unions up to the 1980s.
- 27 See *Parliamentary Debates*, 4<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol. 154, cols. 1295–1351.
- 28 On the highly contentious Welsh Church Commission, see Kenneth O. Morgan, *Wales in British Politics, 1868-1922*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Cardiff, 1991), 231–40.
- 29 Sir Daniel Lleufer Thomas (1863–1940), a stipendiary magistrate, the author of an admirable *Digest* of the Report of the Royal Commission on Land in Wales.
- 30 The Archbishop of Canterbury was Randall Thomas Davidson, Baron Davidson of Lambeth (1848–1930), enthroned in 1903. His advice on public primary education was sought and valued by Balfour in framing the Education Act of 1902. He particularly cultivated the friendship of leading politicians with a Scottish background: Lord Rosebery, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and A. J. Balfour. The debates over Lloyd George's 'people's budget' and the Parliament Act exposed Davidson to charges of political partisanship. When the Finance Bill was rejected by the House of Lords in November 1909, Davidson and most of the bishops abstained, thereby incurring the odium of supporters of both government and opposition. In that debate he expressed the belief that the bishops could, and should, speak with authority on religious, educational, social, and moral questions, but were wise to avoid more overtly party political issues. The Bishop of St Davids was John Owen (1854–1926) who had been enthroned in 1897. Much of Owen's episcopate was marked by controversy. For many years he was involved in conflict over church schools and the place of religious instruction in schools. The Education Act of 1902 gave county councils the responsibility for financing elementary education. Subject to clear conditions, church schools qualified for rate-aided status, but this gave great offence to nonconformists. Lloyd George used this discontent to advantage in Wales where some county councils, including Carmarthenshire, refused to use rates to maintain church schools. A long legal and parliamentary battle ensued before the council was obliged to give way. Between 1907 and 1911 Owen was involved in another long but ultimately successful conflict with the local education authority in Swansea over the funding of church schools in the town. From 1902 to the last years of Owen's life the question of religious education in state schools was a recurrent problem. The article to which Llewelyn Williams is referring is probably 'Welsh Disestablishment' which was published anonymously in *The Welsh Review*, Vol. I, no. 2 (April 1906), 41–42. This in turn was provoked by an article published the previous month in the first ever issue of *The Welsh Review*, viz. 'A practical policy in Welsh politics', *ibid.*, Vol. I, no. 1 (March 1906), 14–15. Both were clearly written by WLIW.
- 31 Frank (later Sir Francis) Edwards (1852–1927), Liberal MP for Radnorshire, 1892–95 (defeated), 1900–January 1910 (defeated), and again December 1910–18.
- 32 The debate on the Education (England and Wales) Bill is available in *Parliamentary Debates*, 4<sup>th</sup> series, Vol. 156, cols. 1504–1622. Llewelyn Williams's speech during the debate is printed *ibid.*, cols., 1575–82. John Redmond (1856–1918), leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1900 until his death in March 1918. Thomas Power O'Connor (1848–1929), a well-known journalist and politician who sat for the Scotland division of Liverpool from 1885 until his death in November 1929. John Dillon (1851–1927), Nationalist MP for East Mayo from 1885 until he was defeated in 1918. Timothy Michael Healy (1855–1931), Nationalist MP for Louth North, 1892 until his defeat in December 1910.
- 33 The debate on the Education Bill is available in *Parliamentary Debates*, 4<sup>th</sup> series, Vol. 158, cols. 116–232. Charles Frederick Gurney Masterman (1873–1927), Liberal MP for West Ham North from 1906 until June 1911.
- 34 Sir John Herbert Roberts (1863–1955), Liberal MP for Denbighshire West from 1892 until he retired in 1918. Sir Henry Fowler (1830–1911), Liberal MP for Wolverhampton East, 1885–April 1908 when he was created first Viscount Wolverhampton. Appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in December 1905. Sydney Buxton (1853–1934), Liberal MP for Tower Hamlets, 1886–1914. Postmaster-General, December 1905–February 1910, President of the Board of Trade, 1910–14. Herbert John Gladstone (1854–1930), Liberal MP for Leeds West, 1885–February 1910, Liberal Party Chief Whip, 1899–1905, Home Secretary, December 1905–February 1910. Thereafter Viscount Gladstone. 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess of Ripon (1827–1909),

- Lord Privy Seal, December 1905–October 1908. Sir Robert Laurie Morant (1863–1920), permanent secretary of the Board of Education.
- 35 Sidney Robinson (1863–1956), Liberal MP for Breconshire, 1906–18. David Davies, Llandinam (1880–1944), Liberal MP for Montgomeryshire, 1906–29, private secretary to D. Lloyd George, 1916–17.
- 36 James Bryce (1838–1922), Liberal MP for Aberdeen South from November 1885 until he was appointed British Ambassador at Washington in January 1907 (continuing to serve there until 1913). Chief Secretary for Ireland, December 1905–January 1907. John Edward Ellis (1841–1910), Liberal MP for the Rushcliffe division of Nottinghamshire from 1885 until his death on 5 December 1910. Served as Under-Secretary of State at the India Office, 1905–06. Thomas Macnamara (1861–1931), Liberal MP for Camberwell North from October 1900 until December 1918. Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, January 1907–April 1908, Parliamentary and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, April 1908–March 1920. Sir Charles Edward Henry Hobhouse (1862–1941), Liberal MP for East Bristol, 1900–18 (defeated), Under-Secretary for India, 1907–08, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1908–11, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1911–14, Postmaster-General, February 1914–May 1915.
- 37 Sir Alfred Thomas (1840–1927), Liberal MP for East Glamorgan from 1885 until his retirement in December 1910. Ellis William Davies (1871–1939), Liberal MP for the Eifion division of Caernarfonshire (Caernarfonshire South) from June 1906 until his defeat in December 1918.
- 38 Sir Edward Grey (1862–1933), Liberal MP for the Berwick-on-Tweed division of Northumberland from 1885 until created Viscount Grey of Fallodon in 1916. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, December 1905–16. Second Baron Tweedmouth (1849–1909), 1<sup>st</sup> Lord of the Admiralty, December 1905–April 1908.
- 39 Owen Morgan Edwards (1858–1920), Welsh litterateur and Oxford don, appointed the first chief inspector of schools under the aegis of the new Welsh Education Department in 1907. Alfred Thomas Davies (1861–1949), the first Permanent Secretary of the Welsh Department of the Board of Education. He remained in this position until 1925.
- 40 Horatio William Bottomley (1860–1933), Liberal MP for South Hackney, 1906–11.
- 41 See J. Graham Jones, ‘Mair Eluned Lloyd George (1890–1907)’, *Transactions of the Caernarfonshire Historical Society*, 60 (1999), 33–54.
- 42 Sir William Henry Clark (1876–1952), civil servant and diplomatist. From 1906 to 1908 he was private secretary to the President of the Board of Trade, Lloyd George. William Jones (1860–1915) was the Liberal MP for Caernarvonshire North (Arfon constituency) from 1895 until his death on 9 May 1915. ‘The two Herberts’ noted here are John Herbert Lewis MP and John Herbert Roberts MP.
- 43 Walter Runciman (1870–1949) was the Liberal MP for the Dewsbury constituency from 1902 until 1918. He had served as parliamentary secretary to the Local Government Board, December 1905–January 1907, and was then Financial Secretary to the Treasury, January 1907–April 1908. In April 1908 he was appointed President of the Board of Education. Colonel John Edward Bernard Seely (1868–1924) was the Liberal MP for the Abercromby division of Liverpool, 1906–10. He was Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, April 1908–11. C. F. G. Masterman had been appointed parliamentary secretary to the Local Government Board. Sir Francis Dyke Acland (1874–1939) was the Liberal MP for the Richmond division of the North Riding of Yorkshire, January 1906–January 1910 (defeated). He was appointed Financial Secretary to the War Office and a member of the Army Council in April 1908.
- 44 During the exceptionally harrowing weeks following the death of Mair Eluned Lloyd George, the Lloyd George family home at Routh Road, London, where Mair had died, was quickly sold, and a lease purchased on a new property at 5 Cheyne Road, Chelsea. Mair’s cruel death was by far the harshest personal blow which Lloyd George was ever to sustain during his long life.
- 45 A reference to Thomas Edward Ellis MP (1859–99), Liberal MP for Merioneth since 1886.
- 46 Sir Edward Tyas Cook (1857–1919), appointed editor of the *Daily News* in 1895.
- 47 Alfred George Edwards (1848–1937), consecrated Bishop of St Asaph in 1889. Was to become the first ever Archbishop of Wales in 1920.
- 48 The Liberals had lost the Ashburton division of Devon in a closely fought by-election held on 17 January 1908. Sir John Lawson Walton, the Attorney-General, had died the very same day. Reading, held by the Liberals, was a very marginal constituency. The majority of Rufus

- Isaccs in the constituency in the 1906 general election, a Liberal landslide, had been just 697 votes (6.8 per cent of those cast).
- 49 'Mabon' was William Abraham (1842–1922), the 'Lib-Lab' (later Labour) MP for Rhondda, 1885–1918. George Whiteley (1855–1925), was the Liberal MP for the Pudsey division of the West Riding of Yorkshire from 1900 and sat until he was created 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Marchamley in April 1908. He served as the Liberal Party Chief Whip, December 1905–April 1908.
- 50 Thomas Lough (1850–1922) was the Liberal MP for Islington West from 1892 until he was defeated in the general election of 1918. He was secretary to the Board of Education, December 1905–April 1908, but was then dropped from the government – to his intense annoyance.
- 51 Sir Robert Chalmers, Baron Chalmers (1858–1938), a member of the staff of the Treasury ever since 1882. For most of that time he served in the Treasury's finance division, and on 28 October 1907 he was appointed chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, where he was largely responsible for the transfer of the excise from the Inland Revenue to a new board of customs and excise in 1908. In this role, and from 24 July 1911, when he succeeded Sir George Murray as permanent secretary of the Treasury, he was one of the principal advisers to successive chancellors of the exchequer: H. H. Asquith, David Lloyd George, Reginald McKenna, and Andrew Bonar Law. Chalmers had strong Liberal convictions and at first he got on well with Lloyd George, of whose 1909 budget he was one of the principal architects, but they fell out in 1913, when Chalmers believed that the chancellor had misled the House of Commons.
- 52 In 1909 Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer, took *The People* newspaper to court for libel because it had dared to suggest that he had women friends with whom he was intimate. He was backed by the best legal brains of the day and he won the case (despite the fact that his 'philandering' was well-known in political and press circles). At almost exactly the same time he was fighting that case he was pushing the so-called 'People's Budget' through the House of Commons, and he and Asquith were threatening to abolish the Lords if they refused to co-operate.
- 53 Sir Lewis Venables Harcourt, Liberal MP for the Rossendale division of Lancashire from 1904 until he was created 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Harcourt on 3 January 1917. 1<sup>st</sup> Commissioner of Works, December 1905–November 1910 and May 1915–December 1916, Secretary for the Colonies, 1910–15. Earl Loreburn, formerly Sir Robert Reid, (1846–1923), Liberal peer, appointed Lord Chancellor in December 1905.
- 54 See J. Graham Jones, 'Framing 'the people's budget': a new perspective', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodion* 1991, 285–98. See also Bruce K. Murray, *The People's Budget 1909/10* (Oxford, 1980).
- 55 Joseph Albert Pease (1860–1943), Liberal MP for the Saffron Walden division of Essex, 1901–December 1910, Junior Lord of the Treasury, December 1905–April 1908, Liberal Party Chief Whip, April 1908–February 1910, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1910–11, President of the Board of Education, 1911–15, and Postmaster-General, January–December 1916.
- 56 Herbert Louis Samuel (1870–1963), Liberal MP for the Cleveland division of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1902–18. Under-Secretary at the Home Office, December 1905–June 1909, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, June 1909–February 1910, Postmaster-General, 1910–14, President of the Local Government Board, 1914–15, Postmaster-General, May 1915–January 1916.
- 57 Sir Ernest Joseph Cassel (1852–1921), merchant banker, financier and member of high society.
- 58 Rev. John Williams (1854–1921), prominent Calvinistic Methodist minister who made his home at Llwyn Idris, Brynsiencyn, Anglesey, on his retirement from his pastorate in 1906. He took a prominent role in promoting the formation of the Welsh division during the First World War and served as its honorary chaplain.
- 59 Joseph Devlin (1871–1934), Irish nationalist and politician. After the 1906 general election Devlin sat for West Belfast, which he regained from the Unionists by sixteen votes. He became a distinguished parliamentarian, though his best oratorical performances continued to be on the public platform. He came to parliamentary prominence after 1910, when home rule dominated politics.
- 60 Sir Walter Hume Long (1854–1924), Unionist MP for the Strand division, January 1910–December 1918. Sir Edward Henry Carson (1854–1935), Unionist MP for Dublin University, 1892–1918, leader of the Irish Unionist Party, 1910–21.

- 61 Rufus Isaacs had been appointed Lord Chief Justice in October 1913. Sir Robert Donald (1860–1933) had accepted the position of editor of the *Daily Chronicle* in January 1904. The new editor invigorated the newspaper; its circulation rose and its influence increased. From 1906 he also edited Lloyd's *Sunday News*. In 1911 he was appointed managing director of United Newspapers. Made a fellow of the Institute of Journalists in 1909, his distinction and status in his profession were acknowledged in 1913 by his unanimous election as president.
- 62 Sir Alfred Moritz Mond (1868–1930), Liberal MP for Swansea District, January 1910–1918.
- 63 Sir Charles Philips Trevelyan (1870–1958), parliamentary under-secretary at the Board of Education, April 1908 until he resigned from the government in early August 1914. By this action he found himself estranged from most of his family, condemned and vilified by a hysterical press, and rejected by his constituency association. William Lygon, seventh Earl Beauchamp (1872–1938). Asquith brought him into the cabinet as Lord President of the Council (21 June 1910 to 7 November 1910) and First Commissioner of Works (8 November 1910 to 6 August 1914). As a radical, Beauchamp was 'very strong' against high naval expenditure, and he tendered his resignation on 3 August 1914, the day before the declaration of war. He was reconciled by the German invasion of Belgium, and on 5 August resumed the Lord Presidency, which he retained until the cabinet reconstruction on 26 May 1915. Sir John Allsebrook Simon, first Viscount Simon (1873–1954). Solicitor-General, 1910–13, Attorney-General (with a seat in the Cabinet), 1913–15.
- 64 Llewelyn William's long expected appointment as Recorder of Cardiff is noted in the *Carmarthen Journal*, 12 March 1915 and *The Welshman*, 12 March 1915.
- 65 The texts of Williams's speeches are available in *Parliamentary Debates*, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol. 73, cols. 117–22, on the second reading of the National Registration Bill, 5 July 1915, and *ibid.*, cols. 2412–16, during the debate on Compulsory Military Service, 29 July 1915. In July a National Registration Act was passed and immediately viewed (and feared) as the first tangible step towards conscription. By this time voluntary enlistment had fallen off rapidly. The key figure in the compulsory enlistment campaign was Lord Kitchener whose menacing face and pointing finger on literally thousands of posters put up across the land had appealed to Britons to do their duty – 'Your country needs you'. Before the end of July, with the House of Commons about to rise for the summer recess, eight backbench Liberal MPs, among them Sir Alfred Mond and Sir Alfred Dalziel, issued a 'whip' to their parliamentary colleagues urging them to endorse national service. See the report in the *Cambria Daily Leader*, 28 July 1915. The mood of the times was reflected in the editorial columns of the highly patriotic *Carmarthen Journal*. By June it was referring to 'the passionate urgency there is that personal sacrifice should be offered by every one'. The formation of the new coalition government the previous month and the 'burning words' of Lloyd George in his dynamic new role had led to 'the dawn of truth' – 'Every worker who can work must work for the war; it is a sacred duty that he should see to it that he finds some means of contributing some form of usefulness which will help in winning the war; he must not rest until he finds it'. (*Carmarthen Journal*, 18 June 1915).
- 66 Annie Kenny (variously Kenney) (1879–1953), member of the Independent Labour Party. She joined the Women's Social and Political Union in 1905. As Annie Kenney was one of the organization's few working class members, when the WSPU decided to open a branch in the East End of London, she was asked to leave the mill where she was employed and become a full-time worker for the organisation. Annie joined Sylvia Pankhurst in London and they gradually began to persuade working-class women to join the WSPU. In 1913 Annie Kenney was sentenced to eighteen months in prison, and like other suffragettes she went on hunger and thirst strike. Released under the provisions of the Cat and Mouse Act, she went into hiding until she was caught once again and returned to prison. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 ended Kenney's militant campaign for the vote. For the next four years she helped organize an Anti-Bolshevist campaign against strikes.
- 67 Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, Viscount Northcliffe (1865–1922), journalist and newspaper proprietor. When the European crisis broke in August 1914 Northcliffe did not want to send an army to Europe. But he quickly threw himself heart and soul into the allied cause, claiming that the *Daily Mail* was the paper that foretold the war. Above all, he exposed the 'shells scandal' in April 1915 when he alleged, and with good cause, that the want of sufficient high explosive shells was 'fatal' to the British offensive at Festubert. On 21 May the *Daily Mail* printed the headline 'The Tragedy of the Shells; Lord Kitchener's grave error'. This had the unexpected result of causing a dip in *Daily Mail* sales, with Northcliffe described as the ally of the Hun; but it also contributed to the crisis which ended with Asquith

- reconstructing his government and taking the Unionist opposition into the cabinet. Northcliffe's reputation rested on the assumption that he could, and did, wield power; and this was enhanced by the political manoeuvres of December 1916, which ended with the replacement of Asquith as Prime Minister by Lloyd George. The role of the press is still disputed, but there is no doubt that at the time Northcliffe was given the credit. Probably Sir John Murray (1851–1928), publisher.
- 68 Sir John Morris-Jones (1864–1929), prominent Welsh scholar, poet, literary critic and eisteddfodwr, Professor of Welsh Language and Literature at the University College of North Wales, Bangor from 1895, previously lecturer in Welsh there since January 1889.
- 69 Max Muspratt (1872–1934), Liberal MP for the Exchange division of Liverpool from January 1910 until he was defeated there in the December 1910 general election. Unsuccessfully contested the Bootle division in the March 1911 by-election. Appointed chairman of the United Alkali Company in 1914.
- 70 Sir George Allardice Riddell, Baron Riddell (1865–1934), newspaper proprietor. Lloyd George and Riddell were close friends for fully twenty years. Both men acknowledged, though no bargain was ever struck, the mutual advantage in working together. Riddell made himself indispensable to Lloyd George. He kept him well informed of all press gossip; he provided hospitality, holidays, a car, a house, the free tenancy of two country mansions, a golfing partner, and not least, constant, shrewd support in his newspaper *The News of the World*. Lloyd George availed himself of his friend's consummate skills as a negotiator. In 1912 Riddell drafted the memorandum that settled the miners' strike and was the basis for the Miners' Minimum Wage Act. During the First World War, Riddell liaised between government and press, frequently chairing the press committee. In 1909 Herbert Asquith, advised that the support of the *News of the World* was a valuable asset to the Liberals, gave Riddell the knighthood he had been seeking.
- 71 Henry William Massingham (1860–1924), journalist. In March 1907 Massingham was appointed editor of *The Nation*, a Liberal weekly which replaced *The Speaker*. Before the First World War he constantly challenged the Liberal Imperialist-inspired foreign policy pursued by Edward Grey, while in domestic politics he advertised and popularized the new Liberals' programme of radical social and financial reforms. During the war he made certain that his paper was a primary forum for the discussion and promotion of radical ideas and particularly designs to prevent future wars.
- 72 W. Llewelyn Williams's speech on Compulsory National Service is available in *Parliamentary Debates*, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol. 74, cols. 212–22 (16 September 1915). See also the reference to it in *The Times*, 17 September 1915, 10, col. e. J. H. Thomas's preceding speech is printed in *Parliamentary Debates*, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol. 74, cols. 201–08 (16 September 1915). James Henry Thomas (1874–1949) was the Labour MP for Derby since January 1910. John Dillon's speech the previous day is *ibid.*, cols. 98–108 (15 September 1915).