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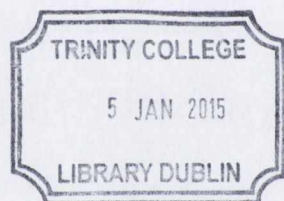
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Thesis 10844

**COMPLETING THE UNION:  
THE POLITICS OF  
IMPLEMENTATION IN IRELAND,  
1801-1815**

A thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

2014

Seán O'Reilly

Trinity College Dublin

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## *Summary*

The Act of Union came into operation on 1 January 1801. Its implementation took years to effect. By examining the administrations of the three viceroys immediately concerned with implementing the union, Hardwicke, Bedford, and Richmond, this thesis provides a new interpretation of how Ireland was governed in the critical early years of the nineteenth century. The union had been intended to resolve the confusions in the Anglo-Irish relationship: instead it created some new ones. Much thought had gone into how the union would be passed; very little thought had gone into what would happen afterwards.

Based on an exhaustive examination of all the relevant sources, both manuscript and printed primary, and on a thorough and critical review of the relevant secondary literature, this thesis explores how successive administrations in Ireland faced the challenge of working within a new, but undefined political structure. The problem for Hardwicke, the first lord lieutenant appointed after the union, was that there was no clear idea about what needed to be done, and so the politics of implementation became a series of fights about roles and responsibilities. For Bedford the union was incomplete, and there was a return to an earlier vision about securing the support of the catholics. For Richmond it was precisely the opposite: the union was complete and it was about making the new structures work. Out of these conflicts and controversies the post-union political dynamic in Ireland was formed.

This thesis is in four sections. The first section looks at the key year of 1801, when so many of the critical decisions were made about how post-union politics would operate in Ireland. This was a time of paralysing confusion in the Irish administration because no one was really clear about respective powers and responsibilities, or who had authority for

what. The earl of Hardwicke had been sent to Ireland as Cornwallis's successor, and he faced a series of power battles over both his role and the role of the Irish administration. The second section looks at Hardwicke in office between 1802 and his recall in 1806. During this time there was a change of ministry in London, following the return of Pitt as prime minister in 1804, but this did not lead to a change of direction in Ireland. Catholic emancipation was still off the agenda, and there was no appetite for doing anything to destabilise the new government.

Section Three of the thesis examines Bedford's time in Ireland, and a new impetus in Irish politics. Bedford's mission was to complete the union, and so he took a markedly different approach to the politics of implementation. The emphasis now was on securing the support of the catholics, of including them within the benefits of the union, and winning their trust. This section of the thesis provides a radical new interpretation of a neglected viceroyalty, and shows that there was an explicit attempt to complete the union in 1806-1807 by following conciliatory policies. Bedford's successor Richmond believed the union was nearly complete. For him, all that needed to be done was to make it work by maintaining law and order. Section Four looks at the challenges Richmond faced between 1807 and 1813, under three different prime ministers. This section is shorter, because by Richmond's time in office many of the issues had been resolved, although tensions remained in how the union actually operated.

The events explored in these four sections determined how the Irish administration fitted into the United Kingdom during the critical period after the union came into effect. However, despite the efforts of everyone involved, later events would prove that the union remained incomplete.



## *Acknowledgments*

Thinking about this thesis began not while I was a postgraduate, but rather during my final undergraduate years at Trinity College Dublin. In that time I took a sophister module on Ireland in the age of reform and revolution delivered by my would be Ph.D. supervisor Dr. Patrick Geoghegan. His inspirational teaching of the years *before* the Act of Union so engaged me, that it ensured I would want to continue that journey into the years *after* the union. And so a thesis was born. Simply put, without his subsequent supervision, so often above and beyond the call of the duty, this thesis would not have been written. I owe him a huge debt of gratitude for his unfaltering encouragement, advice and guidance.

I am very grateful to the Irish Research Council for their financial support and from whom I received a Government of Ireland postgraduate scholarship; the Grace Lawless Lee Fund, TCD; and the Trinity Trust for a travel grant. Similarly, I would like to thank the staff of the many libraries and archives I visited to undertake my research in Ireland and the UK. Particularly, I wish to thank his grace, Andrew Russell, the 15th duke of Bedford for allowing me to access his family's papers at Woburn Abbey. The archivist at Woburn Mrs. Ann Mitchell and her assistant, Mrs. June Day, deserve special mention.

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- Cornwallis Corr.* *from the earliest period to the year 1803, 1810-12, 36 vols. (London, 1806-20).*  
*Correspondence of Charles, first marquess Cornwallis edited with notes by Charles Ross, esq. 3 vols. (London, 1859).*
- Clare Corr.* Fleming, D. A. and Malcomson, A. P. W. (eds.), *'A volley of execrations': the letters and papers of John Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare, 1772-1802, (Dublin, 2005).*
- DIB* *Dictionary of Irish biography*
- Fortescue MS.* *Report of the manuscripts of J.B. Fortescue esq. preserved at Dropmore 10 vols. (London, 1892-1927).*
- Hansard 1* *Cobbett's parliamentary debates, 1803-12, continued as The parliamentary debates from the year 1803 to the present time, 1812-20, 41 vols. (London, 1804-1820).*
- History of parliament 1754-1790* Namier, Lewis and Brooke, John (eds.), *The history of parliament: the House of Commons, 1745-1790, (London, 1964).*  
 [Where no page or volume is given references are taken from the online edition].
- History of parliament 1790-1820* Thorne, R.G. (ed.), *The history of parliament: the House of Commons, 1790-*



1820 5 vols., (London, 1986). [Where no page or volume is given references are taken from the online edition].

HMC	Historical Manuscript Commission
NA	National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NLI MS.	National Library of Ireland manuscript
ODNB	<i>Oxford dictionary of national biography</i>
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
QUBL	Queen's University Belfast, Library

## *Introduction*

Every year in Trinity College Dublin there is an annual discourse, delivered on Trinity Monday, which reflects on the life of someone with a strong connection to the university. In 1930 it was given on the nineteenth century patriot, Thomas Davis, and during the course of the lecture it was suggested, 'that for some twenty years after the Act of Union our history is a blank.'<sup>1</sup> Recently A.P.W. Malcomson, in his reassessment of the life of John Foster, has repeated this point, alluding to this gap in the historiography and the necessity 'to throw light on "the missing years" between the union and catholic emancipation.'<sup>2</sup> Over the past twenty years there has been a wealth of material which has dealt with the forces leading up to the passing of the Act of Union in 1800 and the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. In the same period there has been an even greater amount of material published on the gradual unravelling of the union. But, surprisingly, there has been very little attention paid to the crucial years following its passing that were central to how it developed. This thesis is a deliberate attempt to fill-in some of the 'missing years' by examining how successive Irish administrations dealt with the union, and specifically the politics of implementation, in the first fifteen years after it came into affect. It seeks to make an original contribution by examining a period largely ignored by historians, and demonstrating how these different administrations faced the challenges of making the union complete.

Between the years 1801 and 1815, the union defined the relationship between Great Britain and Ireland in a manner that makes this period of Irish history unique.

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<sup>1</sup> Bolton C. Waller, *Thomas Davis (1814-1845): a commemorative address delivered in the chapel of Trinity College Dublin on Trinity Monday, 1930*, (Dublin, 1930), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> A. P. W. Malcomson, *John Foster (1740-1828) : the politics of improvement and prosperity*, (Dublin, 2011), p. 163.

Fundamentally altering the state of politics in both countries, the union sought to settle centuries old problems of British governance in Ireland. This would result, 'from the first day of January...in the year of our lord one thousand eight hundred and one, *and for ever after*', in the two countries being 'united into one kingdom, by the name of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland'.<sup>3</sup> This careful wording signified the vision that was held up by the architects of the measure. The union was intended to be the definitive act that would shape the Anglo-Irish relationship for all time.

In 1801 the departing lord lieutenant, Lord Cornwallis, was convinced that the union was incomplete. It had been intended to accompany the union with catholic emancipation, but the intransigence of the king had put an end to that. The government of William Pitt collapsed, Cornwallis and his chief secretary, Lord Castlereagh, resigned, and a new ministry was formed under Henry Addington resistant to catholic claims. The problem was that no one had really put much thought into what would happen next in Ireland; everyone had been preoccupied with just making sure the union passed. Pitt may have had some idea, but he was no longer in power, and so control of Irish affairs fell to men who had no clear vision of how the union should be implemented. There was no political road-map for Ireland, and so things were made up as they went along.

## ***Structure***

This thesis is in four sections. The first section looks at the key year of 1801, when so many of the key decisions were made about how post-union politics would operate in Ireland. This was a time of paralysing confusion in the Irish administration

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<sup>3</sup> Part of 'article first' in An act for the union with Ireland, 40 Geo. III, c. 67 [GB] (2 July 1800). [My emphasis].



because no one was really clear about respective powers and responsibilities, or who had authority for what. This was perhaps understandable given the circumstances in which the previous government had collapsed, but it made for uncomfortable work in Dublin Castle. The earl of Hardwicke had been sent to Ireland as Cornwallis's successor, and he faced a series of power battles over both his role and the role of the Irish administration. Some of these battles were within his own administration, some were with opponents in Ireland, and some were with the ministry in London.

The new home secretary was Lord Pelham (himself a former chief secretary for Ireland) and he had his own view of how Ireland should be run. He wondered whether a lord lieutenant was even necessary for Ireland, now that the countries were united, and sought to downgrade the role. Militarily there was no longer to be a commander-in-chief in Ireland, only a commander of the forces, and this was resisted by Hardwicke who saw it as a loss of prestige, and something that diminished his own role. The running battle he maintained against the Home Office on this point, and his concern with maintaining his own status, will be explored in Chapter One. Within his own administration Hardwicke was challenged by two figures who had been key players in the pre-union cabinets. The first was Edward Cooke, the influential Castle undersecretary, who was eventually forced out. The second was Lord Clare, the lord chancellor, whose death ended a key challenge to Hardwicke's authority. The way he responded to these challenges will be explored in Chapter Two. But there were other challenges, and Hardwicke found himself struggle to assert his authority. The most serious conflict was with the home secretary and this will be explored in Chapter Three. Hardwicke played a clever game in maintaining his position by appealing over Pelham's head to the prime minister and other influential figures, and ultimately even threatening to resign rather

than back down. Faced with this resistance, Pelham was outflanked, and Hardwicke carried the argument.

The second section looks at Hardwicke in office between 1802 and his recall in 1806. During this time there was a change of ministry in London, following the return of Pitt as prime minister in 1804, but this did not lead to a change of direction in Ireland. Catholic emancipation was still off the agenda, and there was no appetite for doing anything to destabilise the new government. During this time Hardwicke faced a number of issues, including attempting to close the 'union account' on patronage and engagements (Chapter Four); a possible disclosure of corrupt but secret measures used to pass the union (Chapter Five); and also the political ramification of Robert Emmet's rebellion in July of 1803 and its influence in shifting attitudes to the union (Chapter Six).

The death of Pitt on 23 January 1806 led to the creation of the Ministry of All the Talents under Lord Grenville as prime minister. Hardwicke was replaced and the duke of Bedford came to Ireland as viceroy. Bedford's mission was to complete the union, and so he took a markedly different approach to the politics of implementation. The emphasis now was on securing the support of the catholics, of including them within the benefits of the union, and winning their trust. Section Three of the thesis examines Bedford's time in Ireland and makes extensive use of the Bedford Papers at Woburn Abbey which have until now been underutilised by historians. Chapter Seven explores the circumstances of Bedford's appointment, and how it was meant to signify a new direction in Irish politics. The politics of implementation now took a different line, with the emphasis on making the union complete. The union engagements were put aside, and there was an explicit attempt to signal a break with the past. Chapter Eight explores



military matters, and how Bedford used his own personal initiative to keep the country tranquil, by embarking on a major tour of the country. This section of the thesis provides a radical new interpretation of a neglected viceroyalty, and shows that there was an explicit attempt to complete the union in 1806-1807 by following conciliatory policies.

The issue of catholic emancipation contributed directly to the collapse of the Grenville ministry. A hard line government under the duke of Portland was brought in with a new viceroy for Ireland, the duke of Richmond. Richmond was brought in as an antidote to the conciliatory policies of Bedford. There was to be no attempt to enlist the support of the catholics, and there was no more talk of completing the union. As far as Richmond was concerned the union was complete (Chapter Nine). Therefore all that needed to be done was to make it work by maintaining law and order. Section Four looks at the challenges Richmond faced between 1807 and 1813, under three different prime ministers, Portland, Spencer Perceval, and finally, Lord Liverpool. However, this section also provides a case study of one of the most neglected chief secretaries, William Wellesley Pole, who altered his opinions of how the union should work, and left Ireland convinced that emancipation was needed to complete the union (Chapter Ten).

Richmond also changed during his time in office. He came to Ireland with a reputation as a lightweight, someone with a drink problem who was only interested in sporting endeavours. There was certainly more to him than this, and section four shows how he successfully faced the remaining challenges of the politics of implementation. But by the end of his time in Ireland he had become a liability. He had been hardened by the challenges he had faced, and it seems like his personal battles may also have played their part in affecting his judgement. By 1813 he was an extremist, his advice amounting

to little more than a series of rants, for example, suggesting that a new rebellion was needed in Ireland, provoked by the government, to sort out the disaffected (Chapter Eleven). He was replaced by Lord Whitworth, and from that point on the key figure in the administration was the chief secretary, and not the lord lieutenant.

A constant challenge throughout the period being examined in this thesis was how to honour all of the union promises that had been made to secure it. These proved a drain on the patronage available to a lord lieutenant for over a decade. Hardwicke did his best to honour the promises that had been made, seeing it as the main part of his job in completing the union. His successor, Bedford, had a different idea. His mission was to complete the union, to secure catholic support, and so he wanted a break with the past. The union engagements were a reminder of the corruption which had been used to secure it, and so they were largely set aside. When Richmond was in power there was a subtle refocusing. Richmond cared about making his administration work, and so he needed control of patronage. The union promises were largely set aside, not for reasons of principle but for reasons of pragmatism. The theme of the union promises is explored throughout all four of the sections and was to be a major focus of the politics of implementation.

This thesis is a contribution to the high-political history of the Anglo-Irish relationship in the opening fifteen or so years of the nineteenth century. It looks to bridge the gap between the excellent research work which has been done on the 1780s and 1790s, with the studies of nineteenth century constitutional nationalism and radical republicanism for the 1820s and beyond. In doing so it makes a much needed contribution to Irish, and to an extent British, historiography. K. Theodore Hoppen



indicated that this gap existed when he stated, 'politically the two decades following the union are often dismissed as something of an incomprehensible hiatus during which "things" in some mysterious way "took time to adjust"'.<sup>4</sup> This thesis is therefore a concerted effort to unravel that mystery and takes its lead from Hoppen's suggestion that in viewing the early-nineteenth century through this limited lens, 'is to see politics in too narrow a light.'

### *Chronological scope*

The thesis is, broadly speaking, chronological in fashion. It traces the development of the Anglo-Irish relationship largely through the lord lieutenancies of the first three viceroys after the union: the earl of Hardwicke (1801-1806); the duke of Bedford (1806-1807); and the duke of Richmond (1807-1813). The thesis is consciously bookended by the union itself in 1801, and the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815. Such a starting point is obvious, but the necessity to end this study in 1815, during the viceroyalty of Lord Whitworth, requires some explanation. The key reason is that by that time the politics of implementation had been completed. The political and administrative structures had been fixed, and everything had been decided. The rise of a new catholic nationalism, under Daniel O'Connell, in 1815 also marks it out as representing a new break in Irish history.

The protracted period of warfare between Britain and France from 1793-1815, defined by David Bell as 'the first total war', had greatly influenced how politics had

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<sup>4</sup> K. Theodore Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800 : conflict and conformity*, (2nd ed., London, 1999), p. 17.



been done at Westminster.<sup>5</sup> As John Bew, the biographer of Lord Castlereagh, a principle architect of the union, notes, the war had dominated his subject's 'personal and political life' and for the majority of the leading British political figures of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries a similar principle applies.<sup>6</sup> Most importantly, the union had been presented throughout its inception, not least by William Pitt, as a great measure of imperial security that would ensure Ireland's continued place in the empire and close off the backdoor to invasion. The abortive French expedition to Bantry Bay in 1796 and the United Irishmen led rebellion of 1798 put particular emphasis on these points. Thomas Bartlett provides the best discussion of this topic and suggests that 'this theme of empire in the general union debate' had been 'so common – and...so attractive' to its proponents.<sup>7</sup> The fear of invasion and the desire to maintain the indivisible strength of the empire remained pressing concerns throughout the period under scrutiny here. However, with the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte by the duke of Wellington (who as Arthur Wellesley served as chief secretary in Ireland from 1807-1809) those presenting the imperial argument in favour of union were compelled to change their focus.

The second reason for ending this study in 1815 is to do with considerations that lay closer to the heart of the United Kingdom. This thesis makes a marked attempt to look beyond the catholic question as the sole defining concern of Irish and British politics in the early-nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> There can be no doubting however, that by

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<sup>5</sup> David Avrom Bell, *The first total war : Napoleon's Europe and the birth of modern warfare*, (London, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> John Bew, *Castlereagh: Enlightenment, war and tyranny*, (London, 2011), p. 355.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Bartlett, "'An union for empire": the Anglo-Irish union as an imperial project', in Michael Brown, Patrick M. Geoghegan and James Kelly (eds.), *The Irish Act of Union, 1800: Bicentennial Essays*, (Dublin, 2003), p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> This was the medium through which Bartlett developed his own survey of the post-union period in: Thomas Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation : the Catholic question 1690-1830*, (Dublin, 1992).

1815 the catholic movement had been transformed. Most notably, in January 1815 as Patrick Geoghegan contends, Daniel O'Connell won 'his long-desired victory over the old catholic aristocracy.' He had 'eviscerated the old catholic body' and while 'it remained to be seen what O'Connell would achieve with the new one', he was now effectively the undisputed leader of the catholics of Ireland.<sup>9</sup> This ensured that full, undiluted emancipation was from that point the driving aspiration of the catholic movement, and remained as such until 1829. While agitation on this point had been building throughout the period, with commentators in Dublin Castle noting from the early 1810s the radical dimension men like O'Connell and Denys Scully brought to the movement, this break from the traditional catholic leadership represents a discernible change in how catholics would from now on engage with successive administrations in Britain and Ireland.

Coupled with this, and as is expanded upon in Chapter Eleven, the departure of Richmond in 1813 from Ireland led to the beginnings of a determined change in how the Irish administration functioned, especially in relation to the interplay of the offices of lord lieutenant and chief secretary. From that time, and as Lord Liverpool the prime minister suggested, the chief secretary was to be 'the channel through which the power and patronage of Ireland must flow.'<sup>10</sup> Thus, by 1815, two years after the end of Richmond's tenure, there was a recognisable shift in the power relationship in Ireland.

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<sup>9</sup> Patrick M. Geoghegan, *King Dan : the rise of Daniel O'Connell, 1775-1829*, (Dublin, 2008), pp.145-146; Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800*, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Brian Jenkins, *Era of emancipation: British government of Ireland 1812-1830*, (Montreal, 1988), p. 78.



## *Historiography*

### *Part 1: 'How did the pass the union?'*

The study of the passing of the Act of Union has been the dominant theme in the historiography of the union. The majority of what has been written about the measure, both by nineteenth century contemporaries and by modern historians has focused on this topic. Any review of the historiographical progression of the union must invariably begin almost immediately following the moment the legislation was brought into effect. Those histories however, were dominated by either unionist or, more predominantly, anti-unionist agendas that only recent accounts of the measure have begun to overcome. While this study is concerned with the implementation and operation of the union, as opposed to its inception, any attempt to contextualise such work must be aware of those studies that pay particular attention to this dominant theme in the literature of union history. These early histories of the union are encapsulated by works that include Jonah Barrington's, *Rise and fall of the Irish nation*, Henry Grattan junior's *Life of his father*, Francis Plowden's, *An historical review of the state of Ireland* and Charles Coote's, *History of the union of the kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland*.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, contributions from ultra-protestants like Patrick Duigenan and Sir Richard Musgrave added to the complexity of the matter.<sup>12</sup> The most common claims made by anti-unionist (for later interpretations read: nationalist) authors included accusations that the British

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<sup>11</sup> Jonah Barrington, *Rise and fall of the Irish nation*, (Paris, 1833); Henry Grattan Jnr, *Memoirs of the life and times of the Rt. Hon. Henry Grattan*, 5 vols. (London, 1839-46).; Francis Plowden, *An historical review of the state of Ireland from the invasion of that country under Henry II to its union with Great Britain on the first of January 1801*, (London, 1803); Charles Coote, *History of the Union of the kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland*, (London, 1802).

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed discussion of Duigenan's 'works' see: Peter Jupp, 'Dr. Duigenan reconsidered', in Sabine Wichert and Anthony Terence Quincey Stewart, *From the United Irishmen to twentieth-century Unionism: a festschrift for A.T.Q. Stewart*, (Dublin, 2004), pp. 83-96; Likewise, for Musgrave see: Jacqueline Hill, 'Dublin after the union: The age of the ultra protestants, 1801-22', in Brown, Geoghegan and Kelly (eds.), *Union: Bicentennial Essays*.



government had fermented the United Irishmen led rebellion of 1798 in order to introduce a union and that the union was passed entirely against the will of the Irish people, and then only through corruption and fraud. For the most part unionist history worked to counteract these claims, the best of which came in 1887, written by Thomas Dunbar Ingram.<sup>13</sup> All of these publications followed a prescribed line, and this material published in the years following the union made little attempt to interpret the historical facts impartially, often overlooking elements of the history that did not sit well with their respective arguments.

The first truly modern and pioneering work on the union was produced by G.C. Bolton in 1966. Following a distinctly Namierite approach, Bolton's main thrust challenged the almost two hundred year old mentality that the methods employed by the government were entirely corrupt if not illegal. Rather he said patronage and employment were accepted by men in the Irish parliament who 'too often forgot the larger issues in the scuffles and manoeuvres of party feuding' and were not simply prone to corruption, or less than ethical measures.<sup>14</sup> Bolton's findings on this subject became standard for a significant period of time, as evidenced in the work of Oliver MacDonagh and S.J. Connolly, the former stating in 1977 that 'much of the "bribery" and "corruption" which eased the passage of the bill was, in contemporary eyes, mere compensation for the loss of political or administrative "property"'.<sup>15</sup> And similarly, as Connolly noted in 1989, 'the prominence of patronage before 1801 was the result not of any exceptional tendency to corruption among politicians'.<sup>16</sup> The influence of Michael MacDonagh's 1904 *The viceroy's post-bag* in helping form this perception, providing as

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<sup>13</sup> T. Dunbar Ingram, *A history of the legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland*, (London, 1887).

<sup>14</sup> G. C. Bolton, *The passing of the Irish Act of Union : a study in parliamentary politics*, (London, 1966).

<sup>15</sup> Oliver MacDonagh, *Ireland: The Union and its Aftermath*, (2nd ed., Dublin, 2003), pp. 5-6.

<sup>16</sup> S.J. Connolly, 'Aftermath and adjustment' in F. X. Martin, F. J. Byrne, W. E. Vaughan, et al., *A new history of Ireland, 5, Ireland under the Union, I, 1801-70*, (Oxford, 1989), p. 3.

it did ready access to published primary sources, should also be noted.<sup>17</sup> It also established the idea that patronage itself was the defining concern of Hardwicke's administration.

The influence of this interpretation, however, was broken largely due to the prompting of new research in the anticipation of the bicentenary of the union in 2000. Of primary note are the works of David Wilkinson in his 1997 essay and the much more detailed work of Patrick M. Geoghegan in 1999 in *The Irish Act of Union: a study in high politics*.<sup>18</sup> Both these studies reopened the debate on the use of corrupt measures in passing the union, centring their arguments on newly discovered archival material which indicated the use of secret service funds in ensuring a government victory. Thirty three years on from Bolton's study, Geoghegan's book in particular, once again revised the accepted thinking on the subjects of corruption and illegality throughout the union debates. Furthermore, it seems to have conclusively established that legally questionable measures were entertained by both the pro- and anti-union parties.

The bicentenary in 2000 also saw the publication of a number of collections of essays on various subjects concerned with the union. These works are some of the most valuable contributions to the historiography of the union as they deal with specific themes, from the importance of empire in union decision making, to the catholic question and even the power of the novel, in the words of Clare Connolly, in 'completing the

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<sup>17</sup> Michael MacDonagh, *The viceroy's post-bag : Correspondence, hitherto unpublished, of the Earl of Hardwicke, first lord lieutenant of Ireland after the Union*, (London 1904). Detailed analysis of MacDonagh's work will be provided in sections 1 and 2.

<sup>18</sup> David Wilkinson, "How Did They Pass the Union?": Secret Service Expenditure in Ireland, 1799-1804', in *History*, 82 266 (1997), pp. 223-251 and Patrick M. Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union : a study in high politics, 1798-1801*, (Dublin, 1999).



union'.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the Royal Historical Society published volume brought together a host of papers concerning the union that had been compiled in 1999 and 2000.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Part 2: Why did they pass the union?***

When considering the operation of the union and the limited, often survey length work that have touched on that question, it is worthwhile to ask, not *how* but *why* did they pass the union? Certainly, the arguments advanced by the British government before the act took effect centred on imperial security and stability. The union would act as a gateway to empire, bringing Ireland into the imperial fold and making the country and its people fundamental parts in the grand imperial project. In Ireland itself a proportion of the protestant ascendancy saw the union as the means to ensure their political dominance. However, for Pitt, Castlereagh and Cornwallis, union had to be coupled with catholic relief and the emancipation of the Irish catholics was the essential stepping stone in making a viable union. Of course the collapse of Pitt's ministry on catholic issues and his resignation alongside those of his agents in Dublin, botched the process of completing the union. The emancipationist streak that penetrated the government's thinking at this point, alongside considerations on trade and finance (as Hoppen writes: 'economics in general and finance in particular probably constituted the jewels in this not very impressive crown'<sup>21</sup>), suggests that some vision of a post-union settlement existed.<sup>22</sup> Pitt assumed that he would continue in office, and the working out of the details of the

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<sup>19</sup> Clare Connolly, 'Completing the union? The Irish novel and the moment of union' in Brown, Geoghegan and Kelly (eds.), *Union : Bicentennial Essays*, pp. 157-175.

<sup>20</sup> Daire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Acts of Union : the causes, contexts, and consequences of the Act of Union*, (Dublin, 2001); Brown, Geoghegan and Kelly (eds.), *Union : Bicentennial Essays* ; Royal Historical Society, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, (Sixth Series), Vol. 10, 2000.

<sup>21</sup> K. Theodore Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union? British Politicians and Ireland 1800-1830', in *English Historical Review*, CXXIII 501 (2008), pp. 328-350, p. 340.

<sup>22</sup> Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800*, p. 16; Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998 : politics and war*, (Oxford, 1999), p. 27.

new relationship would take shape as a matter of course.<sup>23</sup> Handing over the reins of power to men who had had nothing to do with the union however, ensured that those same details became huge problems.

This thesis is in part a study then of these problems, considering what worked and not just what failed to work in the fifteen years after the formation of the United Kingdom. As such it is important to take note of Alvin Jackson's recent assertion that, 'given this complicated nativity, and given its apparent lack of historical legitimacy, the union...might indeed have been an immediate and complete failure.'<sup>24</sup> However it survived and endured, despite the controversy. Therefore one of the primary goals of this thesis is to address the ramifications of this failure to plan for what happened next. This thesis looks at the union in the context of the nineteenth century, not simply looking back at eighteenth century preoccupations. In this way it will break new ground.

As mentioned, the survey works of leading scholars like Bew, Boyce, Jackson, Hoppen and MacDonagh are all limited by the wider chronological scope of their endeavours. They fail to take adequate account of this critical period in the development of the Anglo-Irish relationship.<sup>25</sup> An indication of the missing years is the insistence of many historians to quickly progress their studies on post-union Ireland to the mid and later part of the nineteenth century – O'Connell and emancipation in the 1820s; repeal in 1830s and 40s; the famine; the ministries of Wellington and Peel in Britain; Young Ireland; the land war and C.S. Parnell in Ireland, and so on. The important work of R.B.

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<sup>23</sup> Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, pp. 208-226.

<sup>24</sup> Alvin Jackson, *The two unions : Ireland, Scotland, and the survival of the United Kingdom, 1707-2007*, (Oxford, 2012), p. 188.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Bew, *Ireland : the politics of enmity, 1789-2006*, (Oxford, 2007); David George Boyce, *Nineteenth-century Ireland : the search for stability*, (Dublin, 1990); Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*; Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800*; MacDonagh, *The union and its aftermath*; Oliver MacDonagh, *States of mind : a study of Anglo-Irish conflict 1780-1980*, (London, 1983).



McDowell, admirable in so many ways, is particularly guilty in this regard.<sup>26</sup> This thesis will fill that gap, by showing how the implementation of the union affected the Irish administration in the years 1801 to 1815.

Similarly, where attempts have been made to examine the opening years of the century, work has almost exclusively focused on religious concerns as often the sole catalyst behind political developments, as evidenced in Bartlett's excellent *The fall and rise of the Irish nation*, and Connolly's much needed contributions to *A new history of Ireland*.<sup>27</sup> This thesis is an obvious departure from this mode however, actively looking beyond religion as the only driving force shaping the Anglo-Irish relationship in this period. It is an attempt to see Ireland as part of a more complex panoply of political issues within the United Kingdom as a whole between 1801-1815 – not simply to work with exclusivity and insularity as common themes. As Bartlett suggests, within thirty years of the union 'the catholic question became in fact what it had been all along, the Irish question'.<sup>28</sup>

There is however what might be termed a new generation of union history writing. While Edward Brynn's *Crown and Castle* appeared in 1978<sup>29</sup>, these publications have mostly come in the 2000s and 2010s. They include collections of essays, as well as new biographies of some of the leading figures in the period, the most important of which are Bew's *Castlereagh*, Geoghegan's *King Dan* and Malcomson's *John Foster*.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> R. B. McDowell, *The Irish administration, 1801-1914*, (London, 1964). See also: R. B. McDowell, *Public opinion and government policy in Ireland, 1801-1846*, (London, 1952), which in a sense replaces administration with public opinion and continues in the same vein.

<sup>27</sup> Bartlett, *Fall and Rise*; Martin, Byrne, Vaughan, et al. (eds.), *A new history of Ireland*, 5, pp. 1-107.

<sup>28</sup> Bartlett, *Fall and Rise*, p. 374.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Brynn, *Crown and castle : British rule in Ireland, 1800-1830*, (Dublin, 1978).

<sup>30</sup> David George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds.), *Defenders of the Union : a survey of British and Irish unionism since 1801*, (London, 2001); Wichert and Stewart (eds.), *From the United Irishmen to twentieth-*

Alongside these, studies on the political and social development of specific regions such as Belfast, Cork and Dublin in the nineteenth century have been valuable.<sup>31</sup> Some unpublished theses also fall under this category.<sup>32</sup>

Likewise, important contributions from Douglas Kanter and Hoppen have developed methodologies which have influenced this thesis, and their works will be discussed with in detail later.<sup>33</sup> Alvin Jackson's 2012 pioneering comparative analysis of the Irish and Scottish unions begs the question as to why such a study had not previously been conducted. His brief historiographical essay entitled 'corruption and betrayal' is particularly noteworthy.<sup>34</sup> Ultimately though, his three hundred year long discussion (1707-2007) is only partly relevant for this thesis, as its stated aim 'to compare and combine national histories in an effort to illuminate the survival of union' is well outside its parameters.<sup>35</sup>

However, this thesis differs from nearly all these works in terms of its focused analysis of the first fifteen years of the union relationship. At the same time it builds upon the vital biographical work mentioned by contextualising these important individuals within the high-political nuances of the period. Hoppen and Kanter are

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*century Unionism*; Bew, *Castlereagh*; Patrick M. Geoghegan, *Robert Emmet : a life*, (Dublin, 2002); Geoghegan, *King Dan*; Malcomson, *Foster...improvement and prosperity*.

<sup>31</sup> John Bew, *The glory of being Britons : civic unionism in nineteenth-century Belfast*, (Dublin, 2009); Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, *The 'Natural leaders' and their world : politics, culture and society in Belfast, c.1801-1832*, (Liverpool, 2012); David Dickson, *Old world colony : Cork and south Munster 1630-1830*, (Cork, 2005); David Dickson, 'Death of a capital? Dublin and the consequences of union' in Peter Clark and Raymond Gillespie (eds.), *Two capitals : London and Dublin, 1500-1840*, (Oxford, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> Patrick Polden, 'The domestic policies of the Addington administration, 1801-4', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Reading, 1975); Trevor Robert Mc Cavery, 'Finance and politics in Ireland, 1801-17', (Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 1981); Jennifer Ridden, "'Making good citizens": National identity, religion, and liberalism among Irish elite, c. 1800-1850', (Ph.D. thesis, King's College, University of London, 1998); Michael P. Cahill, 'Church and state relations in Ireland, 1770-1829', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 2001).

<sup>33</sup> Douglas Kanter, *The making of British unionism, 1740-1848 : politics, government, and the Anglo-Irish constitutional relationship*, (Dublin, 2009); Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?'

<sup>34</sup> Jackson, *The two unions*, pp. 184-187.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 26.



particularly relevant and their work is discussed in detail throughout the thesis, notably in sections two and three.

### ***Methodology***

The framework supplied in essays by Hoppen in what are two of the most recent and important contributions to the historiography of the post-union years, is extremely useful in helping to form a methodological approach for this thesis.<sup>36</sup> Initially, Hoppen proposed that in 1799 and 1800, ‘much was left hanging in the wind, and it soon became apparent that the act would require pragmatic interpretation and infilling in both the shorter and longer term.’<sup>37</sup> This thesis tackles these shorter term concerns, building on Hoppen’s excellent foundational research, but embracing a more dedicated, specialised study of the period 1801-1815. Hoppen’s work followed a methodology which focused on the various approaches to governance adopted by British politicians between 1801 and 1830, dwelling on concepts of incorporation and integration throughout the period. He also shows the viability, as he does in his 2012 essay, in using the tenure in office of multiple lords lieutenant and their relationship with their political superiors in Whitehall as a fulcrum around which such a study can pivot. In fact, the 2012 volume *The Irish lord lieutenancy* aimed to ‘address a significant gap in our understanding of the history of Irish governance and British-Irish relations’.<sup>38</sup> With contributions from leading scholars such as Toby Barnard, Ciaran Brady, Keith Jeffery and James Kelly, it argued that the role of Irish viceroys in shaping and defining the history of the relationship

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<sup>36</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?' and K. Theodore Hoppen, 'A question none could answer: "What was the vicerealty for?"', 1800-1921', in Peter Gray and Olwen Purdue (eds.), *The Irish Lord Lieutenancy, c. 1541-1922* (Dublin, 2012).

<sup>37</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 328.

<sup>38</sup> Peter Gray and Olwen Purdue, 'The Irish lord lieutenancy, c. 1541-1922', in Gray and Purdue (eds.), *The Irish Lord Lieutenancy*, p. 1.



between the two countries in both the early modern and modern period was one of particular importance. This work contributes a similar study for the period 1801-1815.

This thesis though goes further, and argues that the distinctiveness of each of the three respective post-union administrations at Dublin Castle allows for a critical study of the often competing, sometimes contradictory and nearly always confused plans on how best to govern an Ireland that was now part of the United Kingdom. This is a departure from previous studies as it marks out this period as one of integral importance, in its own right, for the better understanding of the development of the Anglo-Irish relationship under the union. This is one of the most important elements of this thesis as it is really the only study to date to address this period in such a dedicated manner.

While Hoppen's work is perhaps the best in this regard, it is worth noting that he completely overlooks the viceroyalty of the duke of Bedford (1806-1807). This however is not unique.<sup>39</sup> As is stressed in section three, this thesis is the first to analyse the Irish papers of the duke of Bedford in their entirety. This contributes a completely new dimension to the historical study of this period. What is more, the importance of his time in office, under the Ministry of All the Talents in London, gives a more nuanced understanding of British approaches to governance in Ireland in the early nineteenth century. This was a moment when a different mode of governance could have been tried

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<sup>39</sup> Bedford is completely absent for example from some of the key surveys: Boyce, *Nineteenth-century Ireland : the search for stability* ; Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972*, (London, 1989 ); Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*. However his time in Ireland and the impact of the Ministry of all the Talents, is touched upon in a brief section in Bew, *Ireland : the politics of enmity*, pp. 77-79. S.J. Connolly gives some good insights in Martin, Byrne, Vaughan, et al. (eds.), *A New History of Ireland*, 5, esp. pp. 31-34, although entirely in the context of the catholic question, with no reference to any of the Bedford material used here. Similarly, Bedford is referred to in this volume as the 9th duke of Bedford, when in fact he was the 6th, [p. 833].

and developed – one which was active in its engagement with specifically Irish concerns and particularly Irish catholic issues.

The thesis has also taken its direction from the work of some leading scholars in an Irish as well as an international context. For example, the work of Jane Ohlmeyer in *Making Ireland English*, has been particularly important.<sup>40</sup> Ohlmeyer balances her general chronological and thematic approaches with specific case studies over three distinct sections, and this thesis has employed a similar approach.<sup>41</sup> The use of case studies in sections two and four in particular attempts to contextualise the complex and often competing pressures acting on key figures throughout the period. As Ohlmeyer suggests of her period certain inextricable concerns and values penetrated elite society in Ireland,<sup>42</sup> likewise, this thesis would argue that from 1801-1815 the union was one such defining influence.

### ***Implementing ‘the great and most important measure of the union’***

In 1801 the union was not complete. The failure to accompany the measure with the emancipation of the catholics of the United Kingdom was to shatter any hope of any kind of ‘pure’ union. Implementing the union, then, meant not the fulfilment of pre-union concepts, limited as they may have been. But rather the politics of implementation operated on the principles of making the union work, *despite* its failings.

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<sup>40</sup> Jane Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English : the Irish aristocracy in the seventeenth century*, (New Haven, Conn. and London, 2012).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 11-16.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, esp. pp. 64-65 and pp. 211-212.



Two of the Act of Union's most adherent supporters, indeed the two men who more than anyone ensured the act was passed, Cornwallis and Castlereagh, were in 1801 not far from considering the union was doomed to ultimate failure. As Castlereagh put it, 'the union has removed a great impediment to a better system; but the union will do little in itself, unless it be followed up.'<sup>43</sup> However, in a letter to his successor, the earl of Hardwicke, which until now has not been analysed by historians, Cornwallis was more precise. 'I felt a most perfect persuasion that the great work would still be very incomplete'.<sup>44</sup> He went on, 'there would be no solid security for the permanent peace of Ireland'. He suggested that 'unless the act of uniting the legislatures of the two kingdoms was immediately followed by the admission of the catholics to the full enjoyment of all the privileges', Cornwallis was far from convinced of the ultimate success of the union. He saw the fall of Pitt's government and the king's refusal to continue emancipation as a most 'calamitous event' that would 'make the deepest impression upon the mind of every man who feels an interest in the welfare of his country'. Furthermore, Cornwallis revealed he had gone to Ireland a reluctant viceroy, 'my favourite wish', he told Hardwicke, 'was for quiet and retirement'. It was the 1798 Rebellion and the inherent danger that it presented to the Anglo-Irish connection and empire 'that could alone have prevailed upon me', he said. 'It was always my intention to return as soon as tranquillity and order' had been restored. Cornwallis was a soldier and not a politician, but he said, 'the great and most important measure of the union detained me here much longer than I expected.' Yet, by 1801 Cornwallis was gone and politics of implementation fell to others. This thesis is thus an examination of what happened next.

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<sup>43</sup> 'On the expediency of making further concessions to the catholics', n.d., in *Castlereagh corr.*, iv, p. 400.

<sup>44</sup> Cornwallis to Hardwicke, 28 February 1801, (EBL private collection, Box 1 – File 3C). The possible existence of this letter was inferred by Edward Cooke on 27 February 1801. Cooke noted in a communication with Castlereagh that Hardwicke had requested Cornwallis' advice on the matter of catholic relief, 'That on *the* question his [Hardwicke's] mind is not made up; that he wishes for Lord Cornwallis's opinion'. Cornwallis, as this letter proves, responded immediately. [Cooke to Castlereagh, 27 February 1801, *Castlereagh corr.*, iv, p. 63].



### *The lord lieutenant and his chief secretaries*

Chief secretaries did not last long in Ireland during the formative years of the union relationship. Between 1801 and 1812 ten separate appointees held the office, serving under just three lords lieutenant. Hardwicke set the tone for such a high turnover by having no less than five men serve with him: Charles Abbot (1801-1802); William Wickham (1802-1804); Sir Evan Nepean (1804-1805); Nicholas Vansittart (1805); and Charles Long (1805-1806). Bedford, not surprisingly considering the length of time of his viceroyalty, had just one: William Elliot (1806-1807). Richmond saw four chief secretaries arrive at Dublin Castle during his five year tenure: Sir Arthur Wellesley (1807-1809); Robert Dundas (1809); William Wellesley-Pole (1809-1812), and Robert Peel (1812-13, continuing into Whitworth's and Talbot's administrations and serving until 1818). In comparison the same period witnessed the office of undersecretary for civil affairs change hands just four times.<sup>45</sup> E.B. Littlehales, as military undersecretary, held on to his post for eighteen years from 1801-1819.<sup>46</sup> Castlereagh's success in Ireland, as the last chief secretary before the union, and 'the friendly and equal partnership' he enjoyed alongside Cornwallis, seemed to pave the way for the continued growth in the influence of the chief secretary's office on into the 1800s.<sup>47</sup>

R.B. McDowell's important work on the Irish administration suggests that almost from the moment of the union taking effect, the rise in the stature and prominence of the chief secretary was assured. This is not surprising considering that 'his parliamentary duties and the fact that he could be in close contact with cabinet ministers tended to

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<sup>45</sup> McDowell, *Public opinion*, p. 294.

<sup>46</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 18.

<sup>47</sup> McDowell, *The Irish administration*, p. 57.

increase his importance at the expense of his nominal chief'.<sup>48</sup> Brynn supports this view in a section of his work actually subtitled 'the rise of the chief secretary'. As he notes, 'because they sat in parliament, and because they often negotiated directly with the Irish political proprietors, chief secretaries were capable of "great power and mischief."<sup>49</sup> However, there was a regression in the ability of the office to exert its power or attain the lofty heights of political influence which Castlereagh had possessed. Indeed, while McDowell is not as explicit in his assertion as Brynn, who writes 'not until 1812 was the full potential of the office of chief secretary realised', both authors do agree that this was a turning point in the relationship between lord lieutenant and chief secretary following the union.<sup>50</sup> It is no coincidence that in this year Robert Peel, a man who would hold significant sway over the politics of the United Kingdom for much of the first half of the nineteenth century took over the office. Peel's tenure gave the office a sense of longevity it had sorely lacked since the union and allowed him to apply himself completely to Irish government. More recent studies too have looked at the 'the very rapid turnover of chief secretaries in the years before Peel's appointment in 1812'.<sup>51</sup> However, it is worth stressing that this 'reinforced' the 'fairly general agreement that the viceroy was still the more powerful' throughout the period from 1801 until this date. By examining this development as a subtheme throughout the period under study here, this thesis provides a better understanding of this complex, but so far inconsistently explored theme.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 58.

<sup>49</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 48; McDowell, *The Irish administration, 1801-1914*, p. 57.

<sup>51</sup> Hoppen, 'A question none could answer', in Peter Gray and Olwen Purdue (eds.), *The Irish Lord Lieutenancy, c. 1541-1922* (Dublin, 2012), p. 144.



## *Conclusion*

Despite all the work that had gone into passing it, and the price that had been paid both financially and politically, the union did not solve everything. It was not the final piece to complete the puzzle of where Ireland fitted into the British empire. Cornwallis in 1801 would have stated that the union was incomplete as long as catholic emancipation was not granted. Hardwicke would have replied that emancipation was impossible, and all that was needed was to work out how to make the new political and administrative arrangement work. However in 1801 it was unknown territory, and no one was quite sure what the union had changed, apart from abolishing the Irish parliament. It was into this complex terrain that the men tasked with implementing the union were drawn. For Bedford in 1806 the union could be made complete, once decisive measures were taken to secure the support of the catholics. For Richmond, his successor, everything had seemingly been settled and it was just about making these new structures work. This thesis explores how the politics of implementation affected successive Irish administrations in the years after the union. In many ways 1801 is the key year, because that was when so many of the key principles were fixed. As time went on there was less and less to do to complete the union, because in so many ways the opportunities it represented had either been taken or, more often, missed.

The lack of a clear vision in 1801 about what to do next created a paralysis of confusion, which Hardwicke was only partly able to overcome. Bedford's idealism offered a new approach to completing the union, but one that also ended in failure. Richmond had no interest in securing the support of the catholics, and he believed all that was necessary to complete the union was to govern with a firm hand. The politics of



implementation defined the history of early nineteenth century Ireland. While this thesis is called 'completing the union', the reality is that despite a number of competing visions the union, ultimately, remained incomplete.

## SECTION ONE

### Chapter One

**‘The machine of government in Ireland will move of itself’:  
the external challenges facing the Irish administration  
in the post-union era.**

‘If the power of the lord lieutenant is reduced but a very little below its present level, [these men] will soon become his rivals; and if from whatever cause he is removed they will become the tyrants of their countrymen’.<sup>1</sup>

(Lord Hardwicke, 1801)

#### *Introduction*

The collapse of William Pitt’s government in 1801, in large part caused by its failure to accompany the union with catholic emancipation, created a new ambiguity in the Anglo-Irish relationship. The union had been intended to resolve these confusions: instead it created some new ones. Much thought had gone into how the union would be passed; very little thought had gone into what would happen afterwards. The change of government only added to the problem. Central to this was the relationship between Dublin Castle and Westminster, between the lord lieutenant of Ireland and the Home Office, and more generally in the relationship between the politicians and administrators in Dublin, and those in London. It was not clear what the role of the lord lieutenant and chief secretary was in Ireland, now that the Irish parliament had been abolished. Nor was it clear

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Hardwicke to Henry Addington, 24 October 1801 (BL. Add. MSS. 45031, f. 68).

if they would have the same authority as before. The appointment of the earl of Hardwicke as the new lord lieutenant of Ireland on 17 March 1801, a date which was hardly a coincidence, was meant to indicate a new era in Anglo-Irish relations.<sup>2</sup> Instead, Hardwicke faced a series of challenges to his authority, both from his colleagues in London and Dublin, as well as from key figures from the pre-union period. This chapter, and successive ones in this section, will argue that his response in 1801 – in resisting these challenges and reasserting the authority of the viceroy – helped redefine the role of the lord lieutenant at this critical period. It was not so much a redefinition as a clarification, and it fixed the roles and responsibilities of the position for at least the next decade.

Hardwicke, himself, was obsessed by these issues. He was determined to do a good job, and work to make the union complete, but he recognised early on that this would be impossible if he was stripped of his authority. Examining his correspondence throughout this period reveals a man who was obsessed with not losing his powers to friends in London or rivals in Dublin. He believed he had to make the union work, and to do this he needed to have real power. However he faced challenges on three fronts. There was a turf-battle with Lord Pelham, the home secretary, over who was really making the key decisions. There was conflict with Edward Cooke, and other Castle officials over what should happen in Dublin. And there was tension with the old junto which had dominated Irish politics in the 1790s, people like John Foster and the earl of Clare, who wanted to re-establish their influence. Hardwicke successfully faced down every single one of these challenges. Pelham was forced out in 1803, and Hardwicke's brother was brought in to replace him, thus reinforcing his position. Cooke, too, did not last very long, and Hardwicke was able to assert his control over the direction of the government. He was not

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<sup>2</sup> MacDonagh, *The viceroy's post-bag*, p. 5.



successful in every respect. Military patronage was taken out of his hands and given to the king's son, the duke of York. His chief secretary, Charles Abbot, played a key role in attempting to reform the administration. This failed because of the unwillingness of the old political elite to give up their power. That said, Hardwicke's success in other areas ensured a kind of reversion to the pre-union arrangements, except one without the overbearing influence of the old junto as during the Westmorland and Camden viceroalties. This was perhaps inevitable given the absence of any road-map for a reformed political structure: most people were inclined to return to the system they knew best. But that is not to downplay the central role played by Hardwicke himself in ensuring this happened. He succeeded because he formed a close partnership with Abbot, and proved a successful political operator in his dealings with London. By playing on fears that Ireland might be lost he was given support at crucial times to implement his vision and this proved decisive.

When Hardwicke's administration came to an end in 1806, following the death of Pitt, there was a critical assessment of its legacy from the lord chancellor of Ireland, Lord Redesdale, who had four years to observe its working first-hand. On 30 January 1806 he complained that in all the departments of government he had found, 'a neglect of duty, a confusion of characters, a want of any proper check or control, a disposition to do nothing, and an obstinate resistance to any attempt to reform'.<sup>3</sup> But he put the blame not on Hardwicke, or any individual in Dublin, but on the failure of the vision of the men who had framed the union, and those who had replaced them. Redesdale correctly noted that 'those who contrived the union seem to have thought only of carrying that measure, without considering how the machine was to work afterwards'. In a brilliant assessment of the Act

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<sup>3</sup> Lord Redesdale to William Wickham, 30 January 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 25.

of Union in the first years of its existence he noted that, ‘they seem to have fancied that such would be the wonderful effect of the union, that, after its accomplishment, the machine of government in Ireland would move of itself’. ‘The consequence’, he assured William Wickham, himself a former chief secretary under Hardwicke, was that, ‘in many parts, the machine cannot work at all’.

One of the biggest challenges facing Hardwicke, which will be explored in Chapter Three, was in fulfilling the ‘union engagements’.<sup>4</sup> Because of that, in Edward Brynn’s view, his ‘reputation has suffered undeservedly’. However there were much more complex issues at stake in the immediate aftermath of the union.<sup>5</sup> These included whether a lord lieutenant was necessary at all, whether the real power should be in the hands of administrators in Dublin and politicians in London, and ultimately who made decisions in Ireland. By examining Hardwicke’s time in office, and by focusing much attention on developments in 1801, which were the critical months following the enactment of the union, then it is possible to gain a significant, new understanding of the nuances of the Anglo-Irish relationship during this period. From studying the diary and correspondence of two of the key players in this era, namely the prime minister, Henry Addington, and the chief secretary of Ireland, Charles Abbot, it becomes clear the criticisms of Redesdale would not have come as any surprise to people in 1801.<sup>6</sup> These were themes which dominated the post-union administration’s deliberations. This section of the thesis will suggest that the decisions made and actions taken by various protagonists in this period

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<sup>4</sup> Edward Brynn, *Crown and Castle*, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> The view that fulfilling the union engagements (those promises of rewards that the government committed itself to in order to pass the union), was the defining and most important aspect of Hardwicke’s time in Ireland was propagated in 1904 by MacDonagh in *The viceroy’s post-bag*. This study remains the first and only substantial work on Hardwicke’s viceroyalty. It has thus shaped the perceptions of his tenure in office ever since.

<sup>6</sup> See particularly: *Addington Life*, i, pp. 432-436 and pp. 479-486; *Abbot Diary*, i, pp. 251-258 and pp. 275-286.



(Hardwicke included), established precedents, policies, and controls, which defined the Anglo-Irish relationship and more importantly, determined how the Act of Union would operate for some time to come.

In 1809 there was another private review of Hardwicke's administration, and this was even more scathing. Thomas Grenville, told his younger brother, Lord Grenville, the former prime minister who had been foreign secretary at the time of the union, that Hardwicke had botched the job in Ireland and had put the union itself at risk: 'In his hands and by his assistance that measure has been stripped of all public good and national security, and has fraternized us only with the nastiest garbage of the Irish place-market.'<sup>7</sup> Thomas Grenville was particularly worried that the union dealings would become public and bring 'into sight all the dirty buyings and sellings of Lord Castlereagh's union.' At the heart of the criticisms was Grenville's belief that Hardwicke's 'shameless defiance of all principal in reference to the catholic question' had damaged the Irish administration in the first decade after the union. The truth is that Hardwicke had gradually become a supporter of catholic emancipation, but his hands were tied on the issue, and he had been reluctant to do anything especially after Robert Emmet's abortive uprising in 1803. The key issue worth exploring, though, is how Hardwicke had worked to fulfil the union promises, and his negotiations with 'the nastiest garbage of the Irish place-market'.

This chapter will explore some critical tests that Hardwicke faced in 1801 in terms of the relationship which was established between the civil and military functions in Ireland. Much of it centred around the appointment of General William Medows as 'commander of the forces' in Ireland, but not – and this was made explicitly clear – as

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas Grenville to Lord Grenville, 7 April 1809, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 291.



‘commander-in-chief’, thus breaking with all pre-union continuity. Hardwicke wanted to be responsible for dispensing at least some military patronage, and he wanted to work with a commander-in-chief who would be ultimately subservient to him, but still militarily imposing. He was given neither. The most important patronage would be allocated by the duke of York, and he faced the humiliation of having someone with a diminished title working alongside him. It might seem that Hardwicke would have been happier with Medows being sent to Ireland with such a reduction because it would reaffirm that he was clearly the dominant figure. But Hardwicke was more intelligent than this. He recognised that if Ireland was sent a military officer with a reduced title and a reduced role then it reflected badly on him, recognisably lessening the office of lord lieutenant in having to liaise with him. There were other issues at stake as well. Hardwicke had not been consulted about the appointment of Medows, he was completely ignored when it came to what was happening, and he was also not supported in his attempts to secure the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham as a base for the new arrival. This was galling, especially now that Hardwicke was seemingly losing the entirety of his authority over the army in Ireland. Hardwicke was thus losing out on a number of fronts, being forced to hand-over power to a clear junior, and the result was degrading to his conception of the lord lieutenant.

The thinking of the British government was more straight forward. It believed that with the union the armies of both Ireland and Great Britain had been merged, the duke of York, should be commander-in-chief of the whole, in other words for the entire United Kingdom. There was a certain logic to this, but the logic also implied further mergings. If Ireland no longer needed a commander-in-chief then it probably didn’t need a lord lieutenant either, and so the downgrading of the military role suggested a downgrading of the political role. It was for this reason that Hardwicke reacted furiously. He did

everything he could to ensure that Medows was styled 'commander-in-chief' and when he could not persuade the British government to change its mind, he simply ignored them and styled Medows 'commander-in-chief' anyway. Medows was persuaded to go along with this recasting of the role, and for a short time used the old title, notably the one he too thought he had. However this small-scale rebellion did not get very far, and Hardwicke was soon slapped down, with Medows established as 'commander of the forces' in Ireland. Hardwicke had lost the battle, and it did signify a loss of prestige for the office of lord lieutenant. He still had the title – but when it came to certain matters in Ireland he no longer had the power.



*FIG. 1*



**Philip Yorke, 3rd earl of Hardwicke**

*c.* late eighteenth – early nineteenth century

**By William Ward.**

*(Source: National Portrait Gallery, London)*



## *The first lord lieutenant after the union*

Not long before he left England to take up his new position as lord lieutenant of Ireland, Hardwicke received the personal reassurances of George III. 'In the formation of the new administration,' the king said, 'no part has given his majesty more confidence, than the having brought the earl of Hardwicke and Mrs. Yorke, into active employment'.<sup>8</sup> Educated at Harrow School and then Cambridge, where he received his MA in 1776, Hardwicke seemed like a safe bet to entrust the government of Ireland in the aftermath of the union. He had sat in the House of Commons, representing his family's interests in Cambridgeshire, a seat he secured at the insistence of his uncle, the second earl of Hardwicke, after an extortionately expensive election contest in 1780.<sup>9</sup> There he had flirted with the Whig interest under Fox, but by May 1787 he was 'entering into Pitt's circle of friends and associates'. While he supported the prime minister more as an independent voice, aware of his constituents' demands, by the time he succeeded to the earldom on 16 May 1790 and took his place in the Lords, he was firmly in Pitt's corner.<sup>10</sup>

Later commentators had mixed views on Hardwicke's abilities. To admirers 'he was most methodical and business like in his habits', 'a man of commonsense and moderate views, with a practical judgment in affairs.'<sup>11</sup> R.B. McDowell cites a similarly flattering description that Hardwicke was 'a model of an English nobleman – courteous, affable, clam and dignified, hospitable and munificent, intelligent and a highly accomplished scholar'.<sup>12</sup> McDowell concurred suggesting that Hardwicke was 'conscientious', if 'at times...[a] fussy, viceroy.' Others were somewhat more critical. It

<sup>8</sup> George III to Lord Hardwicke, 8 May 1801 (BL, Add. Ms. 45031 f. 1).

<sup>9</sup> J. M. Rigg, rev. Hallie Rubenhold, 'Philip Yorke, (1757-1834), *ODNB*.

<sup>10</sup> *History of parliament 1754-1790*.

<sup>11</sup> MacDonagh, *The viceroy's post-bag*, p. vii.

<sup>12</sup> McDowell, pp. 52-53.

was accepted that Hardwicke may have been ‘of a genial and easy going disposition’, who alongside Lady Hardwicke, relaxed ‘the viceregal etiquette that had prevailed for hundreds of years’. Cultivating a positive relationship with ‘every class of Dublin society’ and allowing Dublin Castle to lose ‘its sinister political reputation’ and which ‘for five years...remained the centre of the social life of the city’, it was claimed he was a viceroy who had ‘policy of doing nothing and doing it well.’<sup>13</sup>

Likewise, contemporaries were sometimes at odds to ascertain what the new lord lieutenant represented. The rising catholic barrister Denys Scully was somewhat amused by the talk that Hardwicke would be appointed to Ireland. He sceptically asked his future brother-in-law, Richard Huddleston, on 5 March 1801, ‘is your friend Lord H[ardwicke] to be our viceroy, as report says [?]’.<sup>14</sup> Scully would become somewhat of a regular at Dublin Castle social occasions during Hardwicke’s time in office, thanks to his wife’s Cambridgeshire roots.<sup>15</sup> As Mary Scully told her mother in June 1802, ‘I have not seen the Hardwicks very lately but dined at the Phoenix Park in a private way... Lord H[ardwicke] said many fine things of R[ichard]. Denys was very near going to the last levee... but he was prevented by his law business.’<sup>16</sup> Scully’s great friend and political associate, Daniel O’Connell, was less agreeable, later quoting one libel-inducing observation that Hardwicke was little more than ‘a sheep-feeder from Cambridgeshire’, unsuited to the high honour he had been given.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> O’ Mahony, *The viceroys of Ireland*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>14</sup> Denys Scully to Major Richard Huddleston, 5 March 1801, in Brian MacDermott (ed.), *The Catholic question in Ireland and England, 1798-1822: The papers of Denys Scully* (Dublin, 1988), p. 49.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. xii.

<sup>16</sup> Mary Scully to Mrs. Huddleston [her mother], 12 June [1802], in *Ibid*, p. 61.

<sup>17</sup> John O’Connell (ed.), *The select speeches of Daniel O’Connell, M.P.*, (Dublin, 1871), p. 259.



If Irish catholic voices were divided upon their assessment of Hardwicke, their protestant countrymen were initially more welcoming. In fact as early as August 1799 Lord Clare, the Irish lord chancellor, had struck up a positive correspondence with the future lord lieutenant, inviting him and his brother, Charles Yorke, another soon-to-be key player in Henry Addington's ministry, to his family seat at Mount Shannon, Co. Clare.<sup>18</sup> Clare was sure to keep the acquaintance alive after Hardwicke's appointment and arrival in Ireland, no more so when he asked him 'to sign an approbation... to exempt me from the income tax'.<sup>19</sup> As will be detailed at length later in Chapter Two though, Clare's relationship with the Irish administration would rapidly deteriorate when it became clear his influence over Dublin Castle was on the wane. Nevertheless, the ultra-protestant Sir Richard Musgrave insisted that Hardwicke's appointment had 'given great spirits and confidence to the protestants' of Ireland. On 11 June 1801, with Hardwicke in Ireland less than a month, Musgrave argued that his predecessor Lord Cornwallis, had had 'an extraordinary and unaccountable predilection' for the Irish catholics and 'abused the royal mercy by being a great deal too lenient'. Hardwicke, Musgrave thought, would 'dispense justice with an even and steady hand'.<sup>20</sup>

It was this 'steady hand', coupled with his family connections, which ensured Hardwicke's appointment to the Irish viceroyalty. The son of a former British lord chancellor, it was nevertheless the influence of his uncle, the soldier and diplomat Joseph Yorke with George III, 'who had used him secretly for private family diplomacy' in the 1760s, that won Hardwicke over to the king.<sup>21</sup> 'The opinion the late Lord Dover, had ever given of his two valuable nephews', George III said, 'has certainly given the best

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<sup>18</sup> Lord Clare to Hardwicke, 10 August [1799], *Clare Corr.*, p. 379.

<sup>19</sup> Clare to Hardwicke, 7 July 1800 [*sic.* 1801], in *Ibid.*, p. 431.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Musgrave to John Stockdale, 11 June 1801, HMC, *Report on the Laing manuscripts preserved in the University of Edinburgh*, 2 Vols. (London, 1925), ii, pp. 685-686.

<sup>21</sup> H.M. Scott, 'Joseph Yorke, (1724-1792)', *ODNB*.



impression in their favour'. 'Their uniform conduct in very trying times', alongside Hardwicke's own 'good sense and prudence', were enough to ensure that no royal veto would hinder his appointment.<sup>22</sup> This was critical, as 'Hardwicke's opinion', his first chief secretary Charles Abbot noted on 17 February 1801, 'is in favour of the catholic emancipation, repeal of the test laws etc.'. In the tense political climate of early 1801, such a stance could easily have destroyed Hardwicke's hopes of office. However, as Abbot stated he was crucially 'not for trying for it now against the positive refusal of the executive government.'<sup>23</sup> This position was not so surprising. Pitt made similar noises after his resignation in favour of Henry Addington, the new prime minister, while one of Hardwicke's final acts in the House of Commons had been to support a petition to remove similar political restrictions on protestant dissenters.<sup>24</sup>

Charles Abbot had been dispatched by Addington in late-February 1801, to see if Hardwicke would indeed take on the lord lieutenancy. He was thus pleased to report on 20 February, that 'Lord Hardwicke consented on all public grounds' and while he said 'he was against *now* agitating the question [of catholic relief]', he was nonetheless, 'reserving himself for other times and circumstances upon the principle'.<sup>25</sup> Hardwicke believed, as Abbot said, 'that peaceful acts and peaceful demeanour were to be the future claims for such a boon as the catholics were now expecting.' This was a crucial assertion on Hardwicke's part. At that moment the shadow of Pitt's failure to couple the union with catholic relief hung over the entire measure. For the fledgling anti-emancipationist ministry under Addington it was imperative that the new Irish viceroy would follow government policy. Indeed, when he left office, Hardwicke 'consistently supported

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<sup>22</sup> George III to Hardwicke, 8 May 1801, (BL, Add. MSS, 45031, f. 1).

<sup>23</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 239.

<sup>24</sup> *History of parliament 1754-1790*.

<sup>25</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 241. [Emphasis in original].

catholic emancipation and voted in its favour in 1829.<sup>26</sup> There is some truth then in the suggestion that Hardwicke's correspondence 'shows that he regarded his office as that of a peace-maker – to win the esteem and confidence of all classes of the Irish people for himself, and to unite them in attachment to the union of Ireland and Great Britain.'<sup>27</sup> As will be detailed later, his administration worked within the undefined but very much subscribed to ideal of "union principles", with Hardwicke trying hard to bring some substance to that promise.

### *The problem of patronage*

Almost immediately upon taking office, Hardwicke was brought to a meeting with the outgoing home secretary, the duke of Portland, and presented with a letter from Lord Cornwallis, Hardwicke's predecessor.<sup>28</sup> Cornwallis, with the help of Lord Castlereagh, had forced the union through the Irish parliament, and he knew what promises had been made. Now they had to pay 'the union account', the price of the union, and it was this which Cornwallis felt honour-bound to pass to his successor.<sup>29</sup> Cornwallis had told Portland that as he would not be continuing in Ireland, he would not be there 'long enough to fulfil all the engagements which I have thought it my duty to contract on behalf of his majesty's government', and that it was therefore necessary to 'draw your grace's attention to the subject.'<sup>30</sup> He admitted he felt himself, 'peculiarly bound to every tie and obligation' to which he had committed himself, his office and the government, in order to pass the union.

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<sup>26</sup> Rosemary Richey, 'Philip Yorke, (1757–1834)', *DIB*.

<sup>27</sup> MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 67.

<sup>30</sup> Charles Cornwallis to the duke of Portland, 19 February 1801, *Cornwallis Corr.*, iii, p. 339.



Cornwallis was proud of having passed the union, but detested the means by which it had been achieved, and what he had been forced to promise. In April 1799 he told his brother, the bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, of the 'dirty jobs' which occupied the grasping mentalities of certain Irish politicians.<sup>31</sup> 'Those who think at all of the great question of union', he declared, 'confine their speculation to the simple question of its either promoting or counteracting their own private views'. He expressed his fears stating that 'under these circumstances...how little I can flatter myself with the hopes of obtaining any credit for myself or rendering any essential service to my country.' Morosely he admitted, 'sincerely do I repent that I did not return to Bengal.' He said much the same to his close friend, Charles Ross. 'The political jobbery of this country gets the better of me', he said, and he regretted 'it has ever been the wish of my life to avoid all this dirty business'.<sup>32</sup> However, now that he was 'involved in it beyond all bearing', Cornwallis felt himself to be 'consequently more wrenched than ever', trapped 'in this most cursed of all situations...most repugnant to my feelings.' This was not to say he had any doubts about doing what was necessary to establish a union between Great Britain and Ireland. As he told Portland, 'there is an opposition in parliament to the measure of union, formidable in character and talents', but, 'I am prepared and ready to do my best.'<sup>33</sup> These competing and complex attitudes Cornwallis harboured throughout the struggle for the union, were summed up in June 1799,

My occupation is now of the most unpleasant nature, negotiating and jobbing with the most corrupt people under heaven. I despise and hate myself every hour for

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<sup>31</sup> Cornwallis to Bishop James Cornwallis, 27 April 1799, *Cornwallis Corr.*, iii, p. 93.

<sup>32</sup> Cornwallis to Charles Ross, 20 May 1799, *Cornwallis Corr.*, iii, pp. 100-101.

<sup>33</sup> Cornwallis to Portland, 24 May 1799, *Cornwallis Corr.*, iii, pp. 101-102.



engaging in such dirty work, and am supported only by reflection that without an union the British empire must be dissolved.<sup>34</sup>

In his position as lord lieutenant Cornwallis battled to secure a legislative union of the two separate kingdoms of Ireland and Britain at the close of the eighteenth century. However his resignation in 1801, over the failure of the government to accompany the measure with catholic emancipation, ensured that the job of implementing the union, and making it a success in the critical first year of its existence, fell to Hardwicke.

How the Irish Act of Union was actually meant to work in the immediate aftermath of its inception, was never really thought about by its architects. Redesdale, who was lord chancellor from 1802 until 1806, summarized in his discussion with Wickham the very complex problems that now existed within the Anglo-Irish relationship. In 1801 (and beyond) the Irish political administration could not function under the union because no real effort had been made on the part of the government to anticipate the particular difficulties that were likely to arise following the unification of the two countries. This issue was further complicated when, after successfully bringing the act into law, the ministry of William Pitt collapsed, and the prime minister along with many of the principle figures involved in securing the union were forced to leave office, either at their own insistence, as was predominantly the case, or were not included in the new ministry formed under Henry Addington.<sup>35</sup> Unable to overcome the king's stubborn resistance to catholic

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<sup>34</sup> Cornwallis to Ross, 8 June 1799, *Cornwallis Corr.*, iii, p. 104.

<sup>35</sup> See: Thomas Bartlett, *Ireland : a history*, (Cambridge, 2010); Bew, *Ireland*; G. C. Bolton, 'Some British Reactions to the Irish Act of Union', in *The Economic History Review*, 18 2 (1965), pp. 367-375; Bolton, *The passing of the Irish Act of Union*; John Ehrman, *The younger Pitt*, 3 vols. (London, 1969-1996); Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*; William Hague, *William Pitt the Younger*, (London, 2004); Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800*; Jackson; Edith Mary Johnston, *Great Britain and Ireland, 1760-1800 : a study in political administration*, (Edinburgh, 1963); A. P. W. Malcomson, *John Foster and the speakership of the Irish House of Commons*, (Dublin, 1972); F. X. Martin, F. J. Byrne, W. E. Vaughan, et al., *A new history of Ireland*, 4,

emancipation, Pitt and his key supporters in Dublin, Lords Cornwallis and Castlereagh, found their positions to be untenable and resigned from office. It is clear that the machinery required to govern was simply not in place in post-union Ireland. The issue of catholic emancipation aside, the union in itself did not create a viable, working administration in Dublin Castle immediately following its implementation. In fact, as this chapter will show, it created more problems than it solved. As Patrick Geoghegan has shown 'a major weakness of the scheme...was that the government was never clear about how the terms of union would be decided.'<sup>36</sup> Such confusion was still evident in the post-union fallout of 1801, and there was no concrete plan or fundamental policy which the government meant to follow.

Geoghegan has discussed the general outlines proposed by Pitt on matters concerning a union of Ireland and Great Britain, placing significant weight behind a paper entitled 'Points to be considered with a view to an incorporating union of Great Britain and Ireland', which, as Geoghegan convincingly argues, had been compiled by Pitt and his foreign secretary, Lord Grenville, sometime in 1798.<sup>37</sup> In turn, Lord Camden, the outgoing lord lieutenant, made a detailed response to the paper in July or August of the same year, indicating that 'the principles of the union ought, therefore, to be as much detailed as possible, before the event actually takes place.'<sup>38</sup> While there may have been general discussions on the measure of union, there was no real decisions taken on the actual

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*Eighteenth-century Ireland 1691-1800*, (Oxford, 1986); William O'Connor Morris, *Ireland, 1798-1898*, (London, 1898).

<sup>36</sup> Patrick M. Geoghegan, 'The making of the union' in Keogh and Whelan (eds.), *Acts of Union*, p. 36.

<sup>37</sup> 'Points to be considered with a view to an incorporating union', (NLI, MS. 8056) and also printed in J. Holland Rose, *Pitt and Napoleon : essays and letters*, (London, 1912), pp.338-341. See: Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union: a study in high politics*, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> [Lord Camden], 'Observations on a paper about the union', July/August 1798, (Act of Union Virtual Library, QUBL, MS. 60).



political operation of the soon to be formed United Kingdom. An examination of the role of the Hardwicke administration demonstrates the truth of this.

One of the primary arguments of this chapter is that the critical failure of the government to set out how the lord lieutenant, and in turn the Irish administration, were to operate, led to a paralysing confusion in the months following the union. These circumstances specifically related in many instances to the power to distribute patronage and the favours of the crown, which was very much the domain of the lord lieutenant previous to union. However, in offering a new assessment of the immediate post-union period, this chapter will show that the issue of patronage was only one part of a much more diverse and complex set of circumstances.

Michael MacDonagh in *The viceroy's post-bag* placed a very great weight on the role of patronage in defining the character and mode of the administration at work in Dublin Castle during Hardwicke's time as lord lieutenant. MacDonagh addresses the point in two ways. First, by pointing to what he calls 'the embarrassing heritage which the viceroy who carried the union left to his successor', namely the union engagements left by Cornwallis.<sup>39</sup> Second, in what was a follow on concern, that Hardwicke had no scope then to hand out his own grants or rewards. As MacDonagh again puts it,

The union engagements practically deprived Lord Hardwicke of the prerogative of patronage which attached to his office as deputy of the king in Ireland. He had

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<sup>39</sup> MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, p. 8.



little left to give to his own relations and friends, or to those who had claims on his bounty for services rendered.<sup>40</sup>

The issue here however, is that the primary concern for the administration was not who they could reward, and in what way, but rather, whether or not they had the authority to do this at all.

S.J. Connolly for example has touched upon this point. His brief summation of the place of the lord lieutenant in the new Anglo-Irish relationship provides an excellent starting point from which to consider the relevant factors that were now governing the Irish executive.<sup>41</sup> However, Connolly endorses the view that Hardwicke was entirely hindered by the union engagements that were agreed upon by Cornwallis. While not completely wrong, his assessment is somewhat restricted as it relies too heavily on MacDonagh's research. Furthermore, Connolly focuses on the idea that the distribution of patronage was of central importance to a crucial debate that raged back and forth across the Irish Sea throughout the middle of 1801 and states 'the obsession with patronage... was thus forced on Hardwicke and his colleagues'.<sup>42</sup> However, MacDonagh's prerogative of patronage, alliterative qualities aside, was interwoven with, but nevertheless secondary to a host, of more pressing concerns, the foremost of which ultimately considered the authority and legitimacy of post-union lords lieutenant and the relevance of the office in the new political makeup. This must be the central point when investigating the post-union Anglo-Irish arrangement and shifts the paradigm in the historiographical analysis of this period.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>41</sup> Connolly, 'Aftermath and adjustment', pp. 2-4.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 'Aftermath and adjustment', p. 3.

## *Hardwicke in Ireland: May-July 1801*

Hardwicke arrived in Ireland on 25 May 1801.<sup>43</sup> He had been forced to delay his departure from London due to illness, but was happy to inform the king on 7 May that his health was ‘so far re-established to enable him to fix his departure for Ireland, in the course of a few days’.<sup>44</sup> George III was delighted. However, he also warned him that while he must ‘treat the Irish with civility he must not get too familiar with them’.<sup>45</sup> He was determined that Hardwicke must ‘show them that the season of jobs is at an end.’ Almost immediately though, Hardwicke was beset with problems. Far from embarking on a campaign to implement the king’s wishes, he was forced to consider the fundamental questions as to what his role in Ireland was and where his authority lay. Hardwicke arrived in Ireland as the lord lieutenant, but not as commander-in-chief of the army in Ireland, a role which the martial Cornwallis had held with distinction when he crushed the rebellion in 1798. Lords lieutenant did not normally hold both roles, but it was not clear in the new arrangement what their respective powers would be. In fact, upon Hardwicke’s arrival, it became clear that an anomaly in the military structure had been created.

Upon his departure, Cornwallis had vacated not just his position as head of the civil administration but also as military leader. Hardwicke’s appointment did not plug this gap. Although a colonel in the Cambridgeshire militia, and having been stationed in Dublin during the closing stages of the 1798 rebellion, this position owed itself to Hardwicke’s social standing as opposed to any military prowess. He was not a soldier and as he admitted to Addington, he could only ‘pretend to be capable of forming an opinion upon a

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<sup>43</sup> MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> Hardwicke to George III, 7 May 1801, (BL, Add. MSS. 45031, f. 1).

<sup>45</sup> George III to Hardwicke, 8 May 1801, (BL, Add. MSS. 45031, f. 1).



subject purely military'.<sup>46</sup> Confused discussions in late April 1801 had taken place, during which at least eight alternative candidates were considered for the position as commander-in-chief: Lords Dorchester, Mulgrave and Howe and generals Sir William Medows, Sir Charles Grey, Sir Charles Stuart (to whom 'the command would have been offered...if he had lived'<sup>47</sup>), Prescott and Johnstone, who was already on the general staff in Ireland and was notably recommended by Cornwallis. Ultimately, Medows was appointed to the 'chief command of the forces in Ireland' on 8 May, only after both Mulgrave and Howe rejected the offer to take over.<sup>48</sup> Howe cited 'age and infirmities' as his reasons for refusal, and the choice of Medows did not necessarily bode well for the military establishment in Ireland.<sup>49</sup> Upon his appointment, Medows 'proposed to set off in a week' in order to take up his new position.<sup>50</sup> That week quickly turned into a month however, with Medows not arriving until early June 1801.<sup>51</sup> Up to this point there was in fact, as Allan Blackstock has noted, 'no military commander at all' resident in Ireland from at least the time of Cornwallis' departure.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, the union led to an important change in the relationship between the military leadership in Dublin and with Britain more generally. As Blackstock states, 'it was now union policy to consider the British army [and its Irish counterpart] as the same army with one commander-in-chief', Frederick, duke of York, who had been appointed to the position in England, by his father in April 1798.<sup>53</sup> Blackstock also suggests that Hardwicke 'had known from February that the army patronage [for Ireland] would go to the duke of York', referencing Charles Abbot's diary

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<sup>46</sup> Hardwicke to Henry Addington, 7 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 2).

<sup>47</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 7 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 3).

<sup>48</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, pp. 264-268; Hardwicke to Addington, 7 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 3).

<sup>49</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 266.

<sup>50</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 268.

<sup>51</sup> The archival sources indicate that Medows arrived no earlier than 8 June, but was certainly in the capital on 10 June 1801, more than likely arriving on the evening of 9 June. Hardwicke to Addington, 7 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 2); Hardwicke to the Duke of York, 10 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 9).

<sup>52</sup> Allan Blackstock, 'The union and the military, 1801-c.1830', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 10 (2000), pp. 329-351, p. 334.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335.



entry on the matter.<sup>54</sup> This was simply not the case however and the questions of patronage, and issues over its dispersal, helped shape much of the discussions at this time. Abbot's entry was in fact for 11 March 1801, where he stated, 'the whole patronage of the army of Ireland will be here [in Britain] under the duke of York.'<sup>55</sup> However even though the decision had been taken before Hardwicke had been sworn into office, he was never told of the fact, and arrived in Ireland in a state of ignorance.

This was a critical issue for Hardwicke because of warnings he had received from his predecessor. On 27 March 1801, just ten days after his official appointment, Hardwicke received from Cornwallis a crucial piece of advice. In a strong letter, Cornwallis warned Hardwicke that the new lord lieutenant alone must shoulder the burden of rule in Ireland. As a result, it was important for Cornwallis that 'the sole power and authority, both civil and military, must be vested in the lord lieutenant'.<sup>56</sup> While he went on to state that the lord lieutenant 'would not act prudently if he interfered with the commander-in-chief in the details of the army', his meaning was clear. As he told Ross in February, 'unless he take the government upon himself, and makes himself independent of the influences which I resisted, and which ruined the administration of my predecessor', then Cornwallis disturbingly declared, 'the country will be completely undone.'<sup>57</sup> This insistence that Hardwicke must hold power suitable to his station and wield authority enough to govern, would shape his policies and define his viceroyalty throughout the entirety of his time in office.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 334.

<sup>55</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 254.

<sup>56</sup> Charles Cornwallis to Hardwicke, 27 March 1801, *Castlereagh Corr.*, iv, pp. 84-85.

<sup>57</sup> Cornwallis to Charles Ross, 26 February 1801, *Cornwallis Corr.*, pp. 340-341.

Military patronage was a crucial issue. 'The military patronage of the lord lieutenant', Cornwallis told Hardwicke, 'has always been one of the greatest grievances of the British army' and 'when there was a parliament to manage it might have been a necessary evil, but it was, at the same time a cruel sacrifice'. Thus, Cornwallis counselled that 'the disposal of cornetcies and ensigncies may be put it in the lord lieutenant's power to oblige the gentlemen of the country and can be attended with no mischief'. For all other 'higher commissions' and promotions Cornwallis insisted that it would be 'much for the convenience of the lord lieutenant, as well as the benefit of the service, if he always consulted with the captain-general, or commander-in-chief of his majesty's forces in Britain, before he transmitted any recommendations to the secretary of state.'<sup>58</sup> Hardwicke took three definitive points from Cornwallis' suggestions: that he would have recommendatory powers in relation to military patronage, consulting with the duke of York as commander-in-chief of the United Kingdom; that he alone should have the power to appoint younger officers to the position of ensign or cornet, as a means to appease the Irish gentry; and more importantly, that it was his inherent right to hold, and to have vested in his office, adequate power that was required to govern with authority in Ireland. That final point in particular, and one which he rightly felt was thoroughly endorsed by the prominent figure of Cornwallis was to be critical in forming Hardwicke's mindset during his time in Ireland.

Hardwicke, however, had no idea of his power and authority in relation to military patronage upon his arrival in Ireland. He had met with Pitt, Abbot and his own brother, the secretary at war, Charles Yorke over the course of 17 and 18 March 1801, where they discussed a number of concerns relating to Ireland. However this military issue was not

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<sup>58</sup> Cornwallis to Hardwicke, 27 March 1801, *Castlereagh Corr.*, iv, p. 85.



resolved.<sup>59</sup> It was a point that was to cause him considerable anxiety and was a bad start, undermining as it did the authority of the Irish lord lieutenant. It also highlighted the confused relationship between Irish institutions and their British equivalents. This is evidenced by the conversations Hardwicke had in early June, with Charles Abbot, his first and very capable chief secretary, later called up by Addington as the speaker of the house of commons in February 1802. He told Abbot, 'as you have my opinion in regard to army arrangements, you will not suspect me of being desirous to obtain military patronage'.<sup>60</sup> However, he went on to state, that he nevertheless wanted to 'express a doubt how far it may be proper to take the recommendation for all commissions out of the channel of the lord lieutenant.' He suggested, 'I should think Lord Cornwallis' idea of leaving ensignries and cornetries to go through the old channel, and to place the power of judging of the propriety of promotions, being in the hands of the commander-in-chief, was the best course of action. There are two points of particular importance in these statements. The first is that Hardwicke was extremely uncomfortable with having no influence over appointments to the military in Ireland. As he stated, Cornwallis' plan 'would be sufficient to secure the army from being sacrificed to patronage and influence', while at the same time 'would not place the lord lieutenant in the situation of being obliged to say to those who might apply to him, that he could not dispose of an ensignrey, but that the application must be made to the commander-in-chief.' Second, is the consideration that Hardwicke was at this juncture speaking of an *Irish* commander-in-chief, distinct from the duke of York in London. 'Upon the whole it seems right that whatever patronage or official business is transferred from the lord lieutenant to the commander in chief', Hardwicke insisted, 'should only be conceded upon mature consideration.' Hardwicke's opinion on

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<sup>59</sup> *Abbot Diary*, pp.269-270.

<sup>60</sup> Hardwicke to Charles Abbot, 8 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 4).



these matters that he stated in June, had however been formed over three months earlier, due predominantly to Cornwallis' assurances.

Beginning 10 June 1801, Hardwicke sent out a flurry of communications from Dublin Castle, hoping to resolve what he saw as a fast developing crisis. It went far beyond the power to distribute patronage. It becomes clear that what was at issue was at one and the same time more complex, yet fundamental to British governance in Ireland: who would govern in Ireland and what power would the lord lieutenant have. As Hardwicke put it, these were 'points of considerable importance...which require the early consideration and attention of government.'<sup>61</sup> A conversation with Medows upon his arrival in Ireland spurred Hardwicke into action. On 1 June 1801, Medows had received his orders from the secretary of war, styling him 'Commander of the forces in Ireland', something which seemed to run in complete contradiction to the impressions Hardwicke had had in early May, from the outgoing home secretary, the duke of Portland and Col. Robert Brownrigg, the military secretary to the duke of York, which were as Hardwicke believed, 'to be his majesty's intentions on the subject.'<sup>62</sup> In fact Medows too had received assurances from Portland on 7 May 1801, that 'wherein it unequivocally appears that he was offered the station of commander-in-chief and purposed to accept it'. His acceptance of that appointment was given due to 'the request of his majesty's confidential servants' that he would do so, and Medows believed, with the express 'concurrence of his royal highness', the Duke of York.<sup>63</sup>

It was this change in title and inherent reduction in authority, as the Irish administration saw it, which caused significant concern at Dublin Castle. Lt. Col. Edward

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<sup>61</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 10 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 7).

<sup>62</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 10 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 7).

<sup>63</sup> Edward Baker Littlehales to [Robert] Brownrigg, 13 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 11).

Baker Littlehales, formerly Cornwallis' private secretary and now the military undersecretary, 'whose knowledge of this country' induced Hardwicke to 'give the greatest weight to his opinion', believed that 'even an apparent diminution of the power and authority of the commander-in-chief' would have a dangerous effect 'upon the kings service' in Ireland. In 'considering therefore the consequences of changing the style and title of the commander-in-chief', Hardwicke was particularly concerned with 'the influence it might have on the public mind at this moment'.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, he warily, yet markedly, pointed to the effect that any such change would have 'upon the militia, which requires such constant attention'. More than worrying about patronage, Hardwicke saw this move as an erosion of the Dublin Castle administration's authority in Ireland through an attack on one of its principle institutions. Taking a rather bold step, Hardwicke told Abbot to inform the government that he had sent 'an official letter to the adjunct general announcing Sir William Medows as commander-in-chief of his majesty's forces in Ireland.' He held no illusions about what he was doing, seeing the communication as a formal 'order' even if 'the power of the duke of York under this order will remain the same over the army in Ireland, as if Sir William Medows had been stiled [*sic.*] commander of the forces in Ireland.'<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, in this moment Hardwicke had overruled not just the military command at Horse Guards, but he had circumvented instructions from London using his authority as lord lieutenant in Ireland. This was an Irish issue and one he believed he had a right to impose his view on. In this instance the uncertain post-union division of the Irish and British administrations, as well as the fuzzy relationship between the civil and military establishments in both countries was apparent. Less than a month in his post and Hardwicke was at loggerheads with his superiors and already finding that the administrative transition from pre- to post-union models was going to be far from smooth.

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<sup>64</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 10 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 7).

<sup>65</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 10 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS 35771, f. 8).



As his actions attest, it was crucially important in Hardwicke's mind that the Irish administration present the appearance of being in control and making the key decisions. He assured Abbot that 'the instructions issued by h[is] r[oyal] highness will equally be obeyed' although that too came only, as Hardwicke put it, 'with my concurrence'. It was critical that a clear expression of authority was vested in Dublin Castle, even if the union had blurred the lines of distinction. Hardwicke played a canny game, in many ways simply ignoring the new proposals. Privately he asked Abbot to intercede with both the duke of York and the duke of Portland, and to express Hardwicke's 'earnest hope that the best interpretation may be given to the style I have thought it my duty to adopt'.<sup>66</sup> Through such an interjection he was confident that 'Sir William Medows' commission may be rendered conformable to that order' which he had already issued. Similarly, he followed up this discussion with Abbot by personally addressing the duke of York. He made no reference to the ongoing dispute over Medows' title, but knowingly referred to him twice as the 'commander-in-chief'. This was an unconcealed challenge on London's policies for Ireland and indeed, a direct challenge to York.<sup>67</sup>

Yet in many ways, Hardwicke had already lost the contest. A copy of *The London Gazette* for 9 June 1801 was to prove just how little attention was being paid to the concerns of the Irish administration. The paper published the king's orders from the day *before* Hardwicke had even sent his recommendations to London on the best way to settle the problem and his opinions on the importance of having a military commander-in-chief in Ireland. Hardwicke would not see a copy until 13 June 1801.<sup>68</sup> The very public announcement of the new military arrangements in the United Kingdom was hard to

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<sup>66</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 10 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 8).

<sup>67</sup> Hardwicke to duke of York, 10 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 9).

<sup>68</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 13 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 12).



stomach. It was clear that Hardwicke had been bypassed and ignored. The lord lieutenant had been bypassed and what really rankled for Hardwicke was the line, tucked away at the bottom of a list of military appointments that read, 'General Sir William Medows, K. B. to be commander of his majesty's forces in Ireland.'<sup>69</sup> Hardwicke had had no input in this decision. While he had accepted on 10 June that the union necessitated the appointment of a commander-in-chief of the United Kingdom, the fact that orders were *issued* and *published* before he had the opportunity to stress his reservations on the specific implications of those orders for Ireland, signified a stark reality.

Hardwicke immediately contacted Abbot, although he found it difficult to maintain his composure. 'We are rather annoyed', he fumed, 'by the order in the gazette', citing his previous arguments against the arrangement.<sup>70</sup> Refusing to accept he was beaten he continued the attack on a number of fronts. Hardwicke again called on Littlehales to give a military assessment of the matter, who in turn sought a more private and somewhat tactful resolution. He approached Brownrigg, the duke of York's secretary, to see if some compromise might be possible. Littlehales was at pains to assure Brownrigg that even though the Irish administration sought to maintain Medows' title as commander-in-chief, as per pre-union precedents, the duke of York's authority as supreme military commander in the United Kingdom was not being questioned. The proposals 'that I now send containing an outline of the military business to be henceforward observed', he told Brownrigg, 'are framed in strict conformity to, and upon the principles, without deviation or exception, of the instructions which his r[oyal] highness was pleased to issue to Sir William Medows.'<sup>71</sup> Littlehales played the soldier, making sure Brownrigg was aware that orders were being followed and the instructions of a superior officer were adhered to

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<sup>69</sup> *The London Gazette*, 6-9 June 1801, p. 636.

<sup>70</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 13 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 12).

<sup>71</sup> Littlehales to Brownrigg, 13 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 11).

completely. It was a clever move, as it brought a conciliatory dimension to Dublin Castle's arguments. Littlehales even conceded that there had been 'some hesitation in the mind of the lord lieutenant as to the propriety of putting Sir William Medows in orders as commander-in-chief'.

Yet again though, the primary concern for the administration in Ireland was the maintenance of a perception that authority resided with Hardwicke and his principle officers, both civil and military. Managing 'the effect', as Littlehales put it, 'on the public mind' was imperative. Almost exactly quoting Hardwicke, he also worried of the effect 'on the troops in general and more immediately the militia and yeomanry corps if there was any apparent diminution of authority' in the military command in Ireland. However, Littlehales also displayed political savvy, justifying Hardwicke's confidence in his longstanding association with Ireland and more importantly letting it be known to the military hierarchy in Britain that he knew what he was talking about. In a powerful statement, he asked Brownrigg, and by extension the powerbrokers in London to consider, 'the incalculable mischief which might arise from a renewal of those insidious observations industriously and in some respects effectively insulated by a description of disaffected anti-unionists in the country'.<sup>72</sup> The importance of this argument should not be understated. Here was the opinion of a leading figure at Dublin Castle, who had worked closely with one of the union's key architects before the measure was enacted, but who had also bridged the transition, taking up a key role in the post-union administration as military undersecretary. Littlehales was acutely aware of the subtle nuances in the Anglo-Irish relationship and what could prove dangerous if not carefully managed. However he was also a man who brought continuity to the administration in 1801. Furthermore, he made a

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<sup>72</sup> Littlehales to Brownrigg, 13 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 11).



clear and critically important reference to the fact that the Act of Union in itself had not solved all of Ireland's problems. Continuity of policy was required then, if the new political realities were to be maintained. Littlehales pulled no punches, stressing that anti-unionists 'may be considered *separatists*'. Expanding on his opinions, he directly quoted the anti-unionist mantra which had sought to prophesise the post-union world, '*that Ireland would be degraded, humiliated and debased in being governed by lords justices and its army left without a commander-in-chief.*'<sup>73</sup>

Littlehales revelations certainly lent weight to the Irish administration's protestations and Hardwicke followed them with an appeal to his brother, Charles Yorke, serving as secretary at war in Addington's ministry. The proposal from Dublin Castle was to retroactively undo the orders published in *The London Gazette*, effectively revoking them, by suggesting they were, 'an erratum in the gazette, that Sir William Medows was stated to be as commander of the forces only, instead of commander-in-chief.'<sup>74</sup> The power, prestige and effectiveness of the British military in Ireland was therefore, the Irish administration believed, to rest on a typo.

### ***The Clanricarde challenge***

As argued, the battle between Dublin Castle and London over the issue of military authority in Ireland was not fought as a trifling plea for fairness in governmental decision making. Nor was it entirely concerned with the power to dispense military place and honours. Rather, Hardwicke and his administration believed that secure British rule in Ireland depended on the unquestioned authority of the institutions inherent in its function.

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<sup>73</sup> Littlehales to Brownrigg, 13 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 11). [Emphasis as in original].

<sup>74</sup> Hardwicke to Charles Yorke, 15 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 16).



Throughout the entirety of his dealings with London on the issue of Medows' position, Hardwicke was forced to contend with yet another challenge to his administration, this time, much closer to home. As Blackstock states, 'up to the 1770s most military administration was the lord lieutenant's responsibility...From this time however, Irish commanders-in-chief began to reside at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham where they gradually began to develop a parallel administration'.<sup>75</sup> Initially the union seemed to do little to alter this relationship. However, before Medows even set sail for Ireland, Hardwicke in 1801 found that he had a troublesome and wholly unwanted lodger on his hands. This figure came in the form of 'the Connaught Chieftain', as Medows was later want to call him, Lord Clanricarde.<sup>76</sup>

Clanricarde was particularly notable for the fact that it was through his personal endeavours in the late 1790s that he raised the 88th Regiment of Foot, later famously known as the Connaught Rangers. Yet, a subsequent promotion to the 66th regiment, 'for he admitted that it must be considered as a promotion to be appointed to an older regiment', meant that he lost that command. The fact that the 88th was stationed in India, on the frontiers of the empire, where he may have gained further recognition and had the opportunity to distinguish himself, made him complain bitterly that it may have been 'more advantageous' for him to stay where he was.<sup>77</sup> This was a far cry from Clanricarde's initial efforts to ensure his appointment to the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham as he had mercenarily used the government's difficulty in passing the union in 1799 and 1800 to achieve his goal. Seeking a move from his current station on the general staff of Scotland, Clanricarde 'exerted his influence, which is considerable in the county of Galway, in favour of the union'. Cornwallis, 'seeing no prospect of being able to gratify his wishes in

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<sup>75</sup> Blackstock, 'The union and the military, 1801-c.1830', p. 334.

<sup>76</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 13 June 1801, (BL, Add. MSS. 35771, f. 12).

<sup>77</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 18 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 16-17).

the civil line' however, and as he 'did not know Lord Clanricarde as a soldier', asked the duke of York, 'under whom Lord Clanricarde had served, and who would consequently be the properest person to determine on the question of his being qualified' for a military posting in Ireland. As York gave his approval, Clanricarde 'was, in consequence, appointed master of Kilmainham'.<sup>78</sup> Clanricarde would inform Hardwicke in 1801 however that the 'expectation that was held out to him at the time of his appointment to the Royal Hospital' would lead to his 'eventual succession to the situation of commander-in-chief'.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, such a presumption might not have been wholly unwarranted. As Alan J. Guy has noted, by the eighteenth century 'the mastership of the hospital was combined with the senior military command in Ireland.'<sup>80</sup> Cornwallis, too, warned Hardwicke that he faced a predicament. He had been unwilling to appoint Clanricarde to the Royal Hospital himself, until ordered to do so by the duke of York, for precisely this reason as it 'would be considered a leading step to the eventual succession to the command of the troops on my departure'. Ever the soldier, Cornwallis said he would 'on no account presume to recommend any officer with whose military qualifications I am unacquainted.' However, with York's support and the appointment coming through British as opposed to Irish channels, Clanricarde took up his position at Kilmainham in the Spring of 1800 with the departure of General Gerard Lake for India, and was, Cornwallis said, thus 'looked upon as the future commander of the forces.'<sup>81</sup> Clanricarde's hopes were therefore dashed upon Medows' appointment. Nevertheless, Clanricarde's reaction and the headache it caused for Hardwicke, was a further indication of the precarious position the lord lieutenant found himself in when trying to assert his authority.

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<sup>78</sup> Cornwallis to Hardwicke, 27 March 1801, *Castlereagh Corr.*, iv, p. 84.

<sup>79</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 18 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 16).

<sup>80</sup> Alan J. Guy, 'The Irish military establishment, 1660-1776', in Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (eds.), *A military history of Ireland*, (Cambridge, 1996), p. 215.

<sup>81</sup> Cornwallis to Hardwicke, 27 March 1801, *Castlereagh Corr.*, iv, p. 84.



Blackstock notes that 'on 17 July 1801 Charles Yorke optimistically told his brother he was "glad...that many things which threatened difficulty have turned out so well... I allude particularly to the affair of Kilmainham."' The inference here is that Yorke was alluding to the more general concern of Hardwicke's relationship with the military administration based at the Royal Hospital and the reassurance 'that his viceregal position as head of the army in Ireland would be the same as his predecessors, except for the loss of military patronage.'<sup>82</sup> This was not the case. Yorke's specific allusion to Kilmainham was a reference to Clanricarde's challenge which was causing Hardwicke significant consternation. Hardwicke viewed Clanricarde's stubbornness as first, direct defiance of his authority as lord lieutenant and second, an obstacle to the smooth and orderly workings of his post-union government. Similarly, Abbot would later go as far as to put Medows at the top of a list of 'the leading persons who served Lord Hardwicke's government effectively and cordially'.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, Yorke's statements on 17 July 1801 show the prominence of the Kilmainham affair and the clearly troubling effect it was having on Hardwicke's administration. Throughout the entirety of the time Hardwicke was in communication with London, desperately trying to ensure that the position of commander-in-chief would remain active in post-union Ireland, he was also forced to deal with Clanricarde's outright refusal to give up his position as governor of the Royal Hospital. Both issues were in fact, inextricably interwoven.

On 7 June 1801 Hardwicke noted, 'some difficulties I fear will arise on account of Lord Clanricarde's refusing to quit the Irish staff and Kilmainham hospital for the appointment of commander-in-chief in Scotland.'<sup>84</sup> The position entitled Clanricarde to 'about a thousand pounds per annum', and this was not something he chose to give up

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<sup>82</sup> Blackstock, 'The union and the military, 1801-c.1830', p. 335.

<sup>83</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 279.

<sup>84</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 7 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 2).



lightly, particularly for an appointment in Scotland through which he would 'experience a great diminution of income'.<sup>85</sup> Hardwicke had no idea at this point how troublesome and lengthy this affair with Clanricarde would be. Yet, that he had little time or patience on the matter is certainly true, suggesting 'it clearly appears, though he would not confess it, that he is not so much hurt upon the score of military feeling as upon the diminution of income'. 'Like many other gentlemen in this country', Hardwicke observed, 'instead of attending to the improvement of his property he has expended a considerable part of it in increasing his political interest, and in laying a foundation for claims upon the government at the expense of the public.' He summed up an appeal to Addington by stressing the 'importance' he placed on the Kilmainham issue and his hope 'that the difficulty should be some way or other got over'.<sup>86</sup>

It quickly became obvious that Clanricarde's actions were casting a bad reflection on Hardwicke's ability to manage his administration in Ireland, particularly after Medows had arrived in Dublin in full expectation of taking up his post. As Hardwicke told Abbot, 'the commander-in-chief as well as the adjutant general, are at present carrying on the public business at their respective hotels in Molesworth and Kildare Street'.<sup>87</sup> Hardwicke tried to remain optimistic, believing a viable outcome was not far off, but feared 'the great inconvenience that will arise to the public service if this point is not speedily determined'. 'It is now become a question, not between Lord Clanricarde and Sir William Medows, but between Lord Clanricarde and the public service', Hardwicke insisted. The seriousness of the predicament was not lost on the government in Ireland either, tasked as they were with consolidating the union in a perceivably hostile environment. Hardwicke worried about the limitations placed on his administration's ability to operate effectively, 'which I will

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<sup>85</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 7 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 2-3).

<sup>86</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 7 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 3).

<sup>87</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 10 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 8).

venture to say cannot be conducted as it ought to be in the most important part, I mean what relates to the army'.<sup>88</sup> Clearly, having the leading members of the Irish armed forces conducting their business from various hotels around Dublin was far from ideal, particularly, in the context of the ongoing war with France, but just as worrying in the event of any outbreak of internal unrest in Ireland.

Hardwicke appealed directly to the duke of York to intercede, declaring that he felt it his 'duty to represent...the inconvenience which the public service in this country will experience if the appointment of Kilmainham Hospital continues to be disunited from the situation of commander-in-chief.'<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, Hardwicke took the opportunity to blatantly link his concerns over Kilmainham with those challenges he felt against the inherent authority of his own position and the bearing of the Irish administration in general. 'It was thought proper between twenty and thirty years ago to unite the two situations for the sake of adding to the emoluments and dignity of the commander-in-chief', he told York, 'as well as for the sake of facilitating the transactions of the public business connected with the army in Ireland.' However, the union had made such concerns even more prominent. 'The reasons which at that time rendered such determination advisable,' he reiterated, 'have certainly acquired additional force at the present moment'. Markedly he insisted, 'the circumstances of the country require every degree of weight and authority to be given to the person whom his majesty thinks fit to place at the head of it.'<sup>90</sup> In this instance Hardwicke might well have been reflecting on his own status.

Hardwicke finally managed to lure Clanricarde to Dublin Castle on 17 June 1801, in order to bring about a conclusion to the matter. Throughout the entire period,

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<sup>88</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 10 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 8).

<sup>89</sup> Hardwicke to York, 10 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 9).

<sup>90</sup> Hardwicke to York, 10 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 9).



Clanricarde had remained in Galway refusing to attend an audience with the lord lieutenant or to entertain any possibility of his giving up the Royal Hospital.<sup>91</sup> At length, Clanricarde morosely recounted the ills he had received at the hands of government. He was at pains to point out that appointment to Scotland would not at all suit him, suggesting 'the situation of commander-in-chief in Scotland might be very desirable' to someone who could be 'in the midst of his companions' or if he had 'a house in Edinburgh' for example. The crux of the matter soon presented itself and it was clear that Clanricarde detested the fact, as he believed it was so, that he had been overlooked by the administration in London, for the command in Ireland. Indeed, 'he felt himself the more hurt, as being left here till the actual arrival of a commander-in-chief with the expectation of being superseded; instead of being removed before that appointment took place, for which there had been ample time.'<sup>92</sup> Hardwicke had little success in winning Clanricarde around. But Clanricarde later agreed with Littlehales to allow Medows 'the use of the house at Kilmainham Hospital', although this was not so gallant considering, 'he purposes to return to the county of Galway' anyway. While Hardwicke offered 'more than once in the course of the conversation to make any statement he might wish' on behalf of Clanricarde to the government, they ultimately found no common ground. Littlehales understandably was forced to reject Clanricarde's offer stating that, 'Sir William Medows would not choose to remove thither unless he was entitled to do so in right of his situation.' An irritated Hardwicke subsequently told Addington, 'I hardly know what to advise under the present circumstances', but demanded that a solution be forthcoming from London, as until then he would be 'impatient to hear that some arrangement has been made which will be satisfactory to Lord Clanricarde.' He was not going to shoulder the burden of implementing the changes alone and exasperatedly asked if there was not 'a more lucrative

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<sup>91</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 18 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 16); Hardwicke to Addington, 7 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 3).

<sup>92</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 18 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 16).

regiment, a government, anything else' that would rid him of Clanricarde.<sup>93</sup> The government's answer was, characteristically, slow to materialise.

What should be noted at this juncture is the optimistic outlook harboured by Hardwicke upon his arrival in Ireland, in relation to how he had planned to work closely with whomever was commander-in-chief in the country, since, as he pointed out, 'one of the objects I have always looked in the appointment was the probability of a cordial union and cooperation with the commander-in-chief'. In fact Hardwicke believed such a working relationship 'did not so much depend upon a previous personal acquaintance, as upon the temper and disposition of the parties.'<sup>94</sup> This point is certainly worthy of consideration, as Hardwicke, as has been noted above, found in Medows a like minded colleague, who was willing to work within the boundaries set by the lord lieutenant. Hardwicke's *Dictionary of Irish biography* entry suggests that Medows (misspelt 'Meadows' and to referred as 'the newly appointed Irish commander-in-chief', which Medows was not), 'was given instructions implying that he could act without reference to Hardwicke', a prerogative he clearly chose not to exercise.<sup>95</sup> A number of observations should be made here however. The first is that in Hardwicke's mind at least, there was initially no concern over how he would interact with the commander-in-chief. He saw himself as the king's representative in Ireland, and thus, the ultimate head of the armed forces there. Hardwicke accepted the duke of York's position as commander-in-chief of the United Kingdom, a 'station' he believed York 'had uniformly filled'. The one exemption through came 'with the exception of the patronage of the army in Ireland being exclusively in the lord lieutenant'. However, that power 'had been relinquished' by Hardwicke and left him 'claiming only the recommending power of...vacant commissions

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<sup>93</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 18 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771 f. 17).

<sup>94</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 18 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 17).

<sup>95</sup> Rosemary Richey, 'Philip Yorke, (1757-1834)', *DIB*.



of cornets and ensigns'. In his capacity as lord lieutenant those recommendations would be ultimately directed to George III and would be made 'on no private consideration but solely for the benefit of the king's service.'<sup>96</sup> Later Abbot would decry that, 'the duke of York yielded nothing of the military patronage, and the lord lieutenant never obtained a single ensigny for any Irishman he recommended, and he recommended none others.'<sup>97</sup>

The second observation is that Hardwicke's considerations were not exclusively concerned with military patronage. He tried to explain to Abbot later that 'with respect to army patronage, it was never meant to give to a lord lieutenant a power of recommending for promotions in the army in general'. Rather he sought, 'merely to give his recommendation in respect to the army in Ireland their due weight, without the absolute power of nomination.'<sup>98</sup> Thirdly then, Hardwicke remained resolute on the key point that his authority as lord lieutenant was to be maintained. Acutely aware of the impropriety of his handing over responsibility for certain military affairs to just about anyone, the Castle was quick to point out that,

as viceroy of Ireland he [Hardwicke] certainly feels that those points that he now concedes to Sir William Medows...on a full conviction of the advantage which his majesty's service will thereby derive, could not upon any grounds be surrendered by him into the hands of any general officer who was not...in possession of the apparent authority and title of commander-in-chief.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Littlehales to Brownrigg, 13 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 12).

<sup>97</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 278.

<sup>98</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 15 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 32).

<sup>99</sup> Littlehales to Brownrigg, 13 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 11-12).

Consequently, in defending the status of the head of the armed forces in Ireland, Hardwicke was in essence ensuring that his own authority as post-union viceroy was protected. The lord lieutenant could not be expected to defer to just any military officer, unless that man was the actual commander-in-chief in Ireland. By ensuring that Medows held a prominent position in the post-union administration, he in turn ensured the preservation of his own authority. This was Hardwicke's enduring preoccupation in the critical months after his appointment.

The cordial relationship that Hardwicke shared with Medows, along with the degrees he went to in an effort to enforce his policies for the Irish administration, are explained in an important document over twenty pages in length, which historians have not examined. On Hardwicke's orders, Littlehales sought to set out and define how the Irish administration would manage the post-union relationship between the lord lieutenant and the commander-in-chief. Continuing to employ the latter title in reference to Medows, Littlehales 'memoranda' made a number of observations on how the two offices would interact. What is critical to note however, is the overall impression that Hardwicke as lord lieutenant was still very much the senior partner in that relationship and would retain an important consultative role in military matters. The memo set out eight separate directives that would ensure that through various bureaucratic practices and administrative procedures, the lord lieutenant would have a significant say in the way the military would function in Ireland. These eight points encompassed: financial matters; courts martial; memorials and petitions of a military nature; the power to grant leave of absence;



promotion; the yeomanry; the militia; and communication between the war office in Dublin Castle and the office of the commander-in-chief.<sup>100</sup>

A number of important conclusions can be drawn from this document. In terms of the financial business of the army in Ireland, the war office at Dublin Castle, under the auspices of the lord lieutenant, kept a tight control on budgetary matters, with all lists of memorials to military personal to be laid before Hardwicke for his 'decision and pleasure'.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, 'the business between the war office and the office of the commander-in-chief' was to be 'confined entirely to financial arrangements, excepting where the lord lieutenant may think it proper to require the opinion and report officially or privately upon necessity from the commander-in-chief'. As such Hardwicke was going to keep a close eye on the working of the military establishment and reserve for himself a final veto on financial matters in that regard. Before the union, the power to convene courts martial had rested solely with Cornwallis 'under the Mutiny Act, with certain exceptions', a convenient result of his dual role as definitive head of both the civil and military branches of government. Hardwicke sought to maintain this power as per pre-union arrangements stating that any change would need to be 'authorized by an Act of Parliament' and as such 'the same course must be observed as at present.'<sup>102</sup> In many respects, this was a far cry from Hardwicke's initial remonstrations with relation to the military, when he told Addington in previously that military matters were not his *forte*. However, following the obvious infringement on his administration's authority, Hardwicke now wished to represent himself as the head of all aspects of the Irish government, seeking to channel the power that was vested in Cornwallis before the union. In an attempt to

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<sup>100</sup> 'Memoranda prepared by Lieutenant Colonel Littlehales by order of his excellency the lord lieutenant' [hereafter: 'Littlehales' memoranda'], 12 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 6-11).

<sup>101</sup> 'Littlehales' memoranda', 12 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 8).

<sup>102</sup> 'Littlehales' memoranda', 12 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 6).

maintain some semblance of balance however, he was willing to leave all matters relating to the granting of leave of absence to military personnel 'exclusively' to the commander-in-chief. Likewise, requests for promotion would go through Medows who would send those worthy of consideration to Horse Guards for the approval of the duke of York.<sup>103</sup>

Two particularly notable proposals, relating to the forces of yeomanry and militia in Ireland were mooted. In both, Hardwicke's clear desire to retain considerable authority over these bodies of troops is certainly evident. In the case of the yeomanry the memoranda stressed that the lord lieutenant must be consulted on a number of matters, particularly the important point of setting any yeomanry corps on permanent duty, or likewise rescinding such orders previously given.<sup>104</sup> Hardwicke was again quick to emphasise that they came 'under the immediate orders of the lord lieutenant.'<sup>105</sup> In essence the military in Ireland would not function in any meaningful manner or undertake any major operation, without the express permission and knowledge of the lord lieutenant. In all of this Medows acquiesced, putting his name to the recommendation of the memoranda to be sent to the ministry in London and signing himself, 'commander-in-chief.' Hardwicke finalised the memoranda, unsurprisingly, with the words 'I approve'.<sup>106</sup>

By late June 1801, Hardwicke was forced to apologise to Abbot over his lack of communication on key administrative issues, due to 'the difficulties which have arisen on the part of Lord Clanricarde in regard to the affair of the Royal Hospital'. Such difficulties he told Abbot, 'have employed so much of my time and obliged me to write so many

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<sup>103</sup> 'Littlehales' memoranda', 12 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 8).

<sup>104</sup> 'Littlehales' memoranda', 12 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 9).

<sup>105</sup> 'Littlehales' memoranda', 12 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 10).

<sup>106</sup> 'Littlehales' memoranda', 12 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 11).



volumes that I have necessarily been more remiss than I wished to be'.<sup>107</sup> As will be shown, this problem was not a once off and remained a consistent feature of Hardwicke's government in the years following the union. In this instance his persistence won him a small victory, in so far as Clanricarde was eventually persuaded to give up his position at Kilmainham, to take up the governorship of Hull. Although, Hardwicke had little opportunity to savour his success, as he pointed out, he wished to 'by no means imply that he [Clanricarde] acquiesced in it upon any idea that the government of Hull was a compensation for that he gave up or with which he was in the least satisfied'. Moreover, Clanricarde was brought to heel more because 'of the king's desire that he would relinquish the hospital', than due to anything Dublin Castle did. In fact, as further evidence of the confused state of affairs between Dublin and London throughout this period and the lack of clear authority vested in the lord lieutenant, Hardwicke was forced to admit that he had had no say in the matter. He conceded, 'I was not authorized to send him [a notice of dismissal], nor would I have done it, without express authority if I had been from my office authorized to remove him.'<sup>108</sup> On the two crucial issues, the power of recommendation for military patronage and the continued establishment of a commander-in-chief of military forces in Ireland, Hardwicke utterly failed to enforce his policies. As noted above the duke of York held the entirety of military patronage in his hands, responding to Hardwicke's protestations by stating,

I shall not enlarge upon the manner in which the army promotions were made in Ireland, upon the abuses which took place, and upon the melancholy state in which the troops were in Ireland in consequence.

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<sup>107</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 25 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 19).

<sup>108</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 25 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771 f. 21).

York insisted that Hardwicke could have no complaints and that, 'from the moment the union was determined upon, it was decided that the two armies should be in all respects consolidated'.<sup>109</sup> As will be elaborated upon later in this thesis, this acted as yet another erosion of the authority of the post-union administration in Ireland. The most telling consequence of Hardwicke's remonstrations with the government in London throughout this entire period was that ultimately William Medows was stripped of his title of commander-in-chief in Ireland. Although London could claim that he never had it to begin with, even if the Irish administration had chosen to ignore the fact. By 25 June 1801 Hardwicke was ready to admit defeat in this matter, having received no positive inclinations from either the civil government or the military establishment. A dejected Hardwicke turned to Addington and requested that Medows 'be appointed a privy councillor of Ireland'. 'Now that he is only styled commander of the forces and not commander-in-chief, it will serve to give him some ideal weight', Hardwicke feebly counselled, 'and will also be personally gratifying to him.'<sup>110</sup> Throughout this entire process Hardwicke's driving ambition however, was to preserve the power and authority of the Irish administration. On 27 June 1801, Hardwicke received papers from his brother, Charles Yorke in which the 'power of confirming the sentences of general courts martial' was given to Medows and taken out of the lord lieutenant's warrant. Hardwicke however was surprisingly pleased stating, 'the purpose I had in view will be fully answered.' Although he did say,

My first idea was that it was a power which if vested at all, should be vested in the king's representative as at present, but I presume that the question has been

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<sup>109</sup> MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, p. 71.

<sup>110</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 25 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 21).



considered and that it is thought more consistent with the system, which has already been adopted, to vest it in the commander of the forces, than in the lord lieutenant.

Hardwicke's overarching intent was revealed when he stated, 'the object is that the power should reside here.'<sup>111</sup> Keeping power *in Ireland with* the Irish administration, in any shape, would remain one of Hardwicke's fundamental concerns throughout his tenure in office. As events would later prove, he had plenty of opportunity to practice his skills in protecting such matters.

### ***'From the kitchen to the parlour': The Irish militia and the defence of the United Kingdom***

In 1801 there were also discussions about sending the Irish militia to Britain in the event of an invasion there. There was no act of parliament enabling this, although in a loose sense there was a belief that the union allowed it. As such, Abbot was greatly pleased to report the response to his circular to the various militia regiments in Ireland.<sup>112</sup> Forwarding a document entitled 'Irish Militia Volunteer'd for England', to London, Dublin Castle could confirm thirty one Irish militia regiments prepared to ship to Britain.<sup>113</sup> On 3 August Hardwicke signified the same to Portland, stating that 'the Irish militia regiments have with a zeal and alacrity that does them the highest credit, offered their services'.<sup>114</sup> While a month later, in September 1801, Abbot would write of 'the suitable and proper provision' made by the king, 'for the wives and children for those soldiers of the several

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<sup>111</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 1 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 25).

<sup>112</sup> Abbot to the Colonels of the Regiments of Militia in Ireland, 30 July 1801, (NA HO 100/103 f. 309).

<sup>113</sup> 'Irish Militia Volunteer'd for England', [August 1801] (BL Add. Ms. 45031 f. 23).

<sup>114</sup> Hardwicke to Portland, 3 August 1801, (NA PRO 30/9/132/8-9).

regiments of militia who have so zealously volunteered their services to any part of the United Kingdom.’<sup>115</sup>

Hardwicke was all in favour of the measure, suggesting, that ‘should it be necessary to send any militia regiments to England it would tend to cement the union by making the people of the two countries better acquainted with each other, than any measure which could be devised.’<sup>116</sup> The key point Hardwicke wished to detail was that the militia had shown exceptional loyalty with ‘great unanimity in almost every regiment’, with one soldier stating “‘to be sure I will volunteer to England, it will be like going from the kitchen to the parlour’”.

On 19 January 1802 Hardwicke consider the question with Pelham, believing that it was important for Ireland to continue ‘furnishing men for the defence of the empire’.<sup>117</sup> He debated the pros and cons of maintaining an Irish militia in peacetime, stating that in favour of the measure was the fact that it ‘tends to induce many of the leading country gentlemen to look to the crown continually for the honours and emoluments belonging to the command of those regiments’, which he said, ‘naturally inclines them to give a local support to the king’s government.’ What’s more, Hardwicke thought this was the best opportunity for the gentry to come ‘into more intimate connection with the lower classes of their countrymen...creating a reciprocal good-will between them, from the continual experience of protection on the one part and confidence and fidelity on the other.’ Likewise, he insisted, it had ‘the affect of connecting the protestants and catholics, whose religious animosities will it is hoped gradually abate and whose minds and habits will thereby become gradually blended and assimilated.’ Hardwicke did see the downside and

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<sup>115</sup> Charles Abbot to George Shee, 14 September 1801 (BL Add. Ms. 35773 f. 6).

<sup>116</sup> Hardwicke to Lord Hobart, 20 August 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 42-43).

<sup>117</sup> Hardwicke to Lord Pelham, 9 January 1802, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 176).



was worried about arming 'so large a body of the people, amongst whom so considerable a proportion are Roman Catholics, whose sentiments and actions have heretofore been too frequently in hostility to the British connection and government.' Hardwicke stated that 'the Irish have been in all times reputed to be bad soldiers at home, but excellent when serving out of Ireland', which suggested their use in Great Britain to be contemplated. This would work 'towards cementing the connection of both countries', and for the Irish in particular, whose country '(it must be confessed) is the less civilized', the rewards were obvious.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 9 January 1802, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 176-177).

## Chapter Two

### ‘The most powerful man in the country’?

#### Hardwicke and the internal challenges to his viceroyalty,

#### March-December 1801

Peter Gray has made the important observation that ‘for much of the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century the office of the Irish lord lieutenant was a contested constitutional site.’<sup>1</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, the union had left a vast amount of loose ends in the administrative as well as the legislative make-up of the United Kingdom while ‘the ultimately unresolved, controversy over Ireland’s constitutional status within the United Kingdom and the British Empire’ remained a prevalent issue.<sup>2</sup> Gray suggests however, that ‘the lord-lieutenancy debate was limited largely to the period between the 1820s and the emergence of the Home Rule campaign in the 1870s.’ This chapter will show that in fact the debate began immediately after the Act of Union came into effect in 1801. Hardwicke faced a series of challenges to his authority, and this chapter will explore how he responded to the internal threats, most notably from key figures from the pre-union administration, such as Edward Cooke and the earl of Clare. What was at stake was the entire conception of the role of the lord lieutenant in post-union Ireland. Would the holder of the office be just a figurehead? Was the position even necessary? By facing down the challenges to his authority – resulting in the dismissal of Cooke and the blocking of his proposed replacement – Hardwicke established that the lord lieutenant would continue to be at the centre of the administration. In doing so he ensured

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Gray, “‘Ireland’s last fetter struck off’: The lord-lieutenancy debate 1800-67’, in Terrence McDonough (ed.), *Was Ireland a colony : economics, politics and culture in nineteenth-century Ireland*, (Dublin, 2005), p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.



a return to a kind of pre-1800 politics, though in this case without the added complication of an Irish parliament.

The question of whether a lord lieutenant for Ireland was needed at all was certainly being asked in quiet corridors in Whitehall immediately following the union.<sup>3</sup> Thus Gray's contention that 'the claims and counter-claims over the incomplete character of the Act of Union, the continuing "colonial" status of Ireland', and most strikingly, 'the survival of "national" political institutions', gains credence for a much earlier period.<sup>4</sup> In fact immediately following the union the matter was raised by ministers in London and the defence of this 'national' institution, the vicerealty, helped shaped the history of this period. This chapter will argue that Hardwicke, in his attempt to secure his authority in Ireland and to maintain the political magnificence of his office, ensured that the 'personal' became the 'political'. His victories over his internal rivals helped recrystallise the role of the viceroy, and settle in the short and medium term the debate over what kind of office it would be, and whether it was even necessary.

In doing so, this chapter builds on the pioneering work of Theodore Hoppen in his ground-breaking essay in the *English Historical Review* in 2008.<sup>5</sup> Hoppen's study has enhanced the historical understanding of the period 1800-1830 and helped to refine some of the initial questions that need to be addressed, as well as answering some others. However some key differences exist between his interpretation and this. The more focused nature of this work, along with a shorter chronological scope, allows for more in-depth and critical analysis of some key primary material which Hoppen was unable to explore. Using this empirical evidence, this chapter will expand on Hoppen's work and make the case that

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>4</sup> Gray, "'Ireland's later fetter struck off'", p. 87.

<sup>5</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?'

many of the key issues were addressed in the very first year of the union coming into operation, and that these debates were then rehearsed and repeated over and over in the years ahead. Similarly, Patrick Geoghegan has made a brief but convincing summation of the post-union ‘cover-up’ of the corrupt measures employed in securing the union in the Irish parliament, in which he has focused on the role of Edward Cooke, the civil undersecretary, and specifically what happened in 1804.<sup>6</sup> This thesis will also build on Geoghegan’s analysis, and provide a useful modification, to show the significance of the earlier events and the way the relationship between Dublin Castle and the Irish political elite was recast as early as December 1801.

### *The challenge of Cooke and Clare*

Hardwicke was not short of advice before he set off for Dublin in March 1801. Before leaving, George III had told him of the manner by which his business in Ireland should be conducted. He was particularly keen to stress that Hardwicke would find support in ‘the lords primate [Archbishop of Armagh, William Stuart] and chancellor [the earl of Clare, John FitzGibbon]’ as these were ‘men that will not deceive the lord lieutenant’.<sup>7</sup> Grateful for the advice, Hardwicke indicated ‘the value’ of the king’s ‘confidential hints in regard to individuals in Ireland’.<sup>8</sup> But it was poor, restrictive advice. Both Stuart and Clare were opposed to catholic emancipation, and were determined to block any kind of reform and exert an influence over the new lord lieutenant. George III had in fact intervened directly to have Stuart appointed to Armagh and ‘hoped that Stuart would prove a staunch defender of the established church, and he certainly proved to be a

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<sup>6</sup> Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, pp. 205-207.

<sup>7</sup> George III to Hardwicke, 8 May 1801 (BL Add. MSS. 45031 f. 1).

<sup>8</sup> Hardwicke to George III, 9 May 1801 (BL Add. MSS. 45031 f. 2). See also George III to Hardwicke, 10 May 1801 (BL Add. MSS. 45031 f. 3).



strong anti-emancipationist in the early months of 1801'.<sup>9</sup> In fact Stuart 'was much consulted by the king' and was 'for ever with him, or in correspondence with him.'<sup>10</sup>

In August Hardwicke discussed with the king the mode of British governance in Ireland. He was eager to point out that a 'degree of weight and authority was at all times important, but never more so than at the present moment, when the general state of the country is unsettled, and when cabals are on foot hostile to the joint interest of the empire as cemented by the union'.<sup>11</sup> Such problems could only be overcome, Hardwicke insisted, 'by an impartial and uncorrupt government, supported by your majesty's unquestionable favour and protection.' Hardwicke followed the king's advice and looked to Clare for support. As he told Clare a few months after taking office, 'I am well aware of the advantage to be received from your advice and assistance in times of difficulty and danger, if unfortunately they should recur'.<sup>12</sup> He followed this a month later with the assurance, 'I shall always feel myself obliged to your lordship for an unreserved communication of your opinions, upon points connected with the general government of this country.'<sup>13</sup> The problem was that Clare did not reciprocate this view. In private he raged against 'the miserable imbecility of Lord Hardwicke' who he believed was 'wanting to complete the system of perfidy to this country.'<sup>14</sup> Thus Clare, aligned himself with another inveterate opponent, a key player within the administration, and this alliance was to pose a major threat to Hardwicke's administration.

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<sup>9</sup> Desmond McCabe, 'William Stuart, (1755-1822)', *DIB*.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Cooke to Lord Castlereagh, 20 March 1801, *Castlereagh Corr.*, iv, p. 81.

<sup>11</sup> Hardwicke to George III, 25 August 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 4).

<sup>12</sup> Hardwicke to Clare, 16 July 1801, *Clare Corr.*, p. 432.

<sup>13</sup> Hardwicke to Clare, 28 August 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 32).

<sup>14</sup> Clare to Lord Auckland, 17 November [1801], *Clare corr.*, p. 455.

The person Clare allied with was Cooke, the civil under-secretary who had played a central role in passing the union. Hardwicke had also received instructions about him. The outgoing lord lieutenant, Cornwallis, had given Hardwicke advice about two people. The first was E.B. Littlehales, in the military department, who Hardwicke was told would 'afford you every assistance in his power'. Cornwallis revealed that Littlehales had 'been so perfectly in my confidence, that he can give you much useful information.'<sup>15</sup> Littlehales certainly became an important part of Hardwicke's government in Dublin Castle, providing valuable insight and assistance throughout Hardwicke's bedding-in period. In fact a later chief secretary would flippantly (and disingenuously) attribute Littlehales' longevity at Dublin Castle, and particularly the trust Cornwallis had placed in him to the fact that 'the worthy baronet (Sir E.B.L.)...[was] *a papist*.'<sup>16</sup> However, it was Cornwallis' second piece of advice that caused the most trouble. He advised Hardwicke to persuade Cooke to continue in office, sure that he would then 'derive the greatest advantages from his abilities, his experience and his knowledge of the country.'<sup>17</sup>

So why was Cooke such a problem? In part, Cooke felt betrayed because catholic emancipation had not accompanied the union, and his disillusionment with the government contributed to him acting-out against Hardwicke. But there was more to it than that. From the beginning he did not respect Hardwicke and made no attempt to hide this fact. He gave his opinion, forcibly, when it was not requested, and at others time declined to give any advice, even when asked.<sup>18</sup> His contemptuous attitude towards Hardwicke made government difficult, if not impossible, especially as Cooke was possibly the only person left in the administration who really understood all the union promises which had still to be

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<sup>15</sup> Cornwallis to Hardwicke, 27 March 1801, *Castlereagh Corr.*, iv, p. 85.

<sup>16</sup> William Wellesley Pole to duke of Richmond, 4 February 1812 [Extract], (NLI MS. 63/593). [Emphasis in original].

<sup>17</sup> Cornwallis to Hardwicke, 27 March 1801, *Castlereagh Corr.*, iv, p. 85.

<sup>18</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 9 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 82-83).



fulfilled. By undermining Hardwicke he risked reducing the influence of the lord lieutenant to nothing, and so the conflict became a battle about who really governed Ireland, and whether the lord lieutenant would be a respected figure, or a figure of fun.

Certainly both Clare and Cooke would have been in Hardwicke's thoughts long before any recommendations from George III or Cornwallis. Both had been prominent unionists, working hard to ensure the measure was successful and steadfastly supporting the government throughout the process, although they were on different sides on the question of emancipation. That difference did not stop them working together in 1801, and they were to prove an insidious influence on Hardwicke's formative months in office and pose the greatest threat to his authority. Cooke, in particular, working from the inside, became his most formidable enemy. John Bew perfectly summarises Cooke's character noting that he was 'a wily and rather cynical civil servant of great experience' but nevertheless 'a difficult man – impatient, acerbic and well trained in the dark arts of politics'.<sup>19</sup> He also represented, much like Littlehales, continuity within the administration, and it was for this reason that Cornwallis felt he could supply the new government with invaluable information on the nuances of Irish political society, and especially of the circumstances in which the Act of Union had been passed.

Cooke had been integral to Castlereagh's successful management not just of the Irish parliament but of public opinion during the passing of the union. He was the author of the significant Dublin Castle anonymously produced pamphlet *Arguments for and against an union between Great Britain and Ireland considered*<sup>20</sup>, which Geoghegan notes was 'an early victory...for the unionists' in 'a propaganda war...waged for the hearts and

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<sup>19</sup> Bew, *Castlereagh*, p. 110.

<sup>20</sup> [Edward Cooke], *Arguments for and against a union between Great Britain and Ireland considered*, (Dublin 1798).

minds of the Irish people.’<sup>21</sup> Even after Castlereagh had departed Ireland in 1801, Cooke, in typical style avowed, ‘I think you are indebted to me for all your *secret* information as to what passes in England.’<sup>22</sup> Initially it seemed Cooke could work with the new administration, and Cornwallis’ confidence might seem justified. The failure to accompany the union with catholic emancipation however, marked the beginning of the end of Cooke’s long service in Dublin Castle. He believed in February 1801 that his continuance in office might happen if ‘the new government was merely to postpone the question without denying the principle’.<sup>23</sup> However, as Bew states, he ultimately realised ‘he could not serve in an administration which was to found itself on opposition to further concessions to the catholics, or protestant dissenters for that matter’<sup>24</sup>, signifying as much to Castlereagh in a telling letter on 9 February 1801.<sup>25</sup>

Close to Castlereagh, and an avowed proponent of the necessity of emancipation, Cooke was an unlikely ally for Clare. Indeed he had been forced to fervently defend the former administration when Clare found out that the government meant to remove the remaining retractions on catholics in the aftermath of the union.<sup>26</sup> However, both men were adamantly opposed to the reform-minded administration, blaming its agenda, incorrectly, on Abbot rather than Hardwicke. They misjudged Hardwicke, and made the mistake of underestimating his direction over the administration. That mistake was a crucial one, and they were not prepared for Hardwicke’s counter-measures against them. Clare declaimed loudly that while he had expected much from Hardwicke, he was ‘a mere

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<sup>21</sup> Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, p. 50.

<sup>22</sup> Cooke to Castlereagh, 23 March 1801, *Castlereagh Corr.*, iv, p. 83.

<sup>23</sup> Cooke to Castlereagh, 6 February 1801, *Castlereagh Corr.*, iv, p. 27. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>24</sup> Bew, *Castlereagh*, p. 170.

<sup>25</sup> Cooke to Castlereagh, 9 February 1801, *Castlereagh Corr.*, iv, pp. 28-29.

<sup>26</sup> Cooke to Clare, 10 February 1801, *Clare Corr.*, pp. 421-425.



puppet in the hands of...Mr Abbot',<sup>27</sup> 'the mere tool and instrument of Mr. Abbot.'<sup>28</sup> Clare was later to find that this was a dangerous miscalculation.

To undermine Hardwicke confidential communications were leaked by Cooke to Clare. As Hardwicke later told Addington an issue was the communication between the two men 'upon points...which ought to be entirely confidential' and he spoke specifically of the use of martial law in Limerick and the authority of General Sir James Duff therein. In 1800, Duff had been given the power by Cornwallis to evoke courts martial without reference to Dublin Castle, in order to quell disturbances, 'upon a point so material to the peace of the Country of Limerick.' After an investigation and conversations with Duff himself, Hardwicke was convinced of the necessity to allow Duff maintain his power in this regard. However Clare, who had been approached by the administration in Ireland to give his opinion on filling up a vacancy in the Irish judicial bench, let it be known that he believed Hardwicke and Abbot were now circumventing that authority. Clare complained of 'having been called upon to make a return of three persons for the office of judge, as he might have been for the office of sheriff'. Hardwicke summarised that 'his correspondence has most liberally communicated, to those who chose to read Lord Clare's letters, that the government had called upon him to return a judge as he would a do a sheriff, and that they had taken away from Sir James Duff, the power which was very reluctantly conferred upon him by Lord Cornwallis'. It was this misrepresentation of the actions of Hardwicke's administration that was at the heart of many of the complaints and was certainly what most worried the lord lieutenant, who reiterated that 'such an idea has been generally

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<sup>27</sup> Clare to Auckland, 19 September [1801], *Clare Corr.*, p. 445.

<sup>28</sup> Clare to Auckland, 17 November [1801], *Clare Corr.*, p. 455.

circulated by Lord Clare, both in his own neighbourhood and in Dublin, through his correspondent Mr. Cooke'.<sup>29</sup>

Hardwicke soon began thinking of ways to remove Cooke. However as Peter Jupp and Geoghegan have noted, losing Cooke would remove from the Irish administration the only remaining man who really understood what had been promised during the passing of the union.<sup>30</sup> As early as June however, Hardwicke was forced to admit that Cornwallis had been wrong in his assessment of Cooke's positive predisposition towards the new administration. On 13 June 1801 Abbot told Hardwicke of the 'extraordinary conduct of Mr. Cooke' towards him, and Hardwicke agreed that this was 'a conduct by the way very unlike what I had a right to expect from him' considering his conversations 'concerning him' which he had had with 'Lord Cornwallis in the month of March'.<sup>31</sup> Both men at this early stage began to consider Alexander Marsden as a replacement as civil under-secretary. 'If...Mr. Cooke resigns, as I sincerely hope he will,' Hardwicke reflected, it would be a good thing 'from the conduct he has hitherto observed both with regard to you and myself'. Of Marsden, Hardwicke stated, 'I am convinced that he ought to succeed to Cooke's station and that we should find great inconvenience from placing any other person at the head of the office.' What is clear is that Hardwicke saw in Marsden the kind of under-secretary he could work with, a man 'attentive to the business of the office...in every respect proper for his situation as well as for mine, seldom giving his opinion unless he is asked, and when he is whatever may be the subject, whether respecting men or measures, never declining it.' Marsden was not 'above the business of his office' and did not 'appear...to process prejudices or jealousies in regard to others.' At the end of it all,

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<sup>29</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 9 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 82-83).

<sup>30</sup> Peter Jupp, 'Edward Cooke. (*bp.* 1755, *d.* 1820)', *ODNB*.

<sup>31</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 25 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 20).



Hardwicke insisted, 'he is not like Cooke'.<sup>32</sup> This was an extremely telling remark. Hardwicke needed men in his administration who would be loyal, and implement his policies. His very close relationship with Abbot was a strength, and it ensured that anyone who stood against them was a threat. In other words, there was more to this than simple obstinacy. He was once again required to maintain his authority in the face of opposition. Cooke, and indeed Clare, could be tolerated in the pre-union political hierarchy, serving with an administration that was secure in its position. Hardwicke did not have that luxury and as his critical feud with the Home Office some months later in September and October 1801 would show, he was right to worry. And so Cooke's days were numbered.

Clare continued to cause mischief. As he told Pelham on 18 September, 'if this gentleman [Abbot] is not controlled, and that very speedily, he will do more mischief here than he can be aware of. He has already contrived to give more offence, in the short time that he has been in this country than I thought it possible for any fool or coxcomb to accomplish.'<sup>33</sup> He fumed to Lord Auckland the next day, 'Mr. Abbot....is without competition the most arrogant, presumptuous, empty prig I have ever met with or heard of.'<sup>34</sup> Clare however was kept at a distance by the new government in London. While the ministry was certainly anti-emancipation, it did not feel inclined to agitate matters further by letting Clare cause trouble in Ireland. Clare recognised that he was not really trusted, complaining that, 'from what I have seen of Mr. Addington, I am free to say that I expect little from his energies.'<sup>35</sup> Thus, with the formation of the post-union administration in Ireland, both Cooke and Clare saw their influence diminish greatly. Both, as Douglas Kanter points out, 'counseled [*sic.*] daily on reform.' However, it was their own brand of

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<sup>32</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 25 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 20).

<sup>33</sup> Clare to Pelham, 18 September 1801, *Clare Corr.*, p. 445.

<sup>34</sup> Clare to Auckland, 19 September 1801, *Clare Corr.*, p. 445.

<sup>35</sup> Clare to Auckland, 22 October 1801, *Clare Corr.*, p. 453.

reform that they sought to introduce, with Cooke being particularly vocal to Pelham on the need 'to let the union settle.'<sup>36</sup> Their efforts to undermine Hardwicke's government at Dublin Castle represented a challenge to the new administration and its ability to govern. Cooke's overtures to Pelham especially signified the murky manoeuvres being played out by people formerly loyal to Pitt and his ministers.

The mounting tension came to a head in the autumn of 1801. Bad-mouthing Hardwicke and Abbot in London, Cooke attempted to retire from his job, get a better position in the Home Office (a posting that would in theory place him in a position of superiority over the administration in Dublin), and nominate his own person to replace him in Ireland. When this became public it was seen, rightly, as an incredible abuse of privilege that represented an attack on the Irish administration, and a furious conflict ensued. Hardwicke and Abbot denounced Cooke's 'treachery' and determined to remove him from office, without any serious pay-off.<sup>37</sup> Peter Jupp in his entry on Cooke in the *Oxford dictionary of national biography* has addressed Cooke's retirement from Ireland on its own merits, attempting to pinpoint the crisis point in the sundering of the relationship. He states:

Cooke took severe umbrage at Abbot's being appointed Irish lord privy seal and at the appointment of a new fellow under-secretary—on the ground of their ignorance of the country. With family pressures mounting, he renewed his decision to leave Ireland and, unbeknown to Hardwicke and Abbot, used part of the time he spent in London to make an arrangement with Lord Pelham, one of his former chiefs in

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<sup>36</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 123.

<sup>37</sup> Abbot to Littlehales, 3 October 1801, *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 320.



Ireland and the incoming home secretary, by which he would become Pelham's under-secretary and Sir George Shee would replace him in Ireland.

As Jupp goes on to note, 'when the arrangement did become known, a serious row broke out which had public and personal dimensions.' The conclusion then is that 'Hardwicke...although it removed the master of the complicated union promises from the castle, consented to Cooke's retirement.'<sup>38</sup> However, it is important to elaborate upon this assessment. By October, Abbot asked Littlehales to 'judge of the difficulties which are thrown in the way of our government by treachery and misrepresentation whilst we are in the hands of our enemies'.<sup>39</sup> This misrepresentation was propagated in London by enemies of the new regime at Dublin Castle, who were none other, as Abbot pointed out, then 'the lord chancellor [Clare]...and the person to whom he communicates this...should be my first secretary! [Cooke].' So while it is true that Cooke attempted to resign and withdraw, the circumstances in which the affair became public ensured that his leaving Ireland became a dismissal. He was fired, before he was given a chance to leave on his own terms.

For Hardwicke and Abbot, Cooke's betrayal and Clare's hand in it, could not go unchecked. In giving up his office, Cooke had 'formed some expectation of succeeding to the Privy Seal' and as Hardwicke told Abbot this was 'an idea [that] has prevailed here'. However, with Abbot placed in the position, Cooke was now 'desirous of negotiating his resignation.'<sup>40</sup> Hardwicke, while wanting rid of Cooke, was conspicuously loath to compromise. On the one hand Cooke could expect little in the way of a pay off, 'a plan which he must know cannot be realised on account of the numerous engagements in the

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<sup>38</sup> Peter Jupp, 'Edward Cooke. (bap. 1755, d. 1820)', *ODNB*.

<sup>39</sup> Abbot to Littlehales, 3 October 1801, *Abbot Diary*, i, pp. 320-321.

<sup>40</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 25 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 20).

formation of which he had so principal a share.’ While on the other, Hardwicke told Abbot, ‘from his conduct towards you...it is not likely we shall be able to go on with him.’ Crucially, Hardwicke was steadfast in his assessment that, ‘if therefore he resigns he must do it gratuitously without any thing more, than what he has already got from Ireland’. If Cooke could find employment in England, Dublin Castle would not ultimately hinder his departure, although they did ‘consider first how far he would be useful, [and] second how far he might be the contrary if he choose to be so.’ Hardwicke did not really mind one way or the other, once he did not have to deal with the consequences. He believed Cooke ‘might be both’, acknowledging ‘he has undoubtedly abilities and a considerable knowledge of this country’. However, ‘his conduct...shows a bad temper and a littleness of mind.’<sup>41</sup> The problem dragged on throughout the summer months Cooke insisting to Auckland in August, ‘I do not deserve this after twenty-three years service here and my labours in the rebellion and union.’<sup>42</sup>

Cooke’s position though was untenable. As far as Hardwicke was concerned he had shown nothing but ‘very extraordinary instances of arrogance and presumption’ in his dealing with others. By this time he was in London desperately trying to ensure his continuance in government through the Home Office and Pelham. Hardwicke was not impressed, and stated ‘when his *Excellency* arrives I presume I shall have the honour of receiving him, and...I will never give way to so inadmissible a pretension.’ Yet, both he and Abbot began to comprehend the kind of game that might be afoot in the Home Office, and Hardwicke asked ‘is it possible that the idea could have originated with Lord Pelham, as an arrangement he could wish Cooke to make upon gratifying his wishes by an appointment in England?’ Furthermore, he believed, ‘I am sure Mr. Cooke with all his

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<sup>41</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 25 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 21).

<sup>42</sup> Cited in P.J. Jupp, ‘Edward Cooke, (bap. 1755, d. 1820)’, *ODNB*.



ability and knowledge of the country will do us no good, either here or any where else: and I am not without apprehension that we shall find the inconvenience of his being under secretary of state'.<sup>43</sup>

Hardwicke saw the influence Cooke might hold over the Irish administration as assistant to the home secretary in London and he feared the repercussions. By 13 July he confronted Pelham on the matter, and it was clear that some plan had been in contemplation between the two men, Pelham having put the idea before Hardwicke on 9 July that George Shee would take up the office on Cooke's departure. Pelham's plans sought to leapfrog Marsden, and Hardwicke was wary to consent. He again pointed to the engagements and the 'heavy mortgage upon the patronage of this country, of which Mr. Cooke himself [is aware], would prevent any arrangement in his favour beyond what he actually enjoys in addition to his office'. He thus insisted, 'his resignation if it took place at all, must have been unconditional in respect to the government of Ireland.'<sup>44</sup> Similarly, 'any arrangement by which Mr. Marsden would be superseded would be unjust to him, and upon that account as well as for other reasons injurious to the public service.'<sup>45</sup> Both the engagements as well as the person of Marsden gave Hardwicke obstacles to hide behind when it came to giving up any leverage in the Cooke dispute. However, at this stage in his relationship with Pelham, while remaining cordial, the character of the proposals emanating from the Home Office began to signal that something was not quite right. In exchanging Cooke for Shee, Pelham would ensure that he had a loyal follower at the heart of the Irish administration, while inheriting Cooke's extensive and invaluable knowledge and experience of Ireland and the key players there. Such a move would give Pelham a

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<sup>43</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 6 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 27). The emphasis on Hardwicke's referral to Cooke as 'his *Excellency*' in this letter is in the original. He underlined the word twice and made a very determinate effort to write it in bold.

<sup>44</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 13 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 29).

<sup>45</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 13 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 29-30).

strong hand in any plans he might have to exert his authority over the lord lieutenant. And as will be shown later in this thesis, this was evidently exactly what he planned to do. Hardwicke was not so easily duped and insisted 'the idea of an exchange between Mr. Cooke and George Shee... I really think is liable to many difficulties'. By blocking the appointment of Shee he had won a major victory in asserting who was to have responsibility for the direction of his administration.

Nevertheless, at this point in his tenure Hardwicke still looked inward and it was clear he was worried by the power Cooke held in Ireland. His influence with the leading political players was evident, his knowledge of the administrative machine at Dublin Castle was unrivalled, and as Hardwicke concluded to Pelham he was the 'person, who for a long time, I mean during the union question, held the labouring oar in the office.'<sup>46</sup>

It was not until Pelham's overt attack on Hardwicke's authority that Hardwicke became fully aware of the problems in his relationship with the home secretary. A big issue became the question of Cooke's pension. At first Hardwicke tried to block it, telling Pelham on 13 October that he could only condone a 'provision of one thousand pounds per annum...granted to Mr. Cooke for life on his retiring from the office of under secretary in the civil department...as the condition of the income...being suspended in the case of his holding an office of equal or superior value'.<sup>47</sup> His resistance to specific overtures to Cooke was justified in terms of the restrictions on the civil list in Ireland. Nor, he said,

...will Mr. Cooke expect that I should ask it as a favour to myself, when he recollects, independently of the language he has held concerning the administration,

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<sup>46</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 13 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 30-31).

<sup>47</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 13 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 79).



how improperly and even injuriously he has acted in regard to me; not only by industrious misrepresentations in every quarter they were chiefly to operate, of every act of government, whose servant he was, and whose interests were confided to him, but by recent acts of positive omission and disrespect.<sup>48</sup>

Nevertheless, Hardwicke changed his mind and officially approved the pension to Cooke on 22 October. He told Pelham, 'how much concerned and really mortified' he had been when he expressed his unwillingness to see Cooke's pension be made, as he put it, 'as a favour to myself'. However, Pelham had simply wanted Hardwicke to sign-off on an official recommendation, without which 'the grant, in whatever form' could not 'regularly proceed without a specification from [Dublin Castle]...of the precise manner in which it is to be framed'. As such Hardwicke insisted he had 'no sort of objection to send an official letter...requesting the grant may be made to Mr. Cooke without the condition originally purposed'.<sup>49</sup> By this stage Hardwicke was preparing to embark on a dedicated campaign to thwart Pelham's attempts to undermine the office of lord lieutenant in Ireland, and to instil in his own position the authority to make decisions for government policy there. This period was one of critical importance, and Hardwicke was cautiously keeping Pelham onside, biding his time before his recommendations reached London.

In this context, an understanding of his about turn on Cooke's departure is more readily discernible. First, Hardwicke wished to simply do as he was told, allowing Pelham to believe that he would face little resistance from Ireland when enacting his policies, and second, with the bigger picture in mind, Hardwicke was afraid he would be stuck with Cooke and might not get rid of him if he placed conditions on the latter's retirement

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<sup>48</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 20 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 80).

<sup>49</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 22 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 85-86).

package. Similarly, at this moment of significant danger, it was better to remove Cooke from the corridors of power, than to permit him to remain in a position where he might hurt the administration. On the same day as Hardwicke signed Cooke's release, it was Clare who best summed up the attitude resonating in Dublin Castle. He told his friend Auckland that, 'Cooke has finally retired from office, and is now branded by Mr. Abbot as a presumptuous clerk, and by a little pettifogger [Marsden] whom he brought into his office as an assistant clerk, who succeed him, as a slovenly and inefficient man.' Such epithets, he believed, were unfair and improper representations of a man who so readily and ably played an important role in the passing of the union. Clare, somewhat uncharacteristically, stated 'I feel very sorry that his apostasy should have brought him into such a situation'.<sup>50</sup> However, apostasy was the term best applied to Cooke's attitude in the months following the union, as he turned his back on the new administration. His actions proved that he could no longer act as a viable member of the new cohort at Dublin Castle, and because of this Hardwicke and Abbot made sure that he could not remain at the head of what had become his own personal fiefdom.

Cooke did not return to government employment until Pitt resumed the premiership in 1804, leaving office in 1801 however with a substantial pension of well over £2000 per year.<sup>51</sup> That Hardwicke and Abbot played such a crucial role in Cooke's political demise cannot be overlooked. While the compensation paid to Cooke when he left his job as undersecretary in the civil department was at least profitable for him, he was nevertheless, forced out of a position he had long held, and thought he might continue to do in the aftermath of the union. His erstwhile co-conspirator Clare probably said it best however, when he followed up his initially sympathetic remarks of Cooke's predicament in 1801 by

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<sup>50</sup> Clare to Auckland, 22 October [1801], *Clare Corr.*, p. 453.

<sup>51</sup> P.J. Jupp, 'Edward Cooke, (b. 1755, d. 1820)', *ODNB*.



'acknowledging, however, that nothing which he has or can experience is not a just visitation upon him.'<sup>52</sup>

Conversely, Dublin Castle was forced to court Clare until his death in January 1802. Hardwicke could not risk taking on the wily lord chancellor, and so went out of his way to placate him. As late as December 1801 Hardwicke discussed with Clare the parliamentary business that was to take place following the 'Christmas Holydays [*sic.*]', and asked him to gauge the other Irish judges and their opinions on the exchequer process bill, so 'that when the object is again mentioned in parliament it may be known what that decision is likely to be.'<sup>53</sup> At all times Hardwicke remained civil, even going as far as to extend his good wishes to Clare saying, 'I shall be very happy to learn, that notwithstanding this severe weather your lordship is recovering from your cold.' Likewise, he suggested three separate times when Clare might call at the castle, asking him to only do so if it would 'be convenient to you'. Only a month previous however, Clare had stated, 'the conduct which has been observed towards me is such that I will never enter the council chamber or hold any political communication with Lord Hardwicke, whilst he remains in Ireland.'<sup>54</sup> While previously he had stated, 'I am much disappointed in Lord Hardwicke, who I was given to understand to be a sensible man.' Furthermore, he sarcastically wondered whether Hardwicke and Abbot, in the implementation of their post-union policies, were to 'complete the system of good faith which has been kept with the friends and supporters of the union in Ireland.'<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Clare to Auckland, 22 October [1801], *Clare Corr.*, p. 453.

<sup>53</sup> Hardwicke to Clare, 14 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 129).

<sup>54</sup> Clare to Auckland, 17 November [1801], *Clare Corr.*, p. 455.

<sup>55</sup> Clare to Auckland, 19 September [1801], *Clare Corr.*, p. 445.

In many ways the collapse of Hardwicke's relationship with Clare was representative of the difficult balancing act he was forced to attempt in the aftermath of the union. Like Cooke here was a man of significant influence in Ireland but the union had not met his high expectations. So even for supporters of the measure, the union was not seen as an unqualified success. Abbot was aware of the lucky escape the Irish administration had had when Clare died suddenly at the start of 1802, relieving them of any need to continue humouring him. As he put it,

The death of Lord Clare in January 1802, delivered the Irish and also the British government of great trouble. He had rendered signal service to his country in a crisis of great violence; but his love of power and the restlessness of his temper, made him unfit for the station of chancellor, when no longer coupled with the overruling authority which he had exercised as a minister before the union.<sup>56</sup>

The political demise of Cooke, and the death of Clare, removed from Ireland two of the sharpest critics of the Hardwicke administration. Hardwicke had risked becoming a figure of fun, undermined and disrespected, and if he had lost his battle with both men the role of the lord lieutenant in post-union Ireland would have been damaged forever. Instead he emerged with authority enhanced. He was lucky in the way things turned out with Clare, but his handling of the removal of Cooke displayed real ability and political acumen. Working side-by-side with his chief secretary he had counteracted the attacks on his character, and demonstrated that his administration was capable of withstanding attacks from within. It was a victory which helped define the viceroyalty for the next fifteen years.

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<sup>56</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 279.



## Chapter Three

### **‘The great measure of union’: Hardwicke *versus* Pelham and the battle to preserve the office of lord lieutenant.**

Rumblings of discontent with the standing of the lord lieutenant of Ireland under the union had been apparent almost from the moment of Hardwicke’s appointment to the post. The first chapter has explored some of these challenges, notably in the area of military patronage and the downgrading of the commander-in-chief, and how Hardwicke fought to ensure that the role of lord lieutenant remained a prestige position, respected in both countries. In this he was not totally successful, but he managed to lay down an important marker about his conception of the role. In the second chapter the internal challenges were explored, most notably the threats to his authority from Cooke and Clare. One was removed from office; the other was removed from existence (by natural causes). But this chapter will explore the most serious threat of all.

In 1801 there was a major clash between Hardwicke and the home secretary, Lord Pelham, and it went beyond mere protocol and formality. It centred on whether there should even be a lord lieutenant in Ireland at all. According to Charles O’ Mahony, in his review of the viceroys in 1912, Hardwicke led an inactive administration because of his ‘policy of doing nothing and doing it well.’<sup>1</sup> What this section of the thesis has shown, however, is that Hardwicke was far from inactive. He was determined to reassert the authority of his position. The paralysis came from those forces which sought to undermine him in that work. This chapter will show how Hardwicke skilfully countered all of

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<sup>1</sup> O’ Mahony, *The viceroys of Ireland*, p. 211.

Pelham's moves to undermine his role. He brought the fight to the Home Office, and played a clever game in maintaining his position by appealing over Pelham's head to the prime minister and other influential figures, and ultimately even threatening to resign rather than back down. Faced with this resistance, Pelham was outflanked, and Hardwicke carried the argument. Pelham himself was fatally damaged by the conflict, and did not last beyond 1803. His replacement as home secretary provided a good example of how far Hardwicke had come. It was Hardwicke's own brother, Charles Yorke.

As has been shown, the majority of the disaffection was confined to the area of military influence and the role of the lord lieutenant in dispensing military patronage. In Ireland, Hardwicke was preoccupied with these matters, defending the need for the lord lieutenant to have some role to play in the military make-up of the country. One of Portland's more radical contributions was to suggest 'assimilating Ireland to Scotland' in terms of military administration.<sup>2</sup> If such an idea could come from 'a notably lazy home secretary', what, the Irish administration must have asked, could one acting vigorously do?<sup>3</sup> They would soon find out, but in the meantime Hardwicke defended his policies stating such plans were 'by no means justly considered'.<sup>4</sup> For, as he noted, 'one of the great arguments against the union was that the country would be governed by lords justice and not by a lord lieutenant'. His summation rested on the stringent assessment that it 'will be impossible for many years to dispense with the office of lord lieutenant, and the parade and representation that belongs to it.' In the beginning, he believed he found an ally in the new home secretary Lord Pelham, a former chief secretary of Ireland, who replaced Portland in July 1801.<sup>5</sup> Hardwicke was in fact heard to proclaim that,

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<sup>2</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 15 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 32).

<sup>3</sup> Hoppen, 'A question none could answer', p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 15 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 32).

<sup>5</sup> D. R. Fisher, 'Thomas Pelham, (1756-1826)', *ODNB*.



Lord Pelham's idea in regard to the propriety of leaving a power in the lord lieutenant, over the army...is perfectly correct; and indeed if the lord lieutenant is reduced to a mere civil office, it will be better at once to have a secretary of state resident in Ireland....so long as a lord lieutenant resides in Ireland, his character must be at least to a certain degree, military.<sup>6</sup>

Hardwicke was soon to learn that this was the only power Pelham meant to vest in the lord lieutenant of Ireland. The Home Office had indeed found, in this case at least, a vigorous leader. Thus while Hardwicke prattled on somewhat about the innocuous 'alterations [that] must immediately be made if the military part of the office is expunged from the commission', worrying that 'even the prayer in the liturgy, in which "the sword which one dread sovereign has committed to his charge" etc. etc. must be left out, with many other changes too tedious to communicate', Pelham stood in the wings, waiting for his moment to take centre stage. Until then, Hardwicke would continue to insist, 'Lord Pelham is perfectly right in his idea'.

Hoppen has argued that Pelham's move to reduce the power and authority of the lord lieutenant 'exploded with some force' in September 1801.<sup>7</sup> This is true to a certain extent but in the context of what has been suggested here already, such a move takes on much more important characteristics. This crisis of authority had been bubbling under the surface for some time. With attacks coming from all sides, Hardwicke was forced to defend the very existence of his office in what became the ultimate test of the first post-union administration. Thus, between September and October 1801, a number of

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<sup>6</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 15 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 32).

<sup>7</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 332.

substantial communications were ferried between London and Dublin by Littlehales. He was entrusted by Hardwicke and Abbot with a delicate mission of the utmost importance: to convey to the prime minister and to the cabinet as a whole, particularly the home secretary, the outright abhorrence resonating from within Dublin Castle concerning the measures seemingly being contemplated by the government in London relating to the Irish executive. Under directions from the cabinet, Littlehales, acting as courier, would later commit to Hardwicke a substantial paper that insisted, 'The union would seem to create a necessity for a very determinate change in the political situation of the lord lieutenant of Ireland, and his chief secretary'.<sup>8</sup> Two documents in particular stand out in terms of their importance. First, a paper prepared by Pelham at the Home Office on 20 September 1801, somewhat innocuously titled, when one considers the drastic propositions contained therein, 'Considerations upon the situation of the lord lieutenant and his chief secretary'.<sup>9</sup> Second, the direct response to that paper by Hardwicke, detailing his 'observations'<sup>10</sup> in a 'counter statement'<sup>11</sup>, on this overt and very real attack to his authority. To date, both of these sources, with one exception, have been overlooked by historians. Hoppen's innovative analysis is the only genuine effort to engage with the material, but even he makes scant use of the lord lieutenant's reply, referencing only one line of a document that is over twenty pages in length, and then only to note Hardwicke's general intention to work in accordance to 'union principles'.<sup>12</sup> This study will seek to correct that omission, in an effort to better comprehend the stresses and strains influencing the dynamics of the Anglo-

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<sup>8</sup> [Pelham], 'Considerations upon the situation of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and his chief secretary' [Hereafter: 'Pelham considerations'], 20 September 1801 (BL, Add. MSS. 45031 f. 42). There are various copies of both the 'Pelham considerations' paper and 'Hardwicke observations' or counter statement paper [see below] dotted throughout the personal and private papers of the various protagonists in the dispute. For clarity of purpose this thesis will reference those found in the Supplementary Hardwicke Papers at the British Library in Add. MSS. 45031.

<sup>9</sup> 'Pelham considerations', (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 42-51).

<sup>10</sup> Hardwicke, 'Observations on a paper entitled "Considerations upon the situation of the lord lieutenant and his chief secretary"' [Hereafter: 'Hardwicke observations'], 24 October 1801 (BL Add. Ms. 45031 ff. 52-65).

<sup>11</sup> Hardwicke, 'Counter statement in answer to the paper of considerations', [24 October 1801], (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 105-111).

<sup>12</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 329.



Irish relationship of the early nineteenth century. Upon his initial journey to London, Littlehales also carried with him extensive orders on how he was to interact with various other members of the ministry, including Addington. While Hoppen does reference these additional and extremely important papers, no analysis of this material exists in the historiography.<sup>13</sup> Critically, this evidence suggests that the Irish administration and not the Home Office at Whitehall prompted this new crisis.<sup>14</sup> However, this argument does require clarification which will be provided here.

Furthermore, the sheer number of questions, proposals, claims and counterclaims which ensued following Littlehales' initial mission is evidence in itself of the almost complete inability of the Irish government to function with cohesion in the aftermath of the union. To all intents and purposes, there was not one major aspect of governance that the Irish administration was not forced to seek clarification on in 1801. Domestic issues and administrative concerns were to be raised with the home secretary; financial policy concentrating on the 'commercial intercourse' between Great Britain and Ireland was to be determined in conversation with the lords of the treasury; the secretary at war was to make known his plans for the outfitting, maintenance and financing of the army; while the role of the commander-in-chief over the army in Ireland, from the movement of troops, to the establishment of fortifications and the preparation of the army accounts was all to be ascertained. On top of all of this the prime minister was to be quizzed on nothing less than the fundamentals of British rule in Ireland. Incredibly, Littlehales was to determine: '1. Principle of government'; '2. Finance of Ireland'; '3. Mode of correcting abuses'; and '4.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 334.

<sup>14</sup> 'Instructions to Lt. Col. Littlehales on his mission to England from his Excellency the Earl of Hardwicke the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland'[Hereafter: 'Littlehales instructions'], 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 89-97). [Hoppen refers to this paper as 'Heads of secret instructions', (Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 334)].

Powers of lord lieutenant.’<sup>15</sup> The question that had to be asked at this point was what, if anything had in fact been decided at the moment of union? The argument must be made, that by September 1801, the administration in Ireland had no idea what it was supposed to do with regard to basic running of the country.

The administration under Hardwicke took an active role in trying to determine the processes by which they were to govern Ireland and how the union was to be implemented. The preceding months had left Hardwicke with the distinct impression that his patent and instructions were slowly being made void and in late August, he was forced to confidentially tell Yorke again of a ‘subject of some embarrassment which was occasion entirely by the forgetfulness and inaction of the Duke of Portland’.<sup>16</sup> This time Hardwicke had looked to appoint Lord Charleville, (from whom he had received an application on 7 July 1801 on the subject), to a vacancy in the Irish peerage on the death of Lord Rossmore, but his plans were again undone by the ministry in London circumventing his authority.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, Abbot had put forward Charleville’s claims<sup>18</sup>, and Hardwicke was convinced he had Addington’s backing in the nomination, as he ‘received full authority by his letter’ of 10 July. Therefore, ‘thinking Lord Charleville just and proper’ and finding the lord chancellor, Clare, in agreement, he put his plans in place to ‘recommend him to the peers of Ireland.’<sup>19</sup> This was to no avail, however. Hardwicke went so far as to inform George III that if such inference was to continue he would be forced to tender his resignation, stating,

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Littlehales instructions’, 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 89-90).

<sup>16</sup> Hardwicke to Charles Yorke, 20 August 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 44).

<sup>17</sup> Hardwicke to Yorke, 20 August 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 44).

<sup>18</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 15 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 33).

<sup>19</sup> Hardwicke to Yorke, 20 August 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 44).



I shall feel that nothing can repair the diminution of weight and authority which your majesty's government in this country will experience, and that it will be impossible for me to continue in this situation without any further prospect of being useful to your majesty's service.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, through his communiqués of September 1801 in an attempt to bring about some sort consensus on his government's mandate and responsibilities, Hardwicke drew the attention of the Home Office, ensuring Pelham played his hand at this moment. By 1 September 1801, the Irish administration, led by Hardwicke, attempted to find some clarity of purpose, which was ultimately occasioned by the string of attempts made to undo the authority of the government there.

Unwittingly, in trying to sort things out, Hardwicke's deployment of Littlehales to London forced the issue into the open and brought much of the post-union problems to a head. The catalyst was not manifest in Hardwicke or his administration but rather stemmed from the unworkable and confused character of the Anglo-Irish relationship since the union. Dublin Castle did not hold back and ensured there was no possibility of understatement,

Many points of a political, civil and military nature, of the utmost importance to the conduct of his majesty's affairs in Ireland arising from the change of circumstances occasioned by the union, appear immediately to require some definitive arrangements with the king's ministers.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> MacDonagh, *The viceroy's post-bag*, p. 61.

<sup>21</sup> 'Littlehales instructions', 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 90).

The relationship of the Irish administration with the Home Department, the commissioners of the treasury, the secretary at war, 'with each of whom the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has usually held a separate and distinct correspondence', were all in need of refinement.

### *The question of the Irish Office*

A close reading of these documents brings to light some of the major concerns of the post-union era, as they were viewed in Dublin. Top of the list was, 'the correspondence between the lord lieutenant and the secretary of state [for the home department]' and how this was to be conducted, 'on what subjects, to what extent and at what periods.' Similarly, the nature of the chief secretary's correspondence with that office was also to be ascertained. As previous events had shown, Hardwicke had no clue to whom he was to direct his queries and on what topics. However, Hardwicke was insistent that the smooth running of an Irish Office in London was of key importance to the successful operation of cross-channel affairs. 'In so much as the removal of the parliamentary business of Ireland requires the chief secretary, for a great part of the year, and a certain portion of the offices connected with his department for the whole of the year, should be resident and established in London', Hardwicke said, 'it is evidently necessary, that the chief secretary should have an immediate communication of all such correspondence between the two branches of government as he would have had if he had continued to reside in Ireland'.<sup>22</sup>

The plan for 'the establishment of an office in London for Irish affairs', had been on Hardwicke's mind almost since his arrival in Dublin and he believed such an

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<sup>22</sup> 'Littlehales instructions', 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 90).



arrangement was 'in contemplation at the time of the union.'<sup>23</sup> It was in fact his administration's 'intention of conforming to the plan originally prepared by Lord Castlereagh for the establishment of an Irish Office in London.' Abbot too was desirous that significant weight should be placed in this new office, and that the 'principal secretary in London', who would answer directly to the Irish chief secretary, would have 'a seat in parliament' in order to keep abreast of business affecting Ireland that was transacted there.<sup>24</sup> While Connolly has noted that such an 'office had already been increasing in importance in the last years before the union', this was not the Irish Office as it was envisioned and established in 1801.<sup>25</sup> There was to be a consummate difference in terminology, if not necessarily function, between the pre- and post-union Irish administrative office in London. Castlereagh for example had worked from what was called the office of the chief secretary in London which comprised 'a resident secretary in London to the lord lieutenant in Ireland' along with a 'solicitor of the revenue of Ireland in London.'<sup>26</sup> These roles had been filled respectively by the long serving joint secretaries for Ireland John Jenkinson<sup>27</sup> and William Henry Fremantle.<sup>28</sup> Both men were vastly experienced in Irish affairs, Jenkinson having actually first served there as far back as August 1773 under the viceroyalty of Lord Harcourt.<sup>29</sup> Their office had existed for at least a decade in its pre-union form with the resident secretary himself receiving a basic salary of £700, but with emoluments and other fees attached, raking up the not inconsiderable yearly income of over £2369 ('British money').<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 25 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 20).

<sup>24</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 1 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 25-26).

<sup>25</sup> Connolly, 'Aftermath and adjustment', p. 5. See also: Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 336.

<sup>26</sup> 'Duties of the office of messrs Jenkinson and Fremantle', [30 May 1801], (NA PRO 30/9/125/8).

<sup>27</sup> 'John Jenkinson, (c.1734-1805)' in W.A.J. Archbold, *rev.* M.C. Curthoys, 'John Banks Jenkinson, (1781-1840), *ODNB*.

<sup>28</sup> G.B. Smith, *rev.* H.C.G. Matthew, 'Sir William Henry Fremantle, (1766-1850)', *ODNB*.

<sup>29</sup> *The history of parliament 1754-1790*.

<sup>30</sup> 'Duties of the office of messrs Jenkinson and Fremantle', [30 May 1801], (NA PRO 30/9/125/9).

So convinced were Irish officials though in early 1801 of the necessity of an increase in operation and stature of the office, that Hardwicke peremptorily asked Pelham to put into action the plan 'of making some arrangement by which...whoever is at the head of the Irish Office in London might be capable of sitting in parliament.'<sup>31</sup> These moves to instil the relevant prominence in the Irish Office since the union sat well in line with the efforts of the Irish administration to ensure it held sufficient authority over Irish affairs. Yet, an important difference here relevant to other considerations was that the Irish Office represented the workings of the Irish government in Britain. The Irish administration were sure to point out that 'in consequence of the union the scope of this office has been enlarged so far as to render it a repository of information...which the chief secretary requires ...to enable him to carry on the king's service...and to prosecute the parliamentary business of Ireland'. All of this was 'indispensably necessary in order to complete the knowledge which he should have of the current business between the two countries.'<sup>32</sup> In essence the Irish Office was to act as the home away from home of the Dublin Castle administration. The chief secretary would hold significant sway therein, and would use it as a means of managing Irish political affairs. Brynn has suggested that later, 'in practice it served largely as a listening post', but even at this early stage the influence that the office might exert in the hands of an enterprising chief secretary, was not indiscernible.<sup>33</sup>

As will be shown, Pelham was drastically opposed to even the consideration of such an office on British soil. Conversely however, Abbot's commitment unsurprisingly to engraining the Irish Office in the post-union administrative framework was evident from as early as May 1801, when he began to compile a number of detailed memoranda on the functions and means of the chief secretary's office in London with the help of Jenkinson

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<sup>31</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 13 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 29).

<sup>32</sup> 'Littlehales instructions', 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 91).

<sup>33</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 72.



and Fremantle.<sup>34</sup> An analysis of this material clearly indicates that the chief secretary's office in London was fundamental to the cross-channel operation of the Irish administration before the union. The office worked to 'receive and enter all *letters* from Ireland and deliver them to the public offices', 'to transmit to Ireland the king's letters...after seeing them entered at the signet office', 'to pay the *fees* on said letters', 'to transmit to Ireland all *military commissions* and to collect the fees thereon', 'to account for the fees to the chief secretary...and the...home department where the commissions are made out' which was 'an intricate and laborious branch of the duty' of the office and 'subject to occasional losses.' Similarly, the office sought to 'expedite all *commissions* which the government of Ireland from time to time transmit' and 'to assist the *state messengers* by the advance of money for their allowances.' The solicitor of the revenue was also tasked to 'transmit to the *Revenue Board* in Ireland books containing the prices of all *teas* sold at the East India Company's sales' while also working 'to solicit and manage all public matters that the commissioners of the revenue may require to be done.' The office was therefore integral to the smooth transition of the political and administrative traffic of Britain and Ireland. Jenkinson and Fremantle were certainly aware of the fact that their operations bridged the geopolitical divide, acting as an arm of the Irish administration in London. This was no more apparent than when they paid 'annually the several *gratuities* which are transmitted to us by the government of Ireland for the different officers of state in this country for their aid in the dispatch of Irish public business in Great Britain.'<sup>35</sup> Tellingly, it was presumed in London that 'the *duties* of the office of messrs Jenkinson and Fremantle' had now, since the union, 'devolved upon the Irish Office' and Abbot was told that 'a plan has been arranged with the different offices in *Dublin Castle* for the

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<sup>34</sup> 'The establishment of the office of the chief secretary to the lord lieutenant in London', [30 May 1801], (NA PRO 30/9/125/15-18).

<sup>35</sup> 'Duties of the office of messrs Jenkinson and Fremantle', [30 May 1801], (NA PRO 30/9/125/8). [Emphasis in original].

*transmission of daily abstracts of the business transacted there*'.<sup>36</sup> Abbot also ordered that the clerk employed in the House of Commons, engaged in recording and transmitting the various proceedings of parliament and the business transacted therein relevant to Ireland to the chief secretary, would continue to operate as per pre-union norms.<sup>37</sup>

The continuation of these various modes of administration and communication between Ireland and Britain and particularly the cross-channel operation of the Irish chief secretary, coupled with the Irish administration's belief that the office would increase in stature is evidence of their attitude towards such measures adopted after the union. By July the new Irish Office was therefore housed in an ample four storey building (which had been fitted out for the purpose at a cost of over £740<sup>38</sup>) on Great George Street in Westminster, positioning it near the governmental hub in Whitehall. [See *FIG. 2*].<sup>39</sup> While Abbot may have wished 'to make some alteration in the mode adopted by Lord Castlereagh for his own personal convenience', it was clear that the Irish administration had no intention of winding up their London based operations, or of handing over the operation of their affairs to any other governmental body.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> 'The establishment of the office of the chief secretary to the lord lieutenant in London', [30 May 1801], (NA PRO 30/9/125/17). [Emphasis in original].

<sup>37</sup> 'Mr. Abbot's orders directing Mr. Samuel Gunnell to transact the business in parliament respecting the affairs of Ireland for the chief secretary', 30 May 1801, (NA PRO 30/9/125/13).

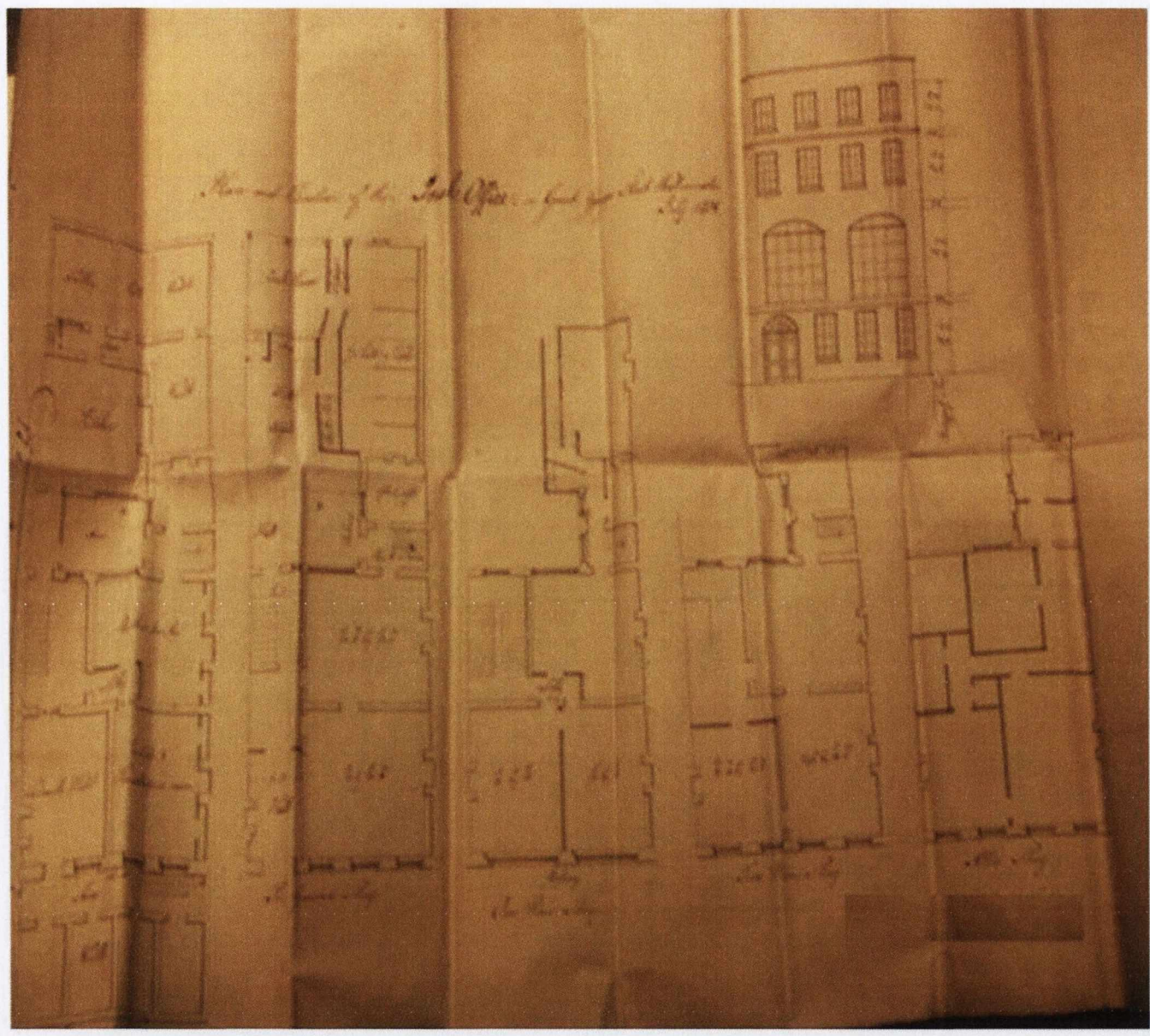
<sup>38</sup> 'Estimate of the advances made by the Irish Office', [September] 1801, (NA PRO 30/9/125/70).

<sup>39</sup> 'Plan and elevation of the Irish Office at Great George Street Westminster', July 1801, (NA PRO 30/90/125); 'The establishment of the office of the chief secretary to the lord lieutenant in London', [30 May 1801], (NA PRO 30/9/125/17).

<sup>40</sup> 'The establishment of the office of the chief secretary to the lord lieutenant in London', [30 May 1801], (NA PRO 30/9/125/18).



**FIG. 2**



*'Plan and elevation of the Irish Office at Great George Street Westminster', July 1801.*

(Source: NA, PRO 30/90/125)

## *Altering the political landscape*

Hardwicke's instructions to Littlehales in September 1801 also turned once more to military matters, this time attempting to win support in the civil line through Pelham. Patronage and the issue of the lord lieutenant's ability to keep the Irish aristocracy onside, as set out above, through the 'exclusive recommending power which he enjoyed before the union' and through which 'the due weight and efficiency to be given to the king's government in Ireland' was reiterated 'on the grounds of public consideration' were his main concerns. Hardwicke accepted his loss of general military patronage but hoped for some smaller boon, namely the right to appoint cornets and ensigns, 'as greatly to enhance the power and...strengthen the influence of government' without affecting 'the paramount authority, dignity and necessary weight of the commander-in-chief.'<sup>41</sup> His efforts to maintain his authority were yet again clear. However, he was also anxious to find out 'how far is the authority of the commander-in-chief... in regard to the embarkation and disembarkation of troops' into or out of Ireland to extend, without the express permissions of the lord lieutenant or the secretary of state. Hardwicke was worried that given the power by the king, the military authorities in Britain would have no need to make any 'such direction to the commander of the forces' or supply any 'official information thereof...to the lord lieutenant' in Ireland, 'whose office renders him responsible of the peace of the country.'<sup>42</sup> If such a power was granted it could mean that through orders from Britain, Ireland would be left in a sorry state in the event of internal unrest or invasion. Nevertheless, the most important of Dublin Castle's communications with London at this juncture, were the 'most secret' questions Hardwicke put to Henry Addington.

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<sup>41</sup> 'Littlehales instructions', 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 93).

<sup>42</sup> 'Littlehales instructions', 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 92).



Littlehales was ordered to fully apprise the prime minister of Hardwicke's vast instructions, but 'independently of the several matters to which these instructions relate' Hardwicke told him, 'you are to confer with Mr. Addington exclusively on the following most important considerations.' Here was the whole point and Hardwicke argued that 'as the government of Ireland has been delegated to the lord lieutenant, it must necessarily be entrusted with the exercise of much of the prerogative of the crown'. That prerogative fell particularly in the way of 'the distribution of favours, as will make that form of government effectual'. 'How far these powers have been truly and faithfully applied to their proper object' would be ensured by the lord lieutenant's 'political conduct and official correspondence' with ministers in Britain. Ultimately, Hardwicke insisted that all such moves would be made only for 'the real interests of the king's service.' From his position in Ireland, Hardwicke was resolute that 'unless such weight and influence are granted to the lord lieutenant for the time being, that form of government cannot either manage the political concerns, or promote the local welfare of the country'.<sup>43</sup> The Irish administration would be crippled in its operation and 'no person will feel any motive, inducement, or advantage in addressing himself to the king's representative there', with 'the inevitable consequences' rendering 'the office of lord lieutenant inefficient'. Hardwicke was not afraid to go even further and he told Addington in no uncertain terms that, 'the aversion to the union, which obtained very strongly in many parts of Ireland and still continues unabated will be unhappily confirmed'. The result he was sure could only be, 'the incalculable injury to the empire.'<sup>44</sup>

The working out of the union arrangement was central to Hardwicke's concerns in September 1801. He even suggested to Addington, none to humbly, that, 'in addition to

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<sup>43</sup> 'Littlehales instructions', 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 95).

<sup>44</sup> 'Littlehales instructions', 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 95-96).

the beneficial effects which may justly be expected from placing an English nobleman of high respectability at the head of the king's government in Ireland,' it seemed to him 'the most impudent step towards cementing the union will be the employment of Irishmen of character in ostensible offices in England'. In this manner he hoped that 'it is further to be desired that in all practicable instances they should feel the parental influence which governs the counsels of the United Kingdom.'<sup>45</sup> Some weight should be placed in this statement. Here again, and in the context of his government's actions already, was evidence of a predilection by Hardwicke to attempt to promote an Irish agenda within the United Kingdom. Certainly, he might have seen the employment of leading Irishmen in Britain as the means to ship problematic figures out of the country, men like Clare or John Foster for example whom he felt threatened the strength and authority of his administration in Ireland. However, a less cynical view might take Hardwicke at his word and suggest that an interchange of key political figures, both Irish and British, throughout the United Kingdom would lead to a better consolidation of the union. As will be shown later in this thesis, this policy was held up as a progressive plan in a military context at least, and thus it is not impossible to believe that Hardwicke's similar ideas on a political line could not also be adopted.

### ***Lord Pelham's Irish problem***

Nevertheless, it was not Addington whom Hardwicke had a need to fear in mid-1801, but Lord Pelham, the home secretary. If there was any doubt about whether the Irish administration had found either friend or foe in the form of this former chief secretary, that doubt was dispelled in the autumn of 1801. Pelham had been forced to take a hiatus from

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<sup>45</sup> 'Littlehales instructions', 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 96).



his post as chief secretary in Ireland in February 1797.<sup>46</sup> He was serving under Lord Camden, who respected him, but his health had however become so bad that 'he was reported to be spitting blood and at one point was considered to be in "extreme danger"'. In a moment of huge significance, Camden insisted upon the appointment of his step-nephew, Lord Castlereagh, to fill the post in the interim. However, with the subsequent support of the new viceroy Cornwallis in June and July 1798, who privately recognised Castlereagh as 'a very uncommon young man', he became one of the very 'few Irishman since the glorious revolution' appointed chief secretary.<sup>47</sup> It was thus Castlereagh, and not Pelham, who would work the union through the Irish parliament in 1800, and his name, not Pelham's, forever attributed to the act and all that went with it. As Bew rightly states, 'the role that he played thereafter was to earn him the lasting enmity of his countrymen.'<sup>48</sup> While Castlereagh had crafted the union, Pelham then was determined to mould it to his own vision in the months following its enactment. Forced to unceremoniously leave Ireland in 1798, Pelham then had the opportunity to directly shape government policy for the country in 1801. This was his return.

In response therefore, to the questions and proposals sent by Dublin Castle, Pelham immediately set about impressing his authority on the administration and government of the country. Hoppen correctly asserts that 'one unanalysed hangover from pre-Union times was the "fact" that Ireland came under the particular attention of the Home Office, though few chose to define what this amounted to.'<sup>49</sup> This thesis will attempt to provide an analysis of this 'fact' in a post-union context and certainly, Pelham's actions attest to his belief, and he argued these 'sentiments and opinions...are approved of by his majesty's

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<sup>46</sup> Bew, *Castlereagh*, p. 110.

<sup>47</sup> Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>48</sup> Bew, *Castlereagh*, p. 110.

<sup>49</sup> Hoppen, 'A question none could answer', p. 141.

confidential servants' more generally, that the Home Office had direct control and authority over Irish affairs.<sup>50</sup> Pelham's bombshell, his considerations paper, was preceded by two separate statements that addressed Hardwicke's concerns.<sup>51</sup> Even here the prominence of the Home Office over the Irish administration was visibly maintained. However, at first Pelham was reluctant to commit himself fully, and while he assured Hardwicke that his proposals had the full backing of cabinet, he did not lead a direct assault on Dublin Castle. In a conciliatory mood for the time being, he asked Hardwicke to get onboard with the plans emanating in London, to 'become a party to the arrangement of the duties of the lord lieutenant and chief secretary'.

Importantly, Pelham initially attempted to win the administration around to his way of thinking, giving them at least some say in how the post-union administration of Ireland was to be arranged. This would ensure that there was not a possible drawn out debate over constitutionality or political procedure. He also however, played on Hardwicke's enduring fear of the exposure of a perception that his administration was politically impotent and Pelham suggested that his plan was 'a mode more agreeable to the sentiments of esteem and respect for Lord Hardwicke, that instructions communicated in a public dispatch would be.'<sup>52</sup> This attitude set the tone for the remainder of Pelham's introductory statements and may be seen as an attempt to lull the Irish administration into a false sense of security. Pelham was happy to concede some small points: Hardwicke was given the 'power of granting pardons for treasons that was delegated to Lord Camden and Lord Cornwallis.' However, as this was 'a very unusual power' in Pelham's own estimation and

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<sup>50</sup> 'Introductory paper from Lord Pelham to Lt. Col. Littlehales for his Excellency the lord lieutenant' [Hereafter: 'Pelham introductory paper'], [15 September 1801], (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 97).

<sup>51</sup> 'Pelham introductory paper', [15 September 1801], (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 97-99); 'Observations on Lord Hardwicke's instructions to Col. Littlehales' [Hereafter: 'Pelham observations'], [20 September 1801], (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 100-101).

<sup>52</sup> 'Pelham introductory paper', [15 September 1801], (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 97).



‘one as the disastrous and critical situation of Ireland could alone justify’, it was limited in its very specific uses. Other questions regarding malting and distilling practices in Ireland as well as a division of the Revenue Board were met with agreeable sounding, yet noncommittal responses. No meaningful answer was given for example, in relation to Hardwicke’s request for instruction on the commutation of the sentence of the captured United Irishman James Napper Tandy. While ‘Lord Cornwallis had respited him, and was inclined to pardon him’, Hardwicke wished to find out whether Napper Tandy was to receive the lesser sentence of ‘voluntary transportation for life’.<sup>53</sup> After Napper Tandy’s arrest, Cornwallis ‘had been secretly instructed...to safeguard his life’ and ‘pressure was put on Tandy to turn informer’, but he refused to do both this and to make a choice ‘between immediate execution and transportation’.<sup>54</sup> Hardwicke’s communication with Pelham on the point is evidence of how the debate ground on ‘but the intervention of the first consul of France and the conclusion of the peace of Amiens ensured that France would be his destination’ eventually on 14 March 1802.<sup>55</sup> In September 1801 Hardwicke had no way of knowing this eventual result and Pelham was not forthcoming with the government’s plans.

To make matters worse, Pelham refused to countenance Hardwicke’s suggestion that ‘the extension of the privilege of printing bibles, exercised by the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, to that of Trinity in Dublin’. He reflected that ‘if it should be granted to Dublin it is to be considered that Edinburgh and Glasgow will probably expect the same’ however, such an expansion ‘would materially lessen the value of that enjoyed by the English universities’. Pelham was unwilling to acquiesce in this regard arguing that ‘the loss [the English universities] sustain by literary publications, is alone compensated by

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<sup>53</sup> ‘Pelham introductory paper’, [15 September 1801], (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 97-98).

<sup>54</sup> C.J. Woods, ‘James Napper Tandy, (1737?-1803)’, *DIB*.

<sup>55</sup> James Kelly, ‘James Napper Tandy, (1737-1803)’, *ODNB*.

the exclusive privilege of printing bibles.<sup>56</sup> This was seemingly a minor concern within a much greater plethora of issues at stake between the Home Office and the Irish administration in this period. However, Hardwicke persistently returned to the point in October in the midst of his enduring battle with the ministry. His detailed and insistent reaction lends weight to the suggestion that he saw this issue as one of particular importance. While at first glance it may seem right to state that Hardwicke was wasting energy that may have been better employed elsewhere in shoring up his administration's influence, his move is yet a further indication of the effort he exerted in finding a balanced union arrangement. Markedly he told Pelham, his argument was made in line 'of the general policy of assimilating as much as possible, upon union principles, the public establishment of the two countries'. This was the central tenet behind his claims. While he believed 'that in the insistence of the recommendation which I submitted to your lordship, a greater degree of correctness than had hitherto existed, would be ensured to the texts of scripture and the liturgy of the church.' And that this material, 'would be safer in the hands of such learned bodies, than in those of printers by trade', Hardwicke was working on his understanding of what the union stood for.<sup>57</sup> In such moderate ways the union might be made work, and as he pointed out, 'though under all the circumstances of the case the privilege may not be of any great value', he pointedly remarked, 'I am afraid the refusal of it may be thought rather ungracious.'<sup>58</sup> Again, public perception of the union and the authority of the lord lieutenant to operate within the (undefined) parameters of that measure were key defining factors of Hardwicke's approach to government in Ireland. It was not however, the view maintained by Pelham as home secretary.

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<sup>56</sup> 'Pelham introductory paper', [15 September 1801], (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 98-99).

<sup>57</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 19 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 87).

<sup>58</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 19 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 88).



## *Working to union principles*

Nevertheless, the persistent invocation of the idea of working to union principles became a consistent ploy in Dublin Castle's engagement with government ministers. Littlehales on mission in London, optimistically told Abbot that in his opinion, the primary players there, specifically Addington and Pelham, were very much forthcoming with their assurances that an equitable arrangement on post-union procedure could be reached. Littlehales had impressed upon Pelham the fact that the administration's opinions did not centre on 'a question of unnecessary consequence and authority' but rather 'since the union it was admitted generally that a definitive arrangement as to the precise duties and power of the lord lieutenant was urgent and indispensable'. Primarily Littlehales ensured Abbot that he made his representations to Pelham upon the contemplation 'that on public considerations it might possibly be deemed advisable not to weaken or diminish the chief governor in Ireland' and that he at all times, discussed his 'instructions upon union principles.'<sup>59</sup> Addington agreed that governmental interaction between London and Dublin would be held 'on union principles exclusively'<sup>60</sup>, and in a follow up meeting with Littlehales he let it be known that he 'was deeply impressed with the policy of governing Ireland on union principles'.<sup>61</sup> Abbot seized on this and fully committed to enacting any governmental reforms with such a policy in mind stating, 'union principles are those by which we most cordially wish to have every modification of its powers regulated.'<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Littlehales to Abbot, 9 September 1801, *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 315.

<sup>60</sup> Littlehales to Abbot, 20 September 1801, *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 317.

<sup>61</sup> Littlehales to Abbot, 24 September 1801, *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 318.

<sup>62</sup> Abbot to Addington, 27 September 1801, *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 319.

Littlehales observed that while Pelham had given him 'a patient hearing', the latter's responses paid inconsequential lip service.<sup>63</sup> Littlehales, having already served with Cornwallis, was confused by Pelham's declaration 'that every communication on the part of the lord lieutenant which was not made directly to the secretary of state for the home department was apparently informal' and even though the lord lieutenant of Ireland might seek the advice and opinions of the secretary at war or the commander-in-chief for example, 'correspondence of that description must be considered indirect.' In communicating with other branches of government, all material should first pass over Pelham's desk for perusal and forwarding to the respective bodies. Particularly important was Pelham's unequivocal insistence that 'no act of government of Ireland' would be considered 'regular or conclusive' until agreement was reached with the home secretary on the manner of the 'king's commands' in whatever case. Littlehales again said, 'as far as I could collect from Lord Pelham, there seemed no disposition on his part to withhold from me any opinion'. Nevertheless, Pelham's attitude was clear: Irish affairs came fully under his brief as he 'cursorily remarked that a cabinet on Irish affairs could only be convened by him as secretary for state'. Littlehales was sure to tell Abbot that Pelham, 'merely threw out these ideas generally to me' and 'as my institutions embraced a state question of importance, he should in all probability, convene his majesty's ministers upon them, and take the whole into serious consideration.'<sup>64</sup>

### ***Face-off: The lord lieutenant and home secretary***

Pelham was committed then in his idea that the governance of Ireland in its entirety was to be overseen by his department. This was the simple fact in his mind, and the union

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<sup>63</sup> Littlehales to Abbot, 9 September 1801, *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 315.

<sup>64</sup> Littlehales to Abbot, 9 September 1801, in *Ibid*, i, pp. 316-317.



he believed necessitated such an arrangement. The problem he faced was that the first lord lieutenant after the union did not share his views. Thus, by 20 September 1801 the coyness of the Home Office and Irish administration turned into an outright brawl. Littlehales returned to Dublin on 18 October 1801<sup>65</sup> and placed in front of Hardwicke and Abbot Pelham's 'Considerations on the situation of the lord lieutenant of Ireland and his chief secretary.'<sup>66</sup> While Littlehales may have previously been of the opinion that some room of manoeuvre and discussion was being conceded by the Home Office, Pelham's opening observations, which accompanied his considerations paper, set a very different tone. The evidence proves that here was the game changer that sought to redefine the relationship of the lord lieutenant and the Irish administration, with the Home Office and the British government in the aftermath of the union. What is more, if Pelham's plans were fully adopted, the fundamental makeup of the United Kingdom would be strikingly altered.

'The lord lieutenant', Hardwicke was informed was to write to the home secretary 'upon all subjects in which the practical interests of Ireland are concerned'. The chief secretary, Pelham stated, 'should correspond officially with no one except in the name of the lord lieutenant.' Seeing the potential authority a chief secretary might wield, maybe even fearing another Castlereagh, Pelham attempted to not just restrict the office, but to in essence to immobilise it. Bluntly he emphasised: 'the Irish Office in London, totally unnecessary.' He followed with the explicit statement that it was 'the office of secretary of state... through which the affairs of Ireland should be conducted.' Throughout these observations Pelham reiterated his point that all communication from Ireland on matters civil, military and fiscal should be sent to his office. Fearing that familial bonds might be

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<sup>65</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 20 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 80).

<sup>66</sup> 'Pelham considerations', 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 42-51).

used to undermine his authority, he was at particular pains to point out that ‘neither the lord lieutenant [n]or the secretary at war are authorised to discuss officially or make any arrangement without the secretary of state’s consent.’<sup>67</sup>

This was the spirit and tenor of Pelham’s key statements on the Anglo-Irish relationship. He saw the radical and definitive adjustment of the position of the lord lieutenant and the chief secretary (and possibly their abolition altogether) as the means to ensure a real union of the two kingdoms. While this may have been the over-riding ambition of the home secretary in the long term, the immediate motive, for Pelham, behind this dispute was, simply put, solely concerned with the accumulation of power and authority. From there came the issue of who had both the constitutional and political right to wield that power. Pelham found however, that ‘the powers of each in the new relation in which the countries now stand, have not yet been settled or defined’. The lord lieutenant ‘acts under instructions nearly similar to those which governed the conduct of his immediate predecessors’, while the chief secretary ‘possess the same authority that the former secretaries had.’ A balanced assessment of Pelham’s considerations in fact leads to the conclusion that such a suggestion was not at all as extraordinary as it may seem at first glance. He argued that ‘if the chief object professed in proposing the union was, to identify the interests of both countries, which had before been considered as distinct, it follows, I think, that even the appearance as well as the reality of separate councils directing the interest of each ought carefully to be avoided.’<sup>68</sup> Such an idea was not at all at odds with what the union meant to do. The imperial parliament was now the domain of Irish MPs as well as their British counterparts, and surely the new relationship that had developed between the two kingdoms called for a straight forward method of government.

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<sup>67</sup> ‘Pelham observations’, [20 September 1801], (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 100).

<sup>68</sup> ‘Pelham considerations’, 20 September 1801, (BL Add. Ms. 45031 f. 42).



Pelham's desire that a clear message, indicating to one and all, about where the power of the British empire, in the first instance resided, and in the second instance, how it would be exercised, were fundamental to the original goals of union. Yet, by Pelham's own admission, 'how far the reality ought to accompany the appearance is a question not so easily determined' and here was the point.<sup>69</sup> The way in which control over Irish affairs was to be maintained, by whatever body, Pelham argued sat in the accepted wisdom 'generally understood, 'that the government of a country resides wherever the power of selecting men for official situations is exercised'.<sup>70</sup> Patronage was key, and it was necessary to insure then that 'appointments in general to offices in Ireland ought as much as possible to appear at least to originate in the British cabinet, or in some power in England'. That power was in Pelham's mind, in consequence of the union, and in terms of the settling the operation of that measure, to be 'the source of all patronage in the empire.'<sup>71</sup> This return once again to the issue of patronage, indicates an extremely limited view of the position of the lord lieutenant in the makeup of Irish society. The king's representative in Ireland had played a vital role in the political (and often militaristic) make up of the country since 1172, following the Norman invasion.<sup>72</sup> He was to all intents the very embodiment of royal, and later, imperial authority throughout the island. His residence in the viceregal lodge in Dublin's Phoenix Park and his direction of the affairs of state from the very heart of the capital in Dublin Castle symbolised both the grandeur and strength of British dominance in Ireland. But more importantly, the incomplete nature of the union (particularly in terms of the lack of movement on catholic emancipation), meant

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<sup>69</sup> 'Pelham considerations', 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 43).

<sup>70</sup> 'Pelham considerations', 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 42-43).

<sup>71</sup> 'Pelham considerations', 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 43).

<sup>72</sup> For a brief but informative summation of 'The Viceregal Heritage' in Ireland, see Brynn, *Crown and castle*, pp. 20-24. Similarly, R.B. MacDowell argues that 'Anglo-Irish administrative history may be said to have begun in April 1172 when Henry II appointed Hugh de Lacy justiciar of Ireland.' [MacDowell, *The Irish administration* p. 1].

that Ireland was not yet fully ingratiated into the imperial fold. If Pelham's wishes were consented to, the lord lieutenant of Ireland would have his power base cut from under him.

Pelham discussed the rise in stature and authority of the viceroyalty and position of chief secretary, and proceeded to give his colleagues a history lesson. Three distinct periods marked this process during the reign of George III he argued, and an analysis of each 'in settling what should be the situation and character of the lord lieutenant now that the union has taken place' he felt, 'may not be entirely useless.'<sup>73</sup> First, Ireland had 'been at one time governed by British laws' with 'the concerns of Ireland frequently discussed in the British Parliament' when 'the minister of the day took the lead in those questions.'<sup>74</sup> From 1782, 'during the second period, when the independence of the Irish Parliament was admitted...the inevitable consequence, and the political importance of the lord lieutenant and his secretary were materially affected.' Pelham was quick to point out that the chief secretary in particular 'acquired the power and influence of a minister entrusted with the management of an independent parliament', while the leading offices in Ireland, previously 'held by persons residing in England'; the chancellor of the exchequer for example, became 'resident' there. The state and nature of the Irish connection itself 'together with these causes...operated powerfully in augmenting still further the political consequence of the Irish government.' Important parliamentary questions and 'the danger to which the state was exposed by disturbances in different parts of the country', Pelham argued, had required 'the exercise of all the power and influence that the constitution would admit'. However, instead of seeing these issues as lasting concerns in Ireland, and still prevalent in the post-union world, Pelham returned yet again to the fact that those considerations had given the lord lieutenant too much influence over the patronage of the crown, insofar 'that

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<sup>73</sup> 'Pelham considerations', 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 43).

<sup>74</sup> 'Pelham considerations', 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 43-44).



their recommendations even to those offices reserved by the king...were so uniformly attended that they had in point of fact, the disposal of them'.<sup>75</sup>

The accuracy of Connolly's statements, referenced already in chapter two, on the nature of the 1782 "constitution" and the role of patronage, must again be noted here. Similarly, this archival evidence suggests that in essence Pelham was not trying to solidify the union relationship, but simply focused on a preoccupation with the power of patronage. Further still, the debate did not concern a workable union, in which conceivably a lord lieutenant would not be required in Ireland, but focused ultimately on the practice of control and exertion of influence of which the use of patronage was just one offshoot. By the end of his lecture, Pelham found it difficult to veil his basic premise. In the final stage of the contemporary history of the Irish administration, with Ireland under the union, Pelham decided that 'the extinction of the separate parliament all ministerial duties connected with its existence are transferred to the king's ministers in London.' While 'it was not till the year 1796... that the office of secretary of state was added to that of chief secretary, in order to give the latter more rank and consequence', particularly in parliament, the union had changed all this. Pelham demanded an incontrovertible regression of Irish political development, 'even previous to the year 1783', and because of this, in this new period of Anglo-Irish relations, 'the two stations of lord lieutenant and secretary are reduced far below their political importance'.<sup>76</sup> So this was it, the Irish government was to become a 'local administration' which could not 'require more than a small portion of the patronage which it may be found necessary...of carrying on the government'.

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<sup>75</sup> 'Pelham considerations', 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 44-45).

<sup>76</sup> 'Pelham considerations', 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 46-47).

Even before he finished however, a fundamental flaw in Pelham's logic began to manifest itself, and it would be one Hardwicke would later seek to exploit. To add insult to injury, Pelham conceded that 'the situation of Ireland, considered with reference to the dispositions prevalent among the inhabitants, and its distance from the seat of government, requires a strong, vigilant, and energetic executive, directing its attention to the police of the country', but subservient at all times 'to the general executive government of the empire'.<sup>77</sup> This was at the very least a necessarily contradictory statement to all that had come before. A strong exercise of power was required on the part of the lord lieutenant to keep the country quiet, but it essentially signified a deprived and subjugated Ireland. It was a place where the grand (but incomplete) political measure of union had not solved the problems of governance there.

Pelham endorsed coercion rather than conciliation, a policy that was to be implemented by a perceivably besieged administration in Dublin Castle. In the meantime the government in London would get on with sorting out the rest of the empire, and the home secretary would direct his unrivalled authority in shaping the character of an Irish political elite. Gone were the innovative, imperially motivated, unifying aspirations of Pitt and Castlereagh. Hardwicke, or any other viceroy for that matter, would be the sole 'acknowledged channel of communication between Ireland and the government of the empire' which Pelham weakly insisted, would 'give him an influence in Ireland'. Again, government would recognise that a certain amount of weight would be represented in the lord lieutenant's recommendations for Irish policy, due to his 'local knowledge of its interest and situation'.<sup>78</sup> None the less, even with this specialist knowledge he would act in an advisory role at best, with the implementation of any measure or plan for Ireland finding

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<sup>77</sup> 'Pelham considerations', 20 September 1801, (BL. Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 47-48).

<sup>78</sup> 'Pelham considerations' 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 49).



its root in London. In what seems almost a pacifying afterthought, Pelham half-heartedly noted, 'a power perhaps of ordering the movement of the troops for the purpose of preserving the peace should be specially given', a possible indication that Pelham foresaw the trouble that might arise in the event of his proposals taking shape.<sup>79</sup>

In the end though, Pelham was working with the idea that the union had solved the problems intertwined with the governance of Ireland. In reality, as he had in fact stated himself, no new plan or application had as of yet been put into action, and this was a drastic step, that would essentially immobilise Ireland's political mechanism. No matter how strong his protestations that 'the practical power and authority' of the Irish administration, 'under these circumstances, may easily be conceived, and will be felt sufficiently to answer every legitimate purpose of executive government', such a plan could not be so bluntly introduced.<sup>80</sup>

Hardwicke's response was immediate, and ingenious. Instead of throwing a tantrum, he sought rather to play Pelham at his own game. With Littlehales' arrival in Dublin on 18 October 1801, Hardwicke made a hollow acknowledgement of Pelham's considerations and informed the latter that he was 'preparing some observations' which he said, 'I flatter myself will be satisfactory and final'. While he did suggest that 'such confidential points connected with the government', with which he had entrusted the steadfast Littlehales, were 'required to be considered and ultimately settled upon some proper honourable and permanent basis', he quickly turned the conversation to other matters.<sup>81</sup> For four more days, the administration bided its time. Furthermore, as has been noted, on 19 October, the day after Littlehales' return, Hardwicke dispatched a follow up

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<sup>79</sup> 'Pelham considerations' 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 50).

<sup>80</sup> 'Pelham considerations', 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 49-50).

<sup>81</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 20 October 1801, (BL Add, MSS. 35771, f. 80).

communication to Pelham that focused entirely on the printing of bibles at Trinity College. As discussed, this seemed to represent a rather trivial detail at the moment of greatest concern for the Irish administration. However while the policy of governing on union principles was seemingly reiterated offhandedly, this was a phrase that would figure prominently in Hardwicke's observations paper and one which, as Littlehales had reported, spoke directly to Addington's sensibilities.<sup>82</sup> Two days later Hardwicke sought instruction from Pelham on an ecclesiastical appointment, notably stating that he would 'take no steps upon this subject until I hear from your lordship', deferring to Pelham's authority and again making no mention of his previous memoranda.<sup>83</sup> On 22 October he spoke of the pension for Cooke and nothing more.<sup>84</sup>

In reality, Hardwicke was yet again mobilising the full resources of the Dublin Castle administration in their attempt to stave off this latest attack. Between the 18 and 24 October 1801, he prepared not just his counter statement to Pelham's paper, but also a vital letter for the prime minister which sought to divide the cabinet on the issue of Ireland.<sup>85</sup> Coupled with these, Hardwicke made a daring move and attempted to bring the key British official of the moment, Lord Cornwallis, into his confidence. Set to go to Amiens as plenipotentiary of the British Empire with the power to sign articles of peace with France, Cornwallis was much respected by all parties involved in the dispute. Hardwicke begged Cornwallis' forgiveness, but felt 'in consideration of the interest you take in whatever relates to Ireland' he was free engage his predecessor.

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<sup>82</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 19 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 87).

<sup>83</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 21 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 85).

<sup>84</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 22 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 85-86).

<sup>85</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 66-71).



This was a clever ploy. Already knowing Cornwallis' positively inclined opinions on the authority required to be manifest in the lord lieutenant of Ireland, Hardwicke attempted to win himself a strong ally. In fact, he sent the entirety of the correspondence on the current crisis with Littlehales, who he was willingly releasing to serve with Cornwallis at Amiens. Undoubtedly, Littlehales played an important role here, ensuring Hardwicke that his former chief would be open to such an approach. Thus, while Hardwicke took 'the opportunity of congratulating your lordship upon your appointment to the embassy you have undertaken, and expressing my sincere wishes for its successful and honourable termination', this was not a selfless act.<sup>86</sup> Hardwicke's fawning endorsement of Littlehales, Cornwallis' long trusted and much respected underling, 'to whose zeal and friendly attention I am much indebted', he said, pushed any subtlety to its limit. He even apologised for the fact that Littlehales 'will be sadly fatigued by two very expeditious journies [*sic.*] between Dublin and London.' Principally though Hardwicke didn't really care if he ever received a response from Cornwallis. His twice made reference to Addington and how the prime minister would be sure to want to know Cornwallis' opinion on these subjects effecting Ireland, told all in terms of the primary theme of the letter. That opinion, 'if Mr. Addington should be desirous to know it', Hardwicke said, was sure to 'be altogether impartial, and founded upon an intimate knowledge of this country and its inhabitants.'<sup>87</sup> Once Cornwallis spoke to Addington in any capacity and on a line that Hardwicke, from previous experience and surely on Littlehales' advice, believed he would, then his goal would be achieved. Abbot would later note that Hardwicke's faith had been well placed and his plan well conceived, stating that, 'Lord Cornwallis very strenuously supported Lord Hardwicke's system communicating to Mr. Addington his decided opinion

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<sup>86</sup> Hardwicke to Cornwallis, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 88).

<sup>87</sup> Hardwicke to Cornwallis, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 89).

in its favour.’<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, it was far from happenstance that Addington was the target of these protestations, as Hardwicke singled out the prime minister specifically as his best chance for success. He even daringly asked that Addington actively seek Cornwallis’ counsel, stating that ‘his opinion may not be altogether without its use, and you may be sure it will be impartial and disinterested.’<sup>89</sup>

As such, Hardwicke made his move on 24 October 1801, dispatching his own observations on Pelham’s considerations paper, a letter to Addington, and playing his trump card to Cornwallis. Gone were pretensions of reserve and restraint. Other than the obvious importance of Hardwicke’s actual observations which will be discussed below, a number of related and crucial points should be made about these documents. For Hardwicke it was critical that his observations would be presented to the cabinet as a whole, and not just sent to the Home Office. Littlehales’ once again acted as Hardwicke’s medium, and upon his return to England, Hardwicke informed Pelham, Littlehales would carry ‘back a paper outlining some observations upon the paper which he delivered to me upon your lordship’s instructions’. Imperiously, Hardwicke insisted that Littlehales would be happy to discuss his observations with Pelham or anyone else, and would be ‘able to give such explanations as may be required of him’. This however would only happen ‘either before or after it has been submitted to the cabinet.’ The entire cabinet then was to be informed of Hardwicke’s concerns, and he continued to remain mute on his observations to Pelham saying, ‘at present I need only trouble your lordship by expressing my earnest hope that they may prove satisfactory.’<sup>90</sup> Pelham’s considerations had been formed entirely in the third person; except in one instance, when he used the pronoun ‘I’,

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<sup>88</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 278.

<sup>89</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 71).

<sup>90</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 86).



to state his feelings on apparent division of government since the union.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, Pelham did not sign the document himself, rather, as he previously stated, Hardwicke could take the considerations as representing the thoughts of all the ministers in London.<sup>92</sup> This tone rankled with the Dublin Castle officials and Hardwicke himself expressed reservations about the nature of the original dispatch. In what was a somewhat peculiar but noteworthy turn of phrase, he stated in a crucial letter to Addington,

the paper of considerations on the situation of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and his secretary, which Colonel Littlehales was directed to deliver to me, has been considered with that attention and respect, which is due to a paper, *the delivery of which at least*, has been sanctioned by the cabinet.<sup>93</sup>

Similarly, Hardwicke's transmission of two separate communications to London is most important when considering the government's attitudes to post-union Ireland. His direct and official answer to the proposed plans for his administration were sent straight to the home secretary, who in turn was to inform the rest of the ministry, while a second letter to the prime minister, marked 'private and confidential', reiterated a number of points but did so in a more conciliatory manner, implicitly enquiring whether these measures were truly to be acted upon.<sup>94</sup> The issue as to whether this was a unified statement on behalf of the cabinet, or just given that perception, was critically vital to the Irish administration. Abbot prepared for the worst, and felt that these 'very important matters...respecting the future

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<sup>91</sup> 'Pelham considerations', 20 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 42).

<sup>92</sup> 'Pelham introductory paper', [15 September 1801], (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 97).

<sup>93</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031 f 66), [my emphasis].

<sup>94</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031 f 66).

system of government for Ireland' may have already been agreed upon by the majority of ministers.<sup>95</sup>

Yet the administration in Dublin did have cause to remain optimistic. On his previous trip to London a month earlier, Littlehales had held two meetings with Addington in which he reiterated 'the incalculable mischief that would inevitably arise to the tranquillity and well being of Ireland' if the executive were to contenance certain plans for the reformation of Irish government. He told Addington the measures seemed 'so objectionable in the opinion of all those capable of viewing the subject on rational and impartial grounds.' Addington responded cordially, and Littlehales said, 'appeared fully to concur with me on this chain of reasoning, and to admit generally to my position.' Crucially, Addington 'confidentially remarked, that with those whom he acted, there could only, he conceived, be one sentiment on this important point.' This first meeting, remarkably took place on the morning of 20 September, the same day that Pelham's considerations paper was drawn up.<sup>96</sup> Thus, Littlehales' second meeting on 23 September 1801 centred directly on these key issues, and while Addington may not have yet seen the final draft of the considerations paper at this point, Littlehales was assured that the prime minister was of the decided opinion that 'any alteration in the present form of government in that country was entirely out of the question'. Addington further agreed that there needed to be 'the proper weight, influence, and dignity, which ought necessarily to attach to the viceroy, as any degradation of actual authority would tend to lessen the king's interest in Ireland'. In fact his opinions on the mode of governance in Ireland, Addington insisted, had not at all altered and they 'were in conformity to those which he had lately given'. Most importantly, while the subject was inevitably 'to come formally under

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<sup>95</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, pp. 277-278.

<sup>96</sup> Littlehales to Abbot, 20 September 1801, *Abbot Diary*, i, pp. 317-318.



discussion before the cabinet', Littlehales was pleased to report 'that Mr. Addington allows me to use his name confidentially...to dispel any apprehension that may be entertained as the supposed intentions of the king's servants to propose any change of system in Ireland'. Furthermore, Addington was particularly disposed to 'satisfy Lord Hardwicke's mind', and ensure him 'that there is no alteration on his part, of opinions generally in respect to the mode of administering the public concerns of Ireland, from what there was when his excellency took his departure from London.'<sup>97</sup>

The opening lines then of Hardwicke's retort to the proposed measures to be adopted by the government in relation to Ireland clearly expressed these reservations. 'The paper containing the statements and opinion of his majesty's confidential servants, delivered by Lord Pelham,' Hardwicke noted, 'appears to convey a general outline of the alterations proposed to be made to the patent and instructions of the lord lieutenant.' Hardwicke was sure to allude to the fact that Pelham had drawn up the proposals and that those proposals only *appeared* to represent the feelings of the cabinet. Furthermore, he insisted that no finalised decisions had yet been reached and that,

It is necessary therefore maturely to consider, before any final resolution is taken upon this important subject, how far such a change in the powers and duties of the lord lieutenant is consistent with his majesty's interests, and the due administration of his affairs in Ireland.<sup>98</sup>

Hardwicke was blunt in his assessment of Pelham's historical analysis of the powers of the Irish administration and particularly the lord lieutenant. Not willing to consider what he

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<sup>97</sup> Littlehales to Abbot, 24 September 1801, *Abbot Diary*, i, pp. 318-319.

<sup>98</sup> 'Hardwicke observations', 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45301, f. 52).

saw as a pointless exercise, he was not however, 'prepared to accede to there having been so great a difference in the powers entrusted to the lord lieutenant in these different periods'. Belittling Pelham's assessment even more, he stated that 'the only question...to be at present material to discuss and determine, is, what may be the best practical mode of administering the king's government in and for this part of the United Kingdom.'<sup>99</sup>

Pelham could dissect the nuances of past administrations all he wanted, but Hardwicke was determined to address the issues in the context of the present new relationship in consequence of the union and its meaning for British governance in Ireland. Furthermore, Hardwicke countered the considerations paper, by ostensibly agreeing with it. Even though he could not argue that he would need the power of patronage to control an unruly Irish parliament, he defended his position by stating that he could not of course 'be suffered to apply this patronage to any other object than the support of [the views of ministers in London]...from which there was 'no longer any possibility of his departing since the removal of the local parliament.'<sup>100</sup> Indicating that he was 'fully impressed with the policy and necessity of a strong, vigilant and energetic executive in Ireland', he vowed to direct 'his majesty's affairs in Ireland, upon British principles conformably to the true spirit of the union.' Yet again though, 'the question of patronage' reared its head and, Hardwicke said, 'seems to be a principal point in the paper of considerations'.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, Hardwicke's proposed solution to the division of power provides definitive evidence of the role, as he saw it, that patronage needed to play in Ireland. 'To administer the principal part of the patronage of the crown through the hands of the lord lieutenant, must...give to the king's government a greater degree of respect and influence because,' as Hardwicke pointed out, 'from local knowledge, information, and constant habits of

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<sup>99</sup> 'Hardwicke observations' 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 52-53).

<sup>100</sup> 'Hardwicke observations', 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS, 45031, f. 57).

<sup>101</sup> 'Hardwicke observations', 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 53-54).



observation, he must have better means of forming a correct judgement of the character of individuals and the state of affairs in Ireland'. Pelham's plans could not 'give a sufficient degree of weight and authority to make the king's government in Ireland respected and efficient', while Hardwicke believed the Irish administration could only 'maintain its proper respect and beneficial influence, and most effectually promote the measures of the king's ministers, both in and out of parliament', if his line of thinking was followed.<sup>102</sup> He was not however, completely unwilling to compromise and was 'perfectly disposed to admit the necessity...of abridging in some degree the patronage which has hitherto been annexed to the office.' The arrangement was again to be made, 'upon true union principles'. Thus Hardwicke conceded, together with 'the offices which the crown, by the terms of the patent, has hitherto thought fit to reserve to its own immediate disposal', nine further appointments which included, privy councillors, the privy seal, chancellor of the exchequer, post-master general and the provostship of Trinity College. He hoped that 'his majesty's ministers should think it advisable to leave the remaining patronage in the hands of the lord lieutenant, upon public grounds and for public uses'. In such a way Hardwicke would then 'endeavour to the best of his ability to conduct the king's government in Ireland' making it 'explicitly understood, that it will be his invariable object to employ these means for the advancement of his majesty's interests, and the support of the measures of his administration.' This was Hardwicke's proposal which he hoped would be well received in London, stating that he could not 'forbear expressing his strong apprehension, that a greater reduction of the patronage...may prove materially injurious to the general influence of government, by lessening the respect due to the office of lord lieutenant'. Any further move of that nature would result in 'depriving him of the means

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<sup>102</sup> 'Hardwicke observations', 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 54-55).

of conciliating and attaching the supporters of the king's government, and rewarding the meritorious services of persons unconnected to the parliamentary interest.'<sup>103</sup>

Consistently, Hardwicke endorsed his own steadfast belief that Ireland's political elite needed to be managed by a lord lieutenant, at a head of an administration with power enough to keep them in check. Furthermore, 'the degree of strength necessary to be given to the king's government in Ireland, cannot with prudence or safety be estimated by its present state of tranquillity, when it is recollected of what individuals the population of this country is composed', Hardwicke said. Such thinking was 'indispensably necessary in a country composed of such active and discordant members', while 'whatever may be the state and condition of Ireland at some distant period, it is now much too soon to consider it on the footing of an English county.'<sup>104</sup> This attitude spoke volumes on the incomplete nature of the union and Hardwicke foresaw (maybe just as Pelham had), the danger posed by a policy that so obviously and vindictively reduced Ireland to a subservient and much inferior partner in the union relationship. Hardwicke challenged the London government to disagree with him on this point and asked them if they were 'prepared to consider this country as sufficiently settled for such a mode of administration; and whether a lord lieutenant with contracted and enfeebled powers can soothe or allay the bitter tempers, party animosities, and divisions of the inhabitants.' Union with Britain did not necessarily mean unification of attitudes and feelings within Ireland itself, a country of diverse political sensibilities. Even if ministers were happy to take the chance and leave 'this duty to the commander of the forces, the country may possibly be kept in a state of tranquillity, but such a system will surely never add to the strength and prosperity of the empire.' All manner of restraint was put to one side and Hardwicke, in a powerful statement prophesied

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<sup>103</sup> 'Hardwicke observations', 24 October 1801, (BL Add, MSS. 45031, ff. 60-61).

<sup>104</sup> 'Hardwicke observations', 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 56-57).



on the viceroyalty, stating 'the pageant of the office with authority so inadequate to the rank and name which it is still proposed to continue, must speedily lead to its abolition'. He painted a none too optimistic picture of an Ireland where 'ministers would again be driven to the necessity of committing the powers and confidence of the government to interested and irresponsible individuals, by which the true interests of the country would be endangered'. The great measure of union would be reduced to a mere footnote 'and, instead of the wholesome principle of British government, a spirit of faction, cabal, and party would prevail throughout the country, and excite the discontents of the people.'<sup>105</sup> Divergence, division and disunion would be the order of the day.

In his 1847 history of the life of Henry Addington, George Pellew cited the influential effect that Hardwicke's remonstrations regarding his administration's predicament had had on the prime minister. Addington confided in 'his friend Charles Yorke' on 27 November 1801, confessing that he had only then had the opportunity to really study the vast amount of material that had come from Ireland during the previous two months. 'These papers', Addington admitted however, 'strongly confirmed the opinion I have ever entertained of the mind and disposition of Lord Hardwicke.' Undoubtedly the decisive factor was Hardwicke's personal appeal to Addington in late-October, the evidence for which, as Pellew points out, was that the letter 'alludes to his lordship's contemplated resignation'.<sup>106</sup> As already stated, Hardwicke's crucial and conciliatory attempt to win Addington over was made on 24 October 1801, and certainly this was the key correspondence noted by Pellew, as Hardwicke finished with an acknowledgement to Addington of 'the value of your friendship and good opinion', which he hoped would be maintained 'whether I continue in a situation in which I may be likely to be useful in this

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<sup>105</sup> 'Hardwicke observations', 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 57-58).

<sup>106</sup> *Addington Life*, i, p. 481.

country, or return to a private situation at home'.<sup>107</sup> Hardwicke reiterated nearly all of his previously declared fears. These were now expressed for Addington as, 'the real and undisguised sentiments of my mind...of essential importance to the good government of Ireland.' Particularly he was to 'take it for granted that there is no difference of opinion in regard to the propriety of maintaining, at least for a considerable time the form of government which is now established'.<sup>108</sup> Hardwicke declared that 'it is right to observe, that the lord lieutenant is and ought to be as much the agent of the prime minister, in the disposal of patronage' and he spoke of the need to control Irish interests in parliament, 'so far as represents the gentlemen of Ireland'. Hardwicke sought to place himself entirely in Addington's hands, crucially making the direction of the viceroyalty the domain of the prime minister and not the home secretary. He specifically attacked Pelham who he said, as secretary of state and a peer was, 'still further removed, even in England, from an intercourse with the people, and a knowledge of the great body of its representatives'. His sole control of patronage and by extension the general governance of the country would 'revive a system which would again render Ireland the sport of party and cabal.' As such, 'some men in this country who, from having acted in the highest situations of political power, and having been engaged in its most impassioned and animated contests,' he said, 'have acquired a tone and activity which, it is to be feared, disdain subordination.' The consequences that would follow,

so great an alteration in the system of government...when the lord lieutenant is reduced, as he will be, to the situation of a mere pageant, the office, which by the respectable part of the community is now considered as a shield against the

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<sup>107</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 24 October 1801, (BL Add MSS. 45031, f. 71).

<sup>108</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 66).



passions and ambition of their countrymen...will be found totally inefficient to every useful purpose, and must either be entirely abolished, or restored.<sup>109</sup>

Similarly, evidence of Hardwicke's overriding ambition to see the fruition of the union, was yet again apparent. He formed his opinions not 'upon any sudden of partial view', but in conversation with 'highly respectable individuals, who have much experience of the feelings and temper of their countrymen and as just a sense of their true interest upon union principles'. He warned Addington then that 'after having contributed to the success of the great measure of union', there were those in Ireland, 'anxious to see it converted, by a radical change of government, in to an engine of power to themselves.' On points concerned with the proposal 'that Ireland can now be governed in the same manner as Scotland', Hardwicke insisted 'observations of this sort, of course, cannot apply.' While Hardwicke conceded that communication between Ireland and the government in London could tolerably be transacted solely by the lord lieutenant and the home secretary, he was sure to state that if adopted the plan 'will introduce a degree of circuitry and delay...and may produce great occasional inconvenience'.<sup>110</sup>

Furthermore, he mentioned to Addington a rumour of 'actual intention of governing by lords justices', which he felt was 'entirely contrary to your declared opinions', and reinforced his claims that such an 'arrangement...should terminate in the degradation of the local government of this country' and he was 'confident' that any such plan 'will be found inconsistent with the tranquillity, good humour and true interests of Ireland.'<sup>111</sup> Addington found then, that in dealing with Irish interests, his mindset ran parallel with Hardwicke's, and he informed Yorke that Hardwicke's appeals had,

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<sup>109</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 67-68).

<sup>110</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS 45031, ff. 68-69).

<sup>111</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS 45031, f. 70).

consequently increased my anxiety that the ultimate arrangement may be such as will enable his lordship to continue his services in Ireland consistently to what he feels to be due to his personal and official station, and to what he may deem essential to the interests of the public.<sup>112</sup>

Hardwicke had won his battle, and the power and prestige of the office of lord lieutenant had been protected.

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<sup>112</sup> *Addington Life*, i, p. 481.



## SECTION TWO

### Chapter Four

#### **‘The Ghost of the Irish Parliament’:**

#### **Fulfilling the Union Engagements, 1801-1806**

One of the biggest challenges that the Hardwicke administration faced was honouring all of the promises that had been made during the passing of the union. A key danger was that these corrupt dealings would be exposed, thus destroying the legitimacy of the measure, and the easiest way for this to happen was if some disgruntled person did not get what they felt they were owed and went public. It was Hardwicke’s job to settle ‘the union account’, but to his frustration he discovered that the Home Office wanted to supersede his authority in this area, and retain control over the distribution of patronage. A large number of union promises still needed to be fulfilled, and this was a key reason why the lord lieutenant could not relinquish his power over patronage. An inability to fulfil the union engagements threatened Hardwicke’s authority in Ireland, and he believed it also threatened the union itself. His endeavour to maintain both, he asserted to the British government, ‘entitles me to every degree of cooperation, assistance and facility.’<sup>1</sup> Despite some humiliations along the way, most notably over the disposal of the patronage of Ross Castle, Hardwicke got his way. He did so by threatening that the union risked collapsing unless he was given a free hand, and his scare-mongering paid off. In doing so, he won another victory in his work to reassert the primacy of his office.

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<sup>1</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 22).

Patronage had played an important role in Irish political life throughout the eighteenth century. In fact a significant amount of the most recent work on the Act of Union has centred on arguments concerned with the use of patronage in a corrupt and illegal manner in order to pass the union in the Irish Houses of Parliament.<sup>2</sup> However, in what is essentially a two pronged statement, S.J. Connolly notes,

The prominence of patronage before 1801 was the result not of any exceptional tendency to corruption among politicians but rather of the nature of the 'constitution of 1782', which provided no other means of ensuring that the executive would have the parliamentary majority necessary for the discharge of its normal functions.<sup>3</sup>

Connolly's argument on the corruption in Irish politics is not valid when considering the passing of the union itself in 1799 and 1800. However, what is important here is his reference to the use of patronage as a catalyst in getting things done at parliamentary level. Irish politics had become used to this type of game, and it was recognised that whoever controlled the purse could control the country, at least politically. If the control over the distribution of patronage was taken away from the lord lieutenant, his influence would be effectively castrated, leaving him impotent in the running of the country. In Ireland the ascendancy was not going to respect a man who could no longer provide direct link to the peerage or even government employment. Hardwicke was all too aware of these facts, and even though he could not claim that he needed the power of patronage to control an unruly Irish parliament, he nevertheless, fought to preserve this power in a vicious turf-war.

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<sup>2</sup> See James Kelly 'The Failure of Opposition' and James Quinn 'Dublin Castle and the Act of Union' in Brown, Geoghegan and Kelly (eds.), *Union bicentennial essays*, pp. 95-107 and pp. 108-128; Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, pp. 54-96; Wilkinson, "How Did They Pass the Union?", pp. 223-251

<sup>3</sup> Connolly, 'Aftermath and adjustment', p.3.



### *'Every degree of cooperation': The Ross Castle affair*

The Ross Castle incident is worth exploring as a case study. In June 1801 the British government decided to grant Lieutenant-General Henry Johnson the governorship of Ross Castle, in place of the deceased Lieutenant-General Eustace.<sup>4</sup> The chief problem in this instance was that Hardwicke had already made overtures to Lord Erne to appoint his son to the post, in his efforts to relieve the union engagement due to them. Erne had supported the union in the House of Lords, but his sons, Abraham and John Creighton, MPs for the borough of Lifford, had to be persuaded to switch sides. Both voted against the union in January 1799.<sup>5</sup> However, by 1800 they had 'renegaded' and were 'privately purchased'.<sup>6</sup> The purchase was obvious to observers, and the archival material proves a direct trail of government commitments to Erne and his sons.

The announcement that the patronage would go elsewhere was a crushing blow for Hardwicke, especially as he only learnt of it by reading the gazette. In a conversation with Abbot, the report of which he unusually but understandably marked 'most secret', he complained bitterly of the dispensing of the government of Ross Castle, without his prior knowledge.<sup>7</sup> And he emphasised that he was, yet again, 'mortified to observe' the appointment in the gazette 'with not any communication whatever been made' from London on the matter.

'Lord Erne has actually accepted of the offer which I proposed to him', Hardwicke told Portland<sup>8</sup>, referring to the fact that Erne had been happy to accept the Ross Castle

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<sup>4</sup> *The London Gazette*, 20-23 June 1801, p. 691.

<sup>5</sup> Brown, Geoghegan and Kelly (eds.), *Union: Bicentennial Essays*, p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> Jonah Barrington, *Rise and fall of the Irish nation*, (Paris, 1833), p. 490.

<sup>7</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 22).

<sup>8</sup> Hardwicke to Portland, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 24).

offer, even though 'the government in question is far inferior' to what his sons had been offered to switch sides at the time of the union.<sup>9</sup> Hardwicke was upset that he had been bypassed on this question, especially 'considering the peculiar and unpleasant situation in which I stand in regard to engagements'. He accepted the parlous state of affairs that the union engagements had left him in, and that this was 'a situation which independently of personal consideration', entitled him to all the help he could get from London in sorting out the mess. Erne, who had 'had two members in the house of commons and his own vote', and whom Hardwicke thought 'acted more honourably than the generality of Irish gentlemen...would have satisfied his engagement', believing a deal could have been made 'had I been more properly treated.'<sup>10</sup> But his warning was ignored.

The Ross Castle debacle, when used as a case study, sheds additional and important light on a number of key facets in the post-union relationship between Ireland and Great Britain. It also illustrates some continuity in pre- and post-union concerns. Hardwicke's detailed correspondence on the issue, some of which was published by MacDonagh in 1904, clearly denotes the complexity of the ways and means through which Hardwicke sought to settle the 'union account'.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, it adds weight to the argument that a critical reassessment of the motivations of the Hardwicke administration in the years after the union is needed. MacDonagh makes the claim that Hardwicke 'paid the union account without any sense of personal humiliation.'<sup>12</sup> However, Hardwicke's statements noted above in his private conversation with Abbot spoke specifically of his personal mortification over the application of government patronage in this case. Coupled with this, he told Addington how the distribution of the Ross Castle governorship 'occasions a

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<sup>9</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 23).

<sup>10</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 22).

<sup>11</sup> MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, pp. 67-70.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 67.



degree of personal embarrassment to myself' and which might 'in its consequences have very unpleasant affects in regard to government.'<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, he asserted that he was now 'placed in the most awkward situation'.<sup>14</sup> Afterwards he put forward his belief that,

I conceive it to be my duty, to apply whatever situations become vacant to the satisfaction of one or other of those engagements which have been delivered to me, 'till the whole are fulfilled; taking care that no appointment is conferred improperly.

As he told Portland this was 'a circumstance which has created a considerable embarrassment in regard to the union engagements', and he sought a solution that would 'relieve me from the embarrassment as far as respects Lord Erne'.<sup>15</sup>

Hardwicke was furious with his predicament. He saw in his treatment an insult to his authority as lord lieutenant, but there was more at stake. The humiliation came in part from having to backtrack on his promises, but more importantly, his discomfort came from the public recognition that he had no power. When placed in the wider context of Irish affairs, this was not simply a problem of patronage. It is interesting that while MacDonagh reprinted the entirety of the Addington letter of 27 June 1801, he made no effort to work beyond the initial remarks concerning the union engagements, and quickly turned to his next point without critical analysis or comment.<sup>16</sup> Considering that Addington was 'no stranger to the variety and extent of the engagements which Lord Cornwallis was under the necessity of counteracting for the purpose of carrying the grand measure of union' and

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<sup>13</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 22).

<sup>14</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 23).

<sup>15</sup> Hardwicke to Portland, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 24).

<sup>16</sup> MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, pp. 69-70.

which, as Hardwicke showed, were ‘delivered to me under your authority’, there was no excuse in not completing the union engagements.<sup>17</sup> These were necessary to ensure the continued operation of the Irish administration.

‘If there were now a parliament here,’ Hardwicke insisted to the British government, ‘the public business could not be carried on with so heavy a mortgage upon the patronage of the crown in this country’. However, he decried, ‘even now, the carrying of those engagements into affect is a matter of no small difficulty.’ Ultimately, the engagements had to be fulfilled ‘if the faith of government is to be kept in regard to those engagements...entirely of a public nature, and for the sake of a measure, which was thought, and which daily experience proves to have been essentially necessary’. Hardwicke felt it his ‘duty’ therefore, ‘to fulfil them as soon as possible’ and look to ‘every vacancy, when the situation can be applied to that purpose’, believing the success of the union itself was at stake.<sup>18</sup> The feasibility of his government in Ireland, he argued with London, depended upon his ability to manage the political elite in the country and to ensure his reputation in this regard remained intact. He unequivocally informed ministers, ‘when these engagements are satisfied and not till then, the full benefit of the union will be felt’.<sup>19</sup> Abbot summed up the predicament precisely in August 1801. ‘Unless points like these are conceded,’ he told the new home secretary, Lord Pelham,

...it is in vain to expect that any lord lieutenant can have the support of the principal persons of the country, in any measure, either in or out of parliament, which the

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<sup>17</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 22).

<sup>18</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 22).

<sup>19</sup> Hardwicke to Portland, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 24).



service of the king's government, or the good welfare of this country, may require.<sup>20</sup>

Little did Abbot know that this cordial and friendly letter would be one of the few that were sent on to the home secretary. Within a month, and as has been detailed already in chapter three, the Irish administration became embroiled in a fight to the death, as the Home Office under Pelham looked to stamp out the power and prestige of the lord lieutenant of Ireland and his chief secretary. Once again, events in Britain would call into question how Ireland should and could operate under the union.

Hardwicke's thinking on the subject of how the union passed is illuminated by a reference he made to Clare's speech on 10 February 1800 which discussed the concept of 'the consular exchequer'. At the height of the debates on the measure, Clare had delivered what was his most ferocious and in many ways finest speech on the need for a union of Britain and Ireland. After detailing the nuances of the historical relationship between the two countries, he robustly attacked his fellow members of the house of lords. What, he asked, 'is their salvation for this country under her present government and constitution, when men of their rank and situation can stoop to shabby and wicked artifice to excite popular outcry against the declared sense of both houses of parliament?'<sup>21</sup> 'If loud and confident report is to have credit,' he insisted, 'a consular exchequer has been opened for foul and undisguised bribery. I know that subscriptions are openly solicited in the streets of the metropolis, to a fund for defeating the measure of union.'

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<sup>20</sup> Abbot to Pelham, 7 August 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 19).

<sup>21</sup> *The speech of the Right Honourable John, earl of Clare, Lord High Chancellor of Ireland, in the house of lords, on a motion made by him on Monday, February 10, 1800...*(Dublin, 1800) , p. 96.

It was to this consular exchequer, and the results of its establishment, which Hardwicke made direct reference in a discussion with Prime Minister Addington on the need to address the issue of union engagements, in June 1801. While Clare had gone on to declaim that, 'if it can exist, I trust there is still sense and honour left in the Irish nation, to cut off the corrupted source of these vile ambitions',<sup>22</sup> Hardwicke was more realistic. He knew that the government had matched – exceeded – the corruption of the opposition, and had built its majority on it. 'The fact is', Hardwicke bluntly stated, 'that the bribes, almost openly offered, by what Lord Clare called the consular exchequer, obliged the government to counteract their influence, by the same system in order to carry the measure'.

Now, in 1801, Hardwicke was keen to point out that 'hence arose the engagements for certain salaries without office, or money payments which are upon the list of engagements'.<sup>23</sup> These he said, had 'already created some embarrassment' and 'must somehow or other be done away'. Ultimately though, Hardwicke was more concerned about the impression been given in Ireland of his administration, due to its inability to fulfil the previous government's promises. 'As the gentlemen to whom they are payable, have very little delicacy upon the subject, they will make no secret of the conduct of government if the payments are not made good', he warned. Most importantly, the main problem 'which more particularly bears upon the question at present', he said, was that 'if they observe either an unwillingness or an inability in government to satisfy the engagements in general', would force a dangerous showdown, with Dublin Castle at its epicentre.

An important observation should be made here. Hardwicke was not afraid of indulging in a bit of scare-mongering, of using perceived threats to terrify the British

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 97.

<sup>23</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 23).



government into following his wishes. His discussions with Addington, on these matters in June 1801 happened relatively early in his tenure as lord lieutenant but he was beginning to contemplate the conflicting attitudes in Dublin and London on how the union was going to work. These observations came on the back of his efforts to ensure the continued use of the title of commander-in-chief in Ireland along with his attempts to retain some part of the military patronage. In both he failed. So while he asserted that, 'above all, though we are not personally concerned in them, it behoves us to prevent the union transactions from being divulged in parliament', he spoke more about the Irish administration as opposed to British rule in general.<sup>24</sup> He sternly avowed, 'there is great danger, if the faith of government is not strictly observed, and if there is not a general impression that it will be.' This was Hardwicke's most important observation on the union engagements, but a point that has not been appropriately stressed in the secondary literature. He implied that the lack of support in London for his administration in trying to complete the union engagements, would threaten the government's interests in parliament. Yet, this was secondary to his concern about his own ability to govern in Ireland. To do that he needed a way to control those men whom he felt would turn against him in the event that he could not live up to their expectations with regard to their union payoffs. There is strong evidence to support this argument. For example he later reiterated his belief that the lord lieutenant desperately needed some degree of military patronage, 'for the purpose of rewarding the zealous and loyal supporters of the king's authority'.<sup>25</sup> But it was the aristocracy, the political elite, he sought to control. 'Numberless and striking examples may be cited by those who have personal knowledge of the leading families amongst the gentry of Ireland,' Hardwicke argued, 'to show the practical inconvenience and

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<sup>24</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 23).

<sup>25</sup> 'Littlehales instructions', 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 92).

disadvantage sustained by the king's government by not leaving matters in this particular to remain on their present footing.'<sup>26</sup>

Hardwicke confided in Addington his premonition of an Ireland void of a lord lieutenant lacking substance, which would lead to 'the inevitable consequence of...the transfer of the powers of government, to some of the principle individuals or families in Ireland, whose local passions and interests peculiarly disqualifies them, however honourable in character, from governing their countrymen'.<sup>27</sup> Littlehales, on Hardwicke's orders, would elaborate on the point, suggesting that 'however honourable in character, wisdom, integrity, and utility certain respectable Irishmen might be, it was quite impossible for them to divest themselves of native prejudices, partialities and animosities'. He concluded therefore that this 'rendered them more immediately in Ireland incapable of administering the king's government on liberal and advantageous principles.'<sup>28</sup>

Hardwicke's statements (and indeed Clare's in 1800) provide a different perspective on the passing of the union, because they focus on the anti-union war chest which was established in 1799 and 1800. Certainly, contemporaries had made reference to such a fund. Castlereagh referred to 'a curious *consular edict* which the opposition have issued', rumoured to have been penned by Sir John Parnell, which was an anti-union attempt 'to consolidate an opposition' to the union in late-January 1800.<sup>29</sup> He told John King, undersecretary at the Home Office, that they 'at least, may have sufficient strength to embarrass the details'. However, Castlereagh's most important observation on the anti-unionist endeavours was that 'a subscription is going forward, not only amongst the party

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<sup>26</sup> 'Littlehales instructions', 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 93).

<sup>27</sup> 'Littlehales instructions', 1 September 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 96).

<sup>28</sup> Littlehales to Abbot, 20 September 1801, *Abbot Diary*, pp. 317-318.

<sup>29</sup> Castlereagh to King, 25 January 1800, *Cornwallis Corr.*, iii, pp. 170-171. [Emphasis in original].



in parliament, but in the city, to form a stock purse.’ He was loath to report ‘they have already humbugged two of our friends, who had vacated by acceptance of office, out of their seats in parliament’; seats for Kilbeggan and Enniscorthy which Castlereagh himself had arranged to be filled by government supporters. The integrity of Castlereagh’s statements was uncertain though, as he closed his message to King by reiterating ‘*a wish expressed in a former letter*’. This was an veiled appeal for the advance of further money for the government’s own slush fund.

During 1800 rumours abounded that ‘£100,000 had been subscribed for the purpose of opposing the union.’<sup>30</sup> Henry Grattan junior later claimed in his memoir of his father, that in a three pronged attack, the leading strategy of the anti-unionists had arranged ‘to outbid the ministers at their own game of bribery’ alongside out publishing them in the pamphlet war and the harebrained idea of killing the leading protagonists in a flurry of prearranged duels.<sup>31</sup> However, the critical discovery of previously unpublished evidence in the papers of William Plunket, a figure ‘central to the establishment of a dedicated anti-union fund’, has proven that such a fund did exist.<sup>32</sup> In June 1809, Plunket exchanged correspondence with Lady Downshire which spoke specifically of the anti-union purchase of parliamentary seats, ‘an engagement...entered into in the year 1800’, by ‘my lord, yourself and others who opposed the then pending measure of the legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland’. Downshire went on to describe the role of Gustavus Lambert ‘who states that “he was treasurer to the anti-union cause and in the consequence of his purchase of a seat in parliament the following writing was entered into but no discharged” and that on the faith of it he paid £2200.’ What followed was a list which included the names of key players of the opposition - Lords Downshire, Granard and Charlemont, William Saurin, Thomas Goold, William Tighe, and Plunket himself all figured, amongst

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<sup>30</sup> Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, p. 102.

<sup>31</sup> Bew, *Castlereagh*, pp. 136-137.

<sup>32</sup> Maeve Ryan, ‘William Conyngham Plunket, (1764-1854)’, *DIB*.

others. All pledged various amounts, from £50 to £500, on account of 'there being a sum of £8,000 due which has been expended in the anti-union cause'.<sup>33</sup>

Such evidence, placed alongside Hardwicke's 1801 post-union statements on the establishment of the consular exchequer, conclusively prove that both Clare's public and Castlereagh's private exclamations were not idle chatter. In fact it should not be taken as coincidental that Clare made his attack on his fellow peers in early February 1800 in which he used the 'consular' moniker; just over two weeks after Castlereagh sent his revealing letter to King in London, speaking of the 'consular edict'. Reflecting on all of this made Hardwicke realise that a consolidated and dedicated group of leading individuals in Ireland could go very far indeed, if they wished to oppose the policies being adopted in Dublin Castle and promoted by the lord lieutenant. Hardwicke feared such an effort in the months and years following the union. He needed to keep such men under control, especially those to whom the government had promised the spoils of victory and who were now clamouring for their rewards. Therefore he saw an almost impossible task ahead of him in the governance of Ireland and the maintenance of his administration's authority. It was for this reason that the engagements had to be filled; this was why he expected the implicit and complete support of the British government in London; why he was sure not to be remiss in expending the labours of government in attempting to keep notable figures onside; and why he and his underlings were careful not to rest on the supposed all-solving laurels of the union.

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<sup>33</sup> Lady Downshire to William Conyngham Plunket, 10 June 1809, (NLI, MacDonnell MS, PC 922). I wish to extend my sincere thanks to Maevé Ryan for this reference. Her excellent 2005 undergraduate dissertation ['The Plunket papers', B.A.(Hons.) dissertation, Trinity College Dublin, 2005], is the first and so far only attempt to analyse and catalogue these vital sources. Similarly, her discovery of this letter, and Plunket's response 29 July 1809, puts to rest one of the key remaining historical debates of the immediate pre-union period. As she writes, 'the significance of this letter should not be underestimated as it provides the first opportunity to conclusively prove what has formerly only been conjectured: that the anti-union side was heavily involved in bribery and the purchase of seats' [p. 17].



Hardwicke was desperate to instil in ministers' minds the same sense of anxiety he felt himself when it came to the men who had previously formed the Irish cabinet. By the end of the year Hardwicke was more adamant than ever that no new formation of such a sphere of influence could take hold in Ireland. On 2 December 1801 he told Addington of the fear he had of 'the propriety of imposing upon the privy council of Ireland, the consideration of the important question of a free corn trade between the two parts of the United Kingdom.' The reason for his apprehension he said was formed on the 'great doubts how far the advantage might be expected from such a mode of collecting information upon that subject, would not be entirely counterbalanced by the inconveniences which might result from it.'<sup>34</sup> Crucially, Hardwicke saw the agitation of such questions amongst the privy councillors of Ireland as an opportunity for political intrigue to take hold. 'It would certainly afford great temptation to those who might be expected to take a lead upon such questions,' Hardwicke emphasised, 'to convert the privy council into a theatre of debate'.<sup>35</sup> In essence he argued 'party difference of opinion...might not only be attended with very unpleasant consequences, but prevent a free and impartial discussion upon its own merits.'<sup>36</sup> For Hardwicke the problem was twofold. On the one hand he showed a shrewd understanding of Ireland, stating that 'the country in general, where potatoes are the common food, and the county members, would in all probability be favourable to a free intercourse in corn'. However, he was quick to point out that 'in Dublin, where the people are greater consumers of bread, and where the enquiry must be carried on, the apprehension would probably be, that their interests would suffer'. This was a difficult issue to balance as the union seemed to encourage free trade. However, the problem was that 'English capital would inevitably carry away the corn that

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<sup>34</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 2 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 122).

<sup>35</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 2 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 122-123).

<sup>36</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 2 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 123).

would otherwise remain...and that consequently the price of bread would be raised'.<sup>37</sup> Hardwicke's analysis signified the complexity of these kinds of issues both within Ireland, where there was not just one great mass or all encompassing political attitude into which Irish MPs and powerbrokers could be lumped, since the union. As well, such debates on English buying power in Ireland in the advent of the creation of a free trade in corn signalled that there were left over financial concerns that could certainly be construed as obstacles in the promotion of the union, markedly affecting the United Kingdom as a whole.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, the second problem and really more pressing concern for Hardwicke as he surmised was 'that we should be cautious at present of establishing here any meeting for debate upon questions of general interest and importance'. 'For if a precedent is now made, in regard to the corn trade', he apprehended, 'it may be used in other instances, and would serve as an engine of influence and power, as well as information upon similar subjects.'<sup>39</sup> These concerns summed up Hardwicke's trepidation about the power that might be exerted by the men who had traditionally held sway in Irish political affairs. He had already faced down the scheme by Pelham at the Home Office to reduce the Irish administration to an inconsequential local bureaucracy. Similarly, without a pre-union style investment of government patronage in his office, he had no hope of securing support for government initiatives in this way. It was therefore vital that he allowed no plan to gain momentum that would encourage the Irish elite to feel they had a leading hand in shaping the political policies of the country, above and beyond the lord lieutenant.

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<sup>37</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 2 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 123).

<sup>38</sup> For a greater elaboration on this theme see particularly: Trevor Robert Mc Cavery, 'Finance and politics in Ireland, 1801-17', (Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 1981).

<sup>39</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 2 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 123).



Abbot was more expressive, if less cool in his assessment. It was to the chancellor of the exchequer of Ireland, the firm unionist Isaac Corry, that he directed his declarations. 'Do but consider', Abbot candidly stated, 'what it is to raise up the ghost of the Irish parliament by making the privy council a debating society.'<sup>40</sup> In reference to the Irish junto he told Corry, 'you know who they are, and what they are, and that nobody on such a subject would be excluded.' Like Hardwicke, he feared the ramifications of 'this first precedent after union' and believed that it 'will perpetuate the practice for all future cases'. 'When will this door be shut, if once opened?', he asked. Yet, Abbot too was aware of the dangerous protocols that might be established if such action was countenanced and he feared for his chief. In what might be construed as a not too positive assessment of Hardwicke's abilities to control such a council he told Corry, 'and figure to yourself H[is] E[xcellency] sitting between adverse wranglers in Dublin Castle to witness examinations and cross examinations by political gladiators.'<sup>41</sup>

Abbot got down to the more base problems at stake and like Hardwicke signalled the divided opinions of Dublin and the rest of the country. He proposed that an enquiry of the Irish privy council into the corn trade would be used 'to allay all apprehensions of Irish corn being drained by British capital'. While his rather limited assessment of the issue saw 'the apprehension groundless – if more is wanted more will be grown...and now industry will spring up in every barony in Ireland', he was quick to note 'there are and will be apprehensions.' It was with the 'populace of Dublin' where the concerns would manifest themselves, the key issue being then, that 'we are to meet daily in Dublin to debate whether Dublin shall have bread.'<sup>42</sup> The great weight of public opinion would again be focused on Dublin Castle, and Abbot insisted, 'the council will soon have their parts cast,

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<sup>40</sup> Abbot to Isaac Corry, 2 December 1801, (BL Add, MSS. 35771, f. 124).

<sup>41</sup> Abbot to Corry, 2 December 1801, (BL Add, MSS. 35771, f. 124).

<sup>42</sup> Abbot to Corry, 2 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 124).

and the combatants will be unrolled.’ Then, and this was the critical point, ‘those who enter or issue forth from the castle yard morning and evening’, Abbot foretold, ‘will be assailed by the mob with huzzas or curses as they are said to be for or against starving Dublin.’<sup>43</sup> Here was Abbot’s resounding terror, reminiscing on the nastiest moments of the union debates, and worst still, the 1798 rebellion. For as he believed ‘a very little good management may excite activity and life among the expiring embers of the United Irish, who’, he warned, ‘have already changed their names and resolved to become “anti-unionists”’. He dared Corry to exclaim as to his overreaction asking, ‘Am I afraid of all this? Not a whit more than I ought. But are you wise in all this?’<sup>44</sup> Abbot’s depiction of an unruly Dublin, where the leading members of the political elite would cajole and manipulate the population if given the opportunity, was certainly meant to give the British government pause for thought. As well, he had made a fleeting observation on the great mass of Irish people, signifying in this instant that the union had not by its enactment overcome the historical challenge inherent in governing them. Hardwicke and Abbot did see the solution in the union itself however. Hardwicke asked Addington to consider ‘whether it may be advisable to carry the enquiry here, or before a committee of the house of commons, where the county members from all parts of the United Kingdom, will have an opportunity of communicating their local information.’ As such he believed, ‘all parties who are desirous of it may be heard upon the subject.’<sup>45</sup>

Ultimately Hardwicke was telling the government in London to invoke the union through the imperial parliament. To debate an issue relevant to the United Kingdom in the parliament of the United Kingdom, and not simply to view this as an Irish issue for the consideration of the Irish administration in concert with leading Irish political figures. In

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<sup>43</sup> Abbot to Corry, 2 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS.35771, ff. 124-125).

<sup>44</sup> Abbot to Corry, 2 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 125).

<sup>45</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 2 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 123).



other words to work for a policy that looked to operate within the parameters set by the union. Abbot was even more direct saying, 'upon my view a parliamentary enquiry may be very useful; and productive of valuable results.' However, he went further making the telling observation that 'the privy council in London is the p[rivy] c[ouncil] of the United Kingdom.' He thus urged Corry to 'send for Foster over – Beresford you have – Lord Sheffield accounts and so many more may be had any day – Geale can travel so can Maxwell – so can King – [Lees?] is 20 miles from London etc. etc. etc.' Here again was an implicit push to bring the union into play. 'By this course your enquiry will also be uniform in both countries', something which could not be guaranteed if the privy council in Ireland was left to its own devices. The operation of the union would furthermore be felt along administrative lines, as much as political ones,

You will begin and close the whole subject together. The lights on one side of the channel will not be different from those on the other and parliament will not have to decide between two Privy Councils, but upon the result of one joint investigation and deliberation.

If the union was to truly work, there needed to be an inherent desire to decide upon political points in a cross-channel manner and not simply enact legislation unilaterally. As Abbot told Corry, 'your prerogative must be exercised where it can with unity, as well as your legislation.'<sup>46</sup> While he feared what might happen if the Privy Council became a vehicle of power that Dublin Castle could not control Abbot was not to be the herald of some kind of power sharing arrangement on a purely equal footing. He was sure to note that the lead on these points had to be taken up in London. The case of so obvious a

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<sup>46</sup> Abbot to Corry, 2 December 1801, (BL. Add. MSS. 35771, f. 125).

‘common cause’, he believed, ‘requires that the British pre-eminence should draw the joint councils to itself, whether in the king’s council or in his parliament and that no severance should obtain’. Making sure he did not endorse the perception that the Irish administration was irrelevant, he quickly alluded to their role in ‘what distance requires in the administration of the executive power for the purposes of making the influence of the king’s government be felt more beneficially and more distinctly by the remote parts of a newly united dominion.’<sup>47</sup>

While particularly prevalent throughout 1801 as Hardwicke attempted to manoeuvre his way through the political quagmire after the union, the Irish administration was determined to maintain some kind of control over the leading figures in Irish society throughout the entirety of Hardwicke’s viceroyalty. On 19 January 1802, Hardwicke discussed the appointment of a new lord chancellor for Ireland in the event that Lord Clare did not overcome his current bout of illness, brought on by a horse riding accident earlier in the month.<sup>48</sup> While Hardwicke stated, ‘Lord Clare is not I believe in danger’, he did note that ‘his symptoms indicate a very early dropsy, and a general decay of strength.’<sup>49</sup> Clare was dead nine days later.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, Hardwicke stated his observations on what he believed were the necessary qualifications for the Irish chancellor and undoubtedly saw in this moment an opportunity to install in the post a person who would be amenable to his administration. Hardwicke’s reasoning on the matter was revealing. ‘The great theatre for the talents of the Irish lawyers, was taken away by the removal of the parliament, and they have now no other objects of ambition, to which they can look,’ he reflected, ‘then those of their own profession.’ It was Hardwicke’s belief then that, ‘with a view therefore to satisfy

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<sup>47</sup> Abbot to Corry, 2 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 125).

<sup>48</sup> E. M. Johnston-Liik and James Quinn, ‘John FitzGibbon, (1748–1802)’, *DIB*.

<sup>49</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 19 January 1802, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 178).

<sup>50</sup> E. M. Johnston-Liik and James Quinn, ‘John FitzGibbon, (1748–1802)’, *DIB*.



that body, I should think the policy of selecting a chancellor, from the Irish bench, in many respects far better, than that of resorting to the English Bar.'<sup>51</sup> By keeping the Irish judges onside, he would maintain his government's influence therein, and in effect hold sway with those same men whose political allegiances were important in post-union Ireland. Notably, Hardwicke, in many ways like Abbot, saw the need to attempt to keep a balance in the union arrangement. So while this appointment would ultimately be decided in London, he felt it necessary to advise the selection of a leading Irish judge so that Irish lawyers could still strive for high office even though the Irish parliament had been disbanded. Of course Hardwicke was once again ignored with the appointment of an Englishman, Lord Redesdale, who took up the office on 15 March 1802 and was not recalled until the fall of Pitt's second ministry and the establishment of a new government under Lord Grenville in 1806.<sup>52</sup> Yet, Dublin Castle continued throughout these years to attempt to manage centres of political influence in Ireland, and Hardwicke never forgot that even though the parliament was removed, his office depended on his ability to work with (or to circumvent) the leading powerbrokers in the country. Alexander Marsden, now well established as civil undersecretary in the place of Edward Cooke, would write to Hardwicke's most recent chief secretary, Nicholas Vansittart, in May 1805 on much the same issue. This time it was Dublin Corporation who came under the scrutiny of the Castle's watchdogs. Marsden told Vansittart, 'in all matters of religion we find the Corporation of Dublin strenuous and much disposed to have its own way.' However, he was pleased to report, 'in other matters the influence of government is fully sufficient'. Yet, and here was the point, 'as the Corporation is the greatest political engine now in the country it is', Marsden was certain, 'material to strengthen the connection of government with it.'<sup>53</sup> At both these moments and in these two separate embodiments of political influence Dublin Castle stuck

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<sup>51</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 19 January 1802, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 178).

<sup>52</sup> Patrick M. Geoghegan, 'John Freeman Mitford, (1748-1830)', *DIB*.

<sup>53</sup> Alexander Marsden to Nicholas Vansittart, 3 May 1805, (BL Add. MSS. 31229, f. 185).

rigidly to the policies set out early in Hardwicke's tenure in office. The parliament may have gone, but Hardwicke and his deputies were certain that the need to control the Irish political elite was central to the maintenance of British authority and by extension the operation of the union, in Ireland and the United Kingdom respectively.

MacDonagh wrote at length of the list of engagements he had unearthed, for example, a copy which Hardwicke had made in September 1804 for the purpose of informing Lord Hawkesbury, the home secretary in William Pitt's second administration, of how the engagements sat at that moment.<sup>54</sup> However, having discussed the engagements with Cornwallis in May 1801<sup>55</sup>, it seems Hardwicke dispatched his *original* list, along with his private instructions, to Addington, under orders. Great care was taken to ensure such a potentially explosive document was kept securely in London, away from inquisitive or prying enemy eyes. In an easily missed postscript, Hardwicke noted his acquiescence in the matter but also how he envisioned further discussion on how to apply the engagements, which as he stated to Addington, 'should regularly come from him [Cornwallis] and Mr. Pitt through you, after perusal and approbation.'<sup>56</sup> Indeed, Abbot later noted that Pitt had passed a list of the engagements to Addington, while Cornwallis had done likewise for Hardwicke.<sup>57</sup> Certainly, he must have made a copy at this juncture in 1801 for his own reference, which MacDonagh believes 'the careful and methodical Hardwicke carried off...on quitting office in 1806.'<sup>58</sup> However, a contemporary list does

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<sup>54</sup> MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, pp. 42-53.

<sup>55</sup> In his diary for 7 June 1801, Abbot notes that a copy of the list of engagements 'was delivered by Lord Cornwallis to Lord Hardwicke', [*Abbot Diary*, i, p. 271]. Hardwicke had arrived in Dublin on 25 May, while Cornwallis was not back in Holyhead until late on 28 May, [*Cornwallis Corr.*, iii, p. 364]. It is therefore not unreasonable to presume that at least some form of discussion, on this important point took place upon Cornwallis' presentation of the list.

<sup>56</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 18 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 19).

<sup>57</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 271.

<sup>58</sup> MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, p. 42.



survive.<sup>59</sup> Buried in the Home Office secret and confidential papers at the National Archives in Kew, and nestled curiously between predominantly military district reports for 1801, it bears striking similarities to Hardwicke's copy from 1804. The Home Office list is undated and has no preamble or title, but does follow a draft of a 'secret' letter from John King, undersecretary at the Home Office to his regular correspondent Edward Cooke, civil undersecretary at Dublin Castle. On 20 March 1801, King, from Whitehall informed Cooke that 'our secret committees will be appointed early next week, so send what you have from Ireland, as fast as you can.'<sup>60</sup>

While Cooke's relationship with the new administration has already been explored, it is proper now to reference Geoghegan's assertion (which will be contested to a degree) that, 'it was left to Cooke to meet the union engagements without any proper assistance' and 'he was the only member of the Irish administration who understood the full list of union engagements.'<sup>61</sup> As such the Home Office list contains the headings 'pensions'<sup>62</sup>, 'law engagements'<sup>63</sup>, 'honours'<sup>64</sup> and 'civil engagements'.<sup>65</sup> Of particular note are the observations: 'those marked thus (X) were in parliament and supported the union'<sup>66</sup> and 'those marked thus (X) were members of the House of Commons, and gave their support to the union'.<sup>67</sup> This indicates that some of the engagements on the list were to be made to individuals who did not actively vote on the union in parliament, but through other means supported its passing. Hardwicke's copied version from 1804 bears the same comments,

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<sup>59</sup> NA HO 100/103/101-108. See also, Wilkinson, "How Did They Pass the Union?", p. 242, footnote 52, for a comprehensive breakdown of the various engagements lists.

<sup>60</sup> NA HO 100/103/99.

<sup>61</sup> Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, p. 205.

<sup>62</sup> NA HO 100/103/101.

<sup>63</sup> NA HO 100/103/103.

<sup>64</sup> NA HO 100/103/105.

<sup>65</sup> NA HO 100/103/107.

<sup>66</sup> NA HO 100/103/103.

<sup>67</sup> NA HO 100/103/108.

many of the same engagements, along with his own additional remarks.<sup>68</sup> The engagement to John Creighton, does appear on both lists, but while Hardwicke stated that Creighton was due a position worth £800 a year in 1804<sup>69</sup>, the original list and Hardwicke's letter to Addington in 1801, state that he was only due £400 a year.<sup>70</sup> Eventually, Creighton was paid his dues, with promotion to the government, not of Ross Castle, but that of Hurst Castle on the south coast of England two months later in August 1801. This step however, came not from the Irish government, but directly from the War Office and the duke of York in London.<sup>71</sup> Already Hardwicke was feeling the results of his failure to secure the investment of some kind of military patronage in Ireland. He was even forced to plead his case with York through Addington and Portland, hoping that, 'the duke of York will relieve me by appointing Lt. Col. Creighton to a government of equal value in Great Britain'<sup>72</sup>, while conceding that he had not the authority to fulfil the engagement but that 'it is in the duke of York's power to relieve me'.<sup>73</sup> York would later make a very lacklustre commitment to helping the Irish administration offload some of the union engagements whenever it might suit the War Office, though he was sure to state that the pressing concern of those engagements alone, would not inform his decisions.<sup>74</sup> Abbot was downbeat in his assessment of the affair, even if Hardwicke somewhat foolishly clung to some optimistic belief that he had some say in the arrangements that would follow. 'The information you have received of the military government in Ireland having been given

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<sup>68</sup> MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, *op. cit.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, p. 48.

<sup>70</sup> NA HO 100/103/107; Hardwicke to Addington, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 23).

<sup>71</sup> *The London Gazette*, 18-22 August 1801, p. 1016. Hardwicke's 1804 list in *The viceroy's post-bag* [p. 48] suggests that the engagement to Creighton was, 'done by the appointment to the government of Heist Castle.' However, as *The London Gazette* proves, this is clearly either a mistake by Hardwicke himself in 1804 when compiling his updated list of engagements for Hawkesbury, or an editorial error in the published list. Although MacDonagh does reference Hurst Castle later in his text [p. 72]. As mentioned above, the inconsistency in the monetary value of Creighton's engagement, £800 as opposed to £400 also occurs here, more than likely a reflection of Hardwicke's difficulty in keeping up with the entire engagement process.

<sup>72</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f.23).

<sup>73</sup> Hardwicke to Portland, 27 June 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 24).

<sup>74</sup> MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, p. 72.



away in England is not entirely true', he said. 'The smaller...military governments, like that of Ross Castle, have been uniformly left to the disposal of the lord lieutenant', Abbot was assured. Yet Hardwicke looked to precedents that no longer provided substance for his arguments now that the union had taken affect, 'General Eustace received it through that channel, as did Col. Skeffington the government of Cork'.<sup>75</sup> Skeffington had taken up command at Cork as far back as 30 January 1792<sup>76</sup>, while Eustace had mobilised his troops at Ross Castle during the 1798 Rebellion.<sup>77</sup> Clearly the union had fundamentally changed the process by which these appointments would be made. Even if Hardwicke insisted that he would work only toward 'the gradual satisfaction of engagements' to which he was 'bound' in such circumstances, the government did not agree with his assessment that, 'it is surely neither equitable nor politic to limit my means'.<sup>78</sup> What is clear is the feeling in Ireland, and certainly harboured by Hardwicke, was that the union engagements overrode all other concerns with regard to patronage in the country. This was required to keep the faith of the Irish political and social elite, and ensure the functionality of the Irish administration. Hardwicke's stance however, was not supported in London in the initial rearrangement of the post-union relationship. In the aftermath of the Ross Castle affair, Hardwicke warned of 'the difficulties I shall experience by being debarred from applying similar situations to the liquidation of the union engagements'.<sup>79</sup> However, the longer he remained in power in Ireland the reality seemed to suggest that his administration was alone in its commitment to the mantra that all patronage in Ireland 'must of course depend upon the appointment being made to fit an engagement.' Worryingly, Hardwicke confided in Abbot, 'if I can I must clear them away as fast as possible.'<sup>80</sup> If the administration

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<sup>75</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 1 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 25).

<sup>76</sup> *The London Gazette*, 31 January-4 February 1792, p. 78.

<sup>77</sup> *The London Gazette*, 26 June 1798, p. 565.

<sup>78</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 1 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 25).

<sup>79</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 1 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 25).

<sup>80</sup> Hardwicke to Abbot, 15 July 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 33).

continued in this mode, British governance of Ireland under the Act of Union, was going to be found wanting. Hardwicke's efforts to overcome this obstinacy in London, as evidenced by the circumvention of his recommendations, was not solely concerned with the post-union clean up of engagements. In fact, it must be argued that his moves in this regard represented another attempt to stave off the erosion of his authority and ensure the viability of his office throughout the country.



## Chapter Five

### John Foster, the 'Consular Exchequer', and the post-union cover-up, 1801-1806

A consular exchequer has been opened for foul and undisguised bribery.<sup>1</sup>

(Lord Clare, 1800).

The old junto, which had dominated successive Irish viceroys in the 1780s and 1790s, splintered over the union. John Foster, the final speaker of the Irish house of commons, broke with former colleagues, such as Edward Cooke and Lord Clare, in opposing the measure, and fought a brave, but ultimately unsuccessful campaign against it. However once the union came into effect Foster's ambitions changed. He now looked to return to a position of prominence within the Irish government, and was determined to do whatever he could to achieve it. This goal was achieved in 1804 when he was appointed chancellor of the Irish exchequer, a position which itself was something of an anomaly given that the union might reasonably have been expected to merge the exchequers (the amalgamation only occurred in 1816 following an separate act of parliament).<sup>2</sup> How he achieved this goal is worthy of study, as it provides a good illustration of how post-union politics operated. This chapter is a case study of the role of John Foster in the period 1801 to 1806 demonstrating how the union did not lead to a new style of politics in Ireland; rather there was a reversion to the kind of politics that had existed in the 1790s. Foster emerged a winner by waging the kind of campaign that would have been successful in the previous decade, causing trouble and undermining the administration, and extracting a deal

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<sup>1</sup> *The speech of the Right Honourable John, earl of Clare, Lord High Chancellor of Ireland, in the house of lords, on a motion made by him on Monday, February 10, 1800...*(Dublin, 1800) , p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> McDowell, *The Irish administration*, p. 88.

from the Hardwicke administration and the Addington government. But, ironically, Hardwicke's administration was also a winner, precisely because it confirmed that it was business as usual in post-union Ireland. The independent Cornwallis/Castlereagh administration of 1798-1800 was shown to be an anomaly, not the beginning of a new system, and the fading promises of the union were further diminished. What it revealed was that the pre-union system could be restored, thus reinforcing the primacy of the lord lieutenant and the chief secretary within that system.

The Irish administration was terrified of the old political junto in Ireland. Composed of figures like John Beresford, Edward Cooke, and the former speaker of the Irish House of Commons, the indefatigable John Foster, these men Hardwicke believed, posed a direct threat to British rule in post-union Ireland. Hardwicke did not press to have their power curbed but insisted that what mattered most was that his own power was not reduced. As he told Addington in late-October 1801 'if the power of the lord lieutenant is reduced but a very little below its present level', 'these men... will soon become his rivals; and if from whatever cause he is removed they will become the tyrants of their countrymen.'<sup>3</sup> This was apocalyptic language, but it worked. As Lord Redesdale, Clare's successor later noted, Foster had set himself the task of becoming 'the most powerful man in Ireland', with the lord lieutenant acting as 'a mere cipher'.<sup>4</sup> If the Irish government could not ensure its own primacy in Irish affairs, then it was not clear whether the administration could effectively govern in Ireland, or co-ordinate affairs in London.

It is worth exploring the complex relationship between lord lieutenants and the old junto. In his biography of Lord Castlereagh, John Bew explains the difficult and impeding

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<sup>3</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 24 October 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 68).

<sup>4</sup> Redesdale to Spenser Perceval, 5 November 1804, cited in Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, p. 206.



nature of the workings of the office of lord lieutenant in the years previous to the union. 'Often a figure with limited knowledge of the country who spent much of his time in London', the holder of the office Bew argues, 'found himself effectively managed and manipulated by a close coterie of advisers known as the "Irish cabinet".'<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that with the appointment of Lord Townshend in 1767, viceroys became resident and efforts for 'dispensing with the "undertakers" and taking Irish governance into his immediate hands' were forthcoming.<sup>6</sup> However with legislative independence granted in 1782, and certainly 'between 1790 and 1800 events supported the thesis that Irish viceroys could not simultaneously serve the Irish parliament and the government in London.'<sup>7</sup> As one contemporary put it in a commentary on the publication of Castlereagh's papers by his brother Charles in 1848, 'It was impossible, absolutely impossible, when the independence of the Irish parliament was established, and the constitution of 1782 obtained, that the alternative, of union with England or absolute separation, could be avoided.'<sup>8</sup>

The reason for this, as Bew rightly points out, was the definitive role in governance of the Irish political junto, made up of the leading lights of the "ascendancy" and the political elites in the country. They were the holders of prominent government offices who exerted significant influence through familial ties, land holdings and long held political sway. As Bew suggests, 'even those lord lieutenants who did periodically attempt to reform and change the terms of Irish politics were often frustrated by this immovable caucus.'<sup>9</sup> No measure could do more to try to change the terms of Irish politics than the Act of Union. Thus it was that Hardwicke in particular, as the first lord lieutenant in the new dispensation, feared the concerted influence that might be wielded by these

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<sup>5</sup> Bew, *Castlereagh*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>6</sup> Gray and Purdue (eds.), *The Irish Lord Lieutenancy*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> *The North British review*, no. XIX, vol. X, (Edinburgh, November 1848-February 1849), p. 224.

<sup>9</sup> Bew, *Castlereagh*, p. 39.

individuals. Of all the threats to his authority in 1801, this junto was one which Hardwicke felt could most damage his administration. It was a concern that was intertwined with nearly all other considerations, taking a prominent position in Dublin Castle's deliberations when dealing with attacks from London and elsewhere.

In many respects the entirety of these considerations were linked and manifested in one figure in particular: the final speaker of the Irish house of commons, John Foster. In 1799 it was Foster whom the government had most feared as leader of the opposition's cause. Cornwallis told Ross, 'the speaker has placed himself at the head of the anti-unionists, and will convert the blind passion with which they are precipitating themselves and their country into certain ruin'. He was convinced that Foster sought only to oppose the union for the 'purposes of his private interest and ambition', and fretted that 'he is likely to retain a majority in the House of Commons, which he will conduct to the attack of the British ministry.' Cornwallis was disgusted with Foster's attitude. Harking back to the dreaded rebellion of the previous year he made the chilling declaration that 'the United Irishmen look on with pleasure, and are whetting their knives to cut the throats of all the nobility and gentry of the island.'<sup>10</sup> It is Foster's prolific biographer A.P.W. Malcomson who notes that 'Foster's stand against the union is the most celebrated event of his career.'<sup>11</sup> However, Malcomson also convincingly argues that it was the government in London (namely Pitt) as well as Dublin (namely Cornwallis), who had bungled their opportunity to win Foster over between December 1798 and January 1799.<sup>12</sup> While 'Foster would always have opposed the union...his opposition need not have been bitter, negative, and factious, need not have lasted till the act received the royal assent in August

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<sup>10</sup> Cornwallis to Ross, 13 February 1801, *Cornwallis Corr.* iii, pp. 59-60.

<sup>11</sup> Malcomson, *Foster...improvement and prosperity*, p. 130.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133-136.



1800'.<sup>13</sup> As such, Jonah Barrington depicted Foster as 'the chief of the opposition throughout the whole of the contest.'<sup>14</sup> In typical dramatic style (although in this instance Barrington might be forgiven his poetic licence), he later described Foster's last act as speaker of the Irish House of Commons,

The speaker rose slowly from that chair which had been the proud source of his honours and of his high character: for a moment he resumed his seat, but the strength of his mind sustained him in his duty, though his struggle was apparent. With that dignity which never failed to signalize his official actions, he held up the Bill for a moment in silence; he looked around him on the last agony of the expiring parliament...another momentary pause ensued – again his lips seemed to decline their office: at length, with an eye adverted from the object which he hated, he proclaimed with a subdued voice, "*the AYES have it.*"

In Barrington's narrative of events Foster epitomised the resistance to union in Ireland. He therefore focused the final lines of his tale on Foster himself as the union was read for a third time and passed through parliament. 'The fatal sentence was now pronounced – for an instant he stood statue-like; then indignantly, and with disgust, flung the Bill upon the table, and sunk into his chair with an exhausted spirit.'<sup>15</sup> Foster had become the personification of the country (the anti-union element at least) and in his defeat could be

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<sup>13</sup> A.P.W. Malcomson, 'John Foster, (1740-1829)', *DIB*. It should also be noted that Malcomson has written the *ODNB* entry for Foster as well. While structured differently, the information contained therein is for all purposes identical. For example, 'Foster was always going to have opposed the union of Great Britain and Ireland, but his bitter and factious response to the issue was dictated by the arrogant and ham-fisted way in which he was handled in November–December 1798, when he was excluded from discussions in London on the draft proposals for the union. [A.P.W. Malcomson, 'John Foster, (1740-1829)', *ODNB*].

<sup>14</sup> Barrington, *Rise and fall of the Irish nation*, p. 482.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 479.

seen the defeat of the nation. Yet, in the aftermath of the union Dublin Castle feared Foster's renewed indignation and reanimated spirit.

The dynamics of the relationship between Foster and the administrations in both Ireland and Britain is extremely important, as it overlays many of the themes raised here. On the one hand, Foster was the prime example of an opposition figure who had held huge sway in Ireland before the union, and someone the Hardwicke administration feared might undermine their fledgling government. On the other, Foster took his seat at Westminster in 1802 as an MP in the united parliament and would eventually be appointed chancellor of the exchequer for Ireland in 1804 with Pitt's return to office.<sup>16</sup> The reason for this, as Malcomson rightly asserts, was that once the union had been established, Foster saw little chance of it ever being repealed. He said as much to his friend and close correspondent Lord Sheffield in September 1799 stating that 'if it passed into law', the union would be 'a "decisive and irrevocable...measure".'<sup>17</sup> What's more, and Malcomson's assessment here is insightful, 'Foster fully recognised that the anti-unionists of the future would not be Foster and his ilk but the radical element in the Irish catholic leadership – in his terminology, the "popish demagogues".'<sup>18</sup> Again, it was in Sheffield that Foster confided on 5 February 1801, a month after the union took effect,

...if by the union the catholics got admission into parliament, they would in the nature of events and consequences become advocates to overturn it. The union has accomplished for them the reform without which they could never hope to be of consequence in parliament. The emancipation now projected takes away their disability. They will soon feel how little they will be in Britain, how great they

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<sup>16</sup> A.P.W. Malcomson, 'John Foster, (1740-1829)', *DIB*.

<sup>17</sup> Malcomson, *Foster...improvement and prosperity*, p. 153.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 162.



would be here [Ireland]. They will look to restoring the parliament and to filling the vacancies...in which they will hope for a majority; and if this comes to pass, a catholic government and consequent separation will be the effect.

Foster followed this prediction with his summation of the union on 13 February, and told Sheffield it was 'a measure carried against the sense of a nation by the most avowed corruption', alongside the 'monstrous abuse of the crown's influence'. Most importantly it had been held out to the protestant elite as 'the means of preserving their establishment at the moment the bargain was made for its overthrow.' 'Yet,' he said, 'even so carried, it is the law. We are bound. And...I shall not be surprised if the loyal men who opposed it by their advice shall be its supporters by their arms.'<sup>19</sup> These statements are of crucial importance as they represented the political realities that encompassed the Anglo-Irish relationship after the union. Even for some adherent anti-unionists like Foster, the union, and indeed the push for emancipation, had changed the game irrevocably. They could, if the government allowed it, get on board or be left behind. However, suffice to say here that Foster's about turn on the union is, as Malcomson points out, not as contemptible as it may at first appear. While 'he valued the Irish parliament...it was for him only a means to the ends he cherished: the promotion of Irish prosperity, the maintenance of the protestant ascendancy and the preservation of the British connection.'<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, some elaboration is required here and links Foster directly to the ideas raised in this thesis. In his extremely important letter to Corry on 2 December 1801, in which he spoke of the dangers of resurrecting 'the ghost of the Irish parliament by making the privy council a debating society', Abbot spoke specifically of Foster.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 162.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pp. 162-163.

However, this was not only in reference to calling him to England to discuss the matter, as has already been noted. Rather, Abbot made the marked observation that in weighing up the propriety of setting a precedent for allowing the privy council to debate policy it was clear to him ‘that the Lord of Collon desires it.’ But he asked, ‘is that a reason for acceding or declining?’<sup>21</sup> Abbot’s undisguised reference to Foster as the lord of his family seat at Collon, Co. Louth, infers that there was a not entirely positive image of Foster at Dublin Castle. There was also Abbot’s later admission that Foster ‘was ready to lend his assistance to Lord Hardwicke’s administration, provided he could also have the sole direction of it,’ and so ‘was treated with civility and respect, but was not invited to assume the reins of government.’ Thus, Abbot reported, ‘he resided the whole of my time [as chief secretary] in the county of Louth, and visited Dublin only occasionally.’<sup>22</sup> Malcomson too endorses this view and suggests that Foster’s relationship with Addington’s government and equally, with Hardwicke in Dublin, ‘might have stayed coolly amicable if Foster had remained safely buried at Collon with occasional visits to Dublin on linen board business and to attend the privy council and pay his respects at the Castle.’ However, there is an inconsistency here. Certainly, there was ‘a guarded courting of Foster’, even though ‘Hardwicke feared the impossibility of providing him with an “office equal to the rank and station he formerly held”’, due in part to Foster’s formerly anti-unionist persuasions.<sup>23</sup> However, the fact that there was not a clear plan on how to treat with Foster, either in London or Dublin was very much evident. The reason for this, this thesis would argue, was that Dublin Castle feared Foster’s influence in Ireland, evidenced by Abbot’s statements to Corry and his observation that Foster only wanted to engage with the Irish administration if he could personally direct its policies. Conversely, Pelham was particularly anxious to bring Foster into the fold telling Hardwicke in September 1801 to

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<sup>21</sup> Abbot to Corry, 2 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 124).

<sup>22</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, pp. 279-280.

<sup>23</sup> Malcomson, *Foster...improvement and prosperity*, p. 167.



consult Foster when the opportunity arose.<sup>24</sup> Further evidence for this line of reasoning comes from an extremely important document, the critical relevance of which has so far been missed by historians.

In October, Hardwicke's personal secretary the Revd. Dr Charles Lindsay had travelled to Collon at Foster's invitation, 'to admire the agricultural improvements'.<sup>25</sup> However, what transpired was a conference that set out Foster's entire mindset on how Ireland was to work within the union; recorded by Lindsay on 3 and 4 October 1801.<sup>26</sup> Malcomson references just one line of this document made up of fifteen pages of text, and then only by citing the same quotation noted by R.G. Thorne in his biographical entry for Foster in the *History of parliament*.<sup>27</sup> Lindsay's minutes were notably marked 'secret' and he was to 'consider these hasty memoranda of the conversations which passed between Mr. Foster and myself as fit only for the eyes of the lord lieutenant and Mr. Abbot'.<sup>28</sup> They contained fifteen separate 'heads of conversation' intricately detailing: '1. Crop of 1801'; '2. Malting'; '3. Brewing'; '4. Distilling'; '5. Canals'; '6. British capital as to manufacture – Fuel, Water'; '7. British capital as to agriculture'; '8. Manufacture and agriculture conjointly'; '9. Coals'; '10. Live cattle'; '11. Linen – Bleaching'; '12. Cotton'; '13. Exchange'; '14. Flax' and '15. Acts of parliament'.<sup>29</sup> Therein, Lindsay meticulously recorded Foster's observations on these points. While some of the material is not relevant for this thesis, there is a vast amount that can be taken from Foster's comments.

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 166.

<sup>25</sup> *The history of parliament 1790-1820*.

<sup>26</sup> 'Minutes of Dr. Lindsay's conferences with Mr. Foster at Collon, October 3 and 4 1801', 6 October 1801, [Hereafter: 'Lindsay-Foster minutes'], (NA PRO 30/9/127/108-116).

<sup>27</sup> Malcomson, *Foster...improvement and prosperity*, p. 166.

<sup>28</sup> 'Lindsay-Foster minutes', NA PRO 30/9/127/116.

<sup>29</sup> 'Lindsay-Foster minutes', NA PRO 30/9/127/107.

The conversations had one main thrust which centred on how Ireland was to fit into the United Kingdom, becoming an integral part of the empire, while at the same time, ensuring the best deal for its inhabitants under the union. This point lends weight to Malcomson's arguments which contend that Foster's overarching post-union strategy was 'his aim of promoting prosperity, in the altered circumstances of the post-union world in which he lacked the bargaining power previously afforded him by the separate Irish parliament.'<sup>30</sup> Therefore when he spoke on the processes of malting, brewing and distilling, Foster believed, 'considering the general question as far as it relates to Ireland...the lord lieutenant should summon a privy council, and appoint a committee to digest the information', he meant to take a lead in shaping Irish interaction with Britain on this front. As he said, 'the question of distillation viewed in regard to England is in his opinion very important, and ought not to be decided without a compleat [*sic.*] investigation of the situation on either side of the channel.'<sup>31</sup> Notably, it was the 'present system of corn laws, and particularly to the commerce of grain between Ireland and England, which by this time might have been fully permitted', which Foster believed represented a very pressing point. However, as this was an 'important question', he told Lindsay that he could not 'presume to offer an opinion, though he will be ready in capacity of privy councillor when summoned to attend his duty in making a strict and diligent enquiry.'<sup>32</sup> This was further indication of the role he felt he and the privy council as a whole would play in directing Irish affairs in the aftermath of the union. Not surprisingly, 'his opinion as to the corn laws in the abstract', which he was willing to give, were nevertheless quite detailed, and Foster again suggested that in fixing prices or considering taxes and duties on imports or exports 'the question should be treated as of the empire.' This Foster said,

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<sup>30</sup> Malcomson, *Foster...improvement and prosperity*, p. 163.

<sup>31</sup> 'Lindsay-Foster minutes', (NA PRO 30/9/127/108).

<sup>32</sup> 'Lindsay-Foster minutes', (NA PRO 30/9/127/108-109).



would see 'all the apprehension of difficulty removed since the wants of the empire would naturally be foreseen'.<sup>33</sup>

'These heads of conversation gradually drew Mr. Foster into political economy', Lindsey said, 'and he seemed to communicate his sentiments very truly upon many collateral topics.' Again, Foster was sure to state that he was 'viewing Ireland in its new connection with Great Britain', but as he told Lindsey 'he does not look forward to much participation of British capital' in the country when it came to investment in manufacturing. Nor was he very enthusiastic in relation to the union having a positive effect on agriculture in Ireland, 'in regard to agriculture he has no better hopes, as the English adventurers whom he has known to embark in agriculture have either gradually disappeared or are tired of the situation.' In Foster's view was entirely due to 'the want of honesty among the peasantry, their idleness, and their total indifference to all excellence'. This he said, had 'gradually blunted the ardour of those who have endeavoured to improve their prosperity, and have disgusted settlers from other parts of the United Kingdom.'<sup>34</sup> That point particularly emphasised Foster's position as a man ingrained with the ideals of the protestant political elite in Ireland. To place the blame for lack of advancement in manufacture and agricultural on the shoulders of the catholic peasantry, who had had no political voice in the country for nearly two centuries was narrow minded at best. It was also possibly an indication of the still unresolved nature of the chasm-like social divide in the country which the union did not address. 'Nonetheless when considering Ireland as an integral part of the empire', Foster was adamant that, 'the right policy would be to

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<sup>33</sup> 'Lindsay-Foster minutes', (NA PRO 30/9/127/109).

<sup>34</sup> 'Lindsay-Foster minutes', (NA PRO 30/9/127/ 110).

encourage agriculture and manufacture upon the coasts by every possible means, such as making the best and securest harbours for the transfer of goods and grain.’<sup>35</sup>

There were other technical considerations in Foster’s mind concerned with the ‘exportation of live cattle’<sup>36</sup>, currency exchange rates and, one of his personal favourites, the manufacture of linen in which, Foster believed, ‘no country in Europe can furnish goods of the same quality as Ireland did’.<sup>37</sup> Yet, it was his closing remarks to Lindsay that are particularly important here. Lindsay began his summation by indicating Foster’s view that ‘the intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland cannot he think be too open and free. But this can only be affected by a gradual assimilation of their laws, which might have been done, and in the course of twenty years this country would in effect have been compleatly [*sic.*] united to Britain.’ What was clear was that Foster had not simply cast off his reservations on the union, and ‘was therefore an opponent to the measure of the union, chiefly as to the time and manner of affecting it’. However, critically his mind was made up and in one of his most important assertions (which is the line quoted by both Thorne and Malcomson<sup>38</sup>), he said that, ‘as it is done, he as a good subject would never wish to have the question agitated.’<sup>39</sup> Foster though, crucially went on to detail his reasoning behind such as viewpoint, expanding upon this point at length. ‘The measure has passed into law and more evils would arise from any agitation of its propriety than can well be imagined’, he stated unequivocally. He proposed ‘to attend his duty in parliament, but chiefly with a view to show his disposition towards the compleat [*sic.*] settlement of questions that must arise, from a measure he deems hasty.’<sup>40</sup> Yet, again Foster was clear to

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<sup>35</sup> ‘Lindsay-Foster minutes’, (NA PRO 30/9/127/110).

<sup>36</sup> ‘Lindsay-Foster minutes’, (NA PRO 30/9/127/111).

<sup>37</sup> ‘Lindsay-Foster minutes’, (NA PRO 30/9/127/112).

<sup>38</sup> *History of Parliament 1790-1820*; Malcomson, *Foster...improvement and prosperity*, p. 166.

<sup>39</sup> ‘Lindsay-Foster minutes’, (NA PRO 30/9/127/113).

<sup>40</sup> ‘Lindsay-Foster minutes’, (NA PRO 30/9/127/113).



stress his belief that the union of the two kingdoms was incomplete and he was particularly keen to see this arrangement augmented in parliament. He cannily 'observed that in the united parliament where Ireland is not specially mentioned, she is supposed to be included in all the provisions of the public acts of parliament'. This was worrying for Foster as he suggested that 'it has already happened that measures have passed as the general laws of the empire which are contrary to the express provisions of many Irish acts which stand unrepealed.'<sup>41</sup> Clearly Foster felt Ireland's interests were not being best served by MPs and Thorne suggests that 'he feared Ireland was not understood at Westminster.'<sup>42</sup> While Lindsay said, 'I collect in general from Mr. Foster that he has not yet chosen the persons with whom he will act in the great political line.' He also stressed that Foster,

...wishes heartily to support the present administration of the affairs of Ireland; and with regard to the minister in England, as he does not wish to particularly seek, nor supposes he will be sought, he is nevertheless open to any friendly communication which may hereafter pass between them.<sup>43</sup>

Ultimately, Lindsay was reserved in his assessment of his meeting with Foster. While he 'took the most open part with Mr. Foster in acquainting him with the disposition of the Irish government to listen to such information as he might honour me with' and while Foster 'appeared to be very frank and communicative', he was not sure how far he 'should be justified in presenting these hints as Mr. Foster's precise modes of thinking'. Nor did he think Foster 'intended to be bound' on them 'in any future discussions.'<sup>44</sup> While the Irish administration spoke only of taking onboard Foster's opinions, his

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<sup>41</sup> 'Lindsay-Foster minutes', (NA PRO 30/9/127/113).

<sup>42</sup> *History of Parliament 1790-1820*.

<sup>43</sup> 'Lindsay-Foster minutes', (NA PRO 30/9/127/113-114).

<sup>44</sup> 'Lindsay-Foster minutes', (NA PRO 30/9/127/114).

conversation with Lindsay seemed to suggest that Foster was a man who could work with government. By December then, when the proposals to bring the corn trade before the privy council were being mooted, Hardwicke even went as far as to suggest that Foster's son, Colonel Thomas Foster, be reinstated at the revenue board. The younger man had been 'removed in the early part of the union contest' Hardwicke reminded Addington and Pelham in London.<sup>45</sup> While not at all unique, Thomas had 'expressed surprise and indignation at the harshness of the measure' in 1799.<sup>46</sup> However, with the imminent resignations of John Beresford and Sir Hercules Langrishe, Hardwicke wished to seek approval of a plan for 'the arrangement which must take place upon the occasion in consequence of Lord Cornwallis' union engagements'.<sup>47</sup> So while he would fill up the two places with men due compensation for their support of the union, Hardwicke proposed an elaborate reshuffle that would allow for the redirection of funds for a salary for an additional seat on the board.<sup>48</sup> Thomas Foster would be the candidate to fill this new seat. This was an extremely noteworthy move on Hardwicke's part as he sought to place an opponent of the union and a man not on the list of engagements, in government office. His reasoning was even more telling,

As this is a point so nearly connected with the interests and possible wishes of a person who has born so distinguished a part in the politics of this country, as Mr. Foster the late speaker, I have thought it my duty to suggest it for the consideration of your lordship and his majesty's ministers...<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 10 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 128); Hardwicke to Addington, 10 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 127).

<sup>46</sup> AP.W. Malcomson, *John Foster : the politics of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy*, (Oxford, 1978), p. 81.

<sup>47</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 10 December 1801, (BL. Add MSS. 35771, f. 127).

<sup>48</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 10 December 1801, (BL. Add MSS. 35771, f. 128).

<sup>49</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 10 December 1801, (BL. Add MSS. 35771, ff. 128-129).



In order to keep John Foster happy, with the appointment of his son to a government job, Hardwicke was willing to overlook former anti-unionist activities and go against his oft cited argument that all government patronage must be used to fulfil the leftover engagements.

The fact that this impetuous for such a move was coming from Dublin, even though Hardwicke told ministers that he would 'not suffer the smallest hint of it to transpire, unless you should be ultimately of the opinion that it is the mode which under all circumstances that I have laid before you, ought to be preferred', is important.<sup>50</sup> It was an indication certainly of how Foster's meeting with Lindsay had been received at Dublin Castle and gave Hardwicke the means to keep him onside, while not incorporating him fully into the administrative framework. The plan was vetoed however, and Thomas Foster was not reappointed until May 1807, this time to the Treasury Board, when Hardwicke had long since given up the viceroyalty.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, the express call to find a place for the younger Foster had come from Ireland following a direct overture from John Foster on his willingness to work with the Irish administration. However when Foster took his seat in parliament in 1802, 'it was almost inevitable that his presence at Westminster would draw him, however involuntarily, into positions which were or seemed to be hostile to the government and, by extension, to the union.'<sup>52</sup> Events transpired then to ensure that Foster could not be trusted by the Irish administration. While Hardwicke may have worked to garner his support, at least indirectly and in the view of Foster's observations in October 1801, the context in which Foster's overture were received meant that the administration could not endorse any policy which would give a person of Foster's influence a footing in government. It is not surprising then that upon his taking his place

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<sup>50</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 10 December 1801, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 129).

<sup>51</sup> *History of Parliament 1790-1820*.

<sup>52</sup> Malcomson, *Foster...improvement and prosperity*, p. 167.

as an MP in Britain, he ran afoul of the government.<sup>53</sup> As such they maybe missed a very good opportunity to bring onside an influential former anti-unionist and a man who might have played a positive role in helping consolidate the union in those critical months and years after its enactment. Ultimately though it was Irish concerns and the political games being played out there, that decided Foster's fate.

Foster's relevance as a fulcrum upon which many of these considerations hinged, was again evident upon his return to office in 1804 under Pitt, as chancellor of the Irish exchequer. In November 1804, having 'continued to investigate the methods that had been used to pass the union' he had found evidence that contradicted official government accounts and had the opportunity to destroy its integrity forever, yet chose not to play his hand. He followed this in December by signing an Irish treasury order which allowed the government 'to finalise the concealment of its secret union activity.'<sup>54</sup> Malcomson, rather kindly, makes 'three objections to this interpretation', the most prominent observation being that 'the last thing Foster wanted from 1801 onwards was the overturning of the union.'<sup>55</sup> However, as his assertions to Sheffield in 1799 and more particularly Lindsay, and by extension the administrations in Ireland and Britain in October 1801 prove, he was very much willing to get onboard the union train as it embarked on its journey into the nineteenth century.

In that year Hardwicke spoke specifically of the bribery the government had employed to pass the union, while at the same time readily pointing to the same efforts being endorsed by those opposed to the measure. For him both enterprises were relevant to how government was going to work in Ireland after the union. He had to keep those who

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, pp. 170-171.

<sup>54</sup> Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>55</sup> Malcomson, *Foster...improvement and prosperity*, pp. 194-195.



supported the measure quiet long enough to pay them off, while he sought to court those anti-unionists who might threaten his authority. As such the new political milieu in which men like John Foster found themselves was far from straightforward and it seemed the union itself did little to give clarity on the point. What mattered was power and influence, and Foster showed that he had lost none of his old political cunning in the post-union era. His rise and return to prominence was a blow to the British government. But ironically it strengthened the administration in Ireland, because it restored a pre-union system of viceroy and junto, competing for power, and mutually reinforcing their own interests in doing so.

## Chapter Six

### ‘A land flowing with milk and honey’:

#### Hardwicke in office, 1802-1806

The formative period of Hardwicke’s viceroyalty could be said to have come to an end with the departure of his trusted chief secretary Charles Abbot in 1802. Abbot’s reformist agenda, as has been discussed, was not appreciated by all of the political powerbrokers in Dublin. A circular letter he had transmitted in early September to the various heads of government departments in Ireland had caused particular consternation. Abbot demanded a complete run down of all office holders in Ireland, ‘to the establishment of your institution, or to any points connected therewith’. He even alluded that those returns should ‘be completed *as if to be verified upon oath*’, if the lord lieutenant felt so inclined.<sup>1</sup> Lord Clare was disgusted calling it the ‘state inquisitorial catechism’ and believed Abbot had embarked on this crusade of ‘effecting reformation in every department’ by himself, making use of Hardwicke’s name only as an afterthought and certainly not with the appropriation of the government in London.<sup>2</sup> He asked Pelham, ‘is there wisdom, justice or policy in suffering this upstart prig to disgust and offend the gentlemen to whose support we are indebted for carrying the union, before it has well been completed?’<sup>3</sup> The same day he told his old colleague John Beresford, another Irish politico, ‘by everything that I have learned, Mr. Abbot is beyond comparison the most arrogant, presumptuous and insolent little prig that has ever [sic.] made his appearance on a public

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Abbot’s circular letter’, *Clare Corr.*, pp. 440-441. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>2</sup> Clare to Pelham, 5 September 1801, *Clare Corr.*, pp. 439-440.

<sup>3</sup> Clare to Pelham, 5 September 1801, *Clare Corr.*, p. 440.



stage.’<sup>4</sup> ‘As in England so in Ireland, Abbot’s probing inquiries and dictatorial manner upset influential figures.’<sup>5</sup>

### *A new direction?*

However, by the beginning of 1802 Abbot’s time in Ireland was at an end. He left the chief secretary’s office to take up the vacant Speaker’s chair in the House of Commons, a plum offered to him by Addington. The reason for his departure was twofold. On the one hand it was good opportunity for Ireland to ‘get rid of him’, as Lord Hobart put it, with Abbot having ‘so far alienated vested interests in Ireland’.<sup>6</sup> However, there was a second reason. Abbot had gone to Ireland with the impression that he would one day return to serve Addington in London. ‘The scene was great’ in Ireland Addington had told him, and his mission ‘would be to render the nominal union a real union.’ However, Abbot was assured that he ‘might afterwards come back at the end of a year or two, and be ready for anything.’<sup>7</sup> The death of Clare on 28 January 1802 had removed one of Abbot’s most vocal and influential critics; in some respects negating the argument that he had to leave Ireland as a matter of political necessity. However, paradoxically, it was Clare’s death that gave Addington the opportunity to bring his friend back to England. Sir John Mitford had taken over the position of Speaker when Addington was called to the premiership by the king in 1801; it was Mitford, who as Lord Redesdale would now be appointed to Ireland as Clare’s successor as chancellor, taking office in February 1802. Inversely, Abbot would return to the Commons in the next parliamentary session as Speaker.<sup>8</sup> Ironically, Abbot’s parting gift of Redesdale to the Irish administration was in complete contradiction to

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<sup>4</sup> Clare to John Beresford, 5 September [1801], *Clare Corr.*, p. 441.

<sup>5</sup> Clare Wilkinson, ‘Charles Abbot, (1757-1829)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>6</sup> Clare Wilkinson, ‘Charles Abbot, (1757-1829)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>7</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 229.

<sup>8</sup> D. S. Greer, ‘John Freeman-Mitford, (1748–1830)’, *ODNB*.

Hardwicke's recommendation to Addington. 'The policy of appointing an Irishman, or selecting a person from the English bar, must of course be for your consideration', he said on 19 January 1802, but he nonetheless, insisted, 'I should say that it would be better to appoint an Irish lawyer at the present moment.'<sup>9</sup> He signified much the same to Pelham the following day. While conceding that 'his majesty's ministers with whom the determination upon so important a question must necessarily rest', he felt it his 'duty to add, that there is no one, who in point of bearing, character and experience has better pretensions to fill the high situation of chancellor of Ireland, than Lord Kilwarden.'<sup>10</sup> Hardwicke however, was not placated and Redesdale took office.

It is important also to briefly interject here on Hardwicke's recommendation of Kilwarden to the post of lord chancellor. Kilwarden had been a supporter of a union from as early as 1798, even if 'he was worried about public opposition and wary of committing himself openly as a unionist.'<sup>11</sup> By 1800 he was however, firm in his support of the measure. Therefore by 1802 Hardwicke was pleased to state, 'my private opinion entirely is, and I believe that of the public also, that the experience, character and talents of Lord Kilwarden point him out as the properest [*sic.*] person to succeed Lord Clare.'<sup>12</sup> Of the other potential candidates he was less enamoured. 'Lord Norbury, though a very worthy and pleasant man is scarcely fit for the situation to which he has been raised', while 'Lord Avonmore is deeply in debt, and is besides of a temper less adapted to such an office'.<sup>13</sup> In Kilwarden then Hardwicke saw possibly a calming influence, something that had been sorely lacking when Clare held sway. However, Kilwarden had also been the man who had ordered a stay of execution on Theobald Wolfe Tone in November 1798, although this

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<sup>9</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 19 January 1802, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, ff. 178-179).

<sup>10</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 20 January 1802, (BL Add. MSS. 35771, f. 179).

<sup>11</sup> E. M. Johnston-Liik, 'Arthur Wolfe, (1739-1803)', *DIB*.

<sup>12</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 19 January 1802, (BL. Add. MSS. 35771, f. 178).

<sup>13</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 19 January 1802, (BL. Add. MSS. 35771, f. 178).



was on purely legal grounds. However, it 'precipitated a major constitutional crisis', and it could be speculated that the London government in 1802 had to be sure of their man.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, later in May 1802, Kilwarden passed a judgement against Dublin town major Henry Sirr which 'roused much public interest', and suggested that Kilwarden could not be counted upon to follow the government line where the law was concerned.<sup>15</sup> While Dublin Castle paid Sirr's damages neither the chief secretary nor undersecretary, were pleased with the outcome.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, Redesdale was a safer bet and while he only 'became increasingly reactionary and anti-catholic as time went by' during his Irish appointment, his attitudes on this question would have endeared him to Addington's ministry. On 1 April 1803, Redesdale even received from London a number of important documents which detailed the progress of religious issues in Ireland since 1801, pointing to the fact that he was within the government's counsels on such matters.<sup>17</sup> The appointment of an English lawyer, in direct contradiction of Hardwicke's recommendations, was thus assured.

Abbot's departure did signal however, the arrival at Dublin Castle of a new chief secretary; the vastly experienced William Wickham. Wickham had been the top British intelligence officer both at home and on the Continent for the best part of the previous decade. He 'was one of the most feared spymasters in Europe...ruthless and determined'.<sup>18</sup> Abbot was Wickham's 'closest friend'<sup>19</sup>, and secured, with 'the joint advice of Charles Yorke' both Hardwicke's and Addington's approbation of Wickham as chief secretary.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> W. N. Osborough, 'Arthur Wolfe, (1739-1803)', *ODNB*.

<sup>15</sup> Sylvie Kleinman, 'Henry Charles Sirr, (1764-1841)', *DIB*.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph W. Hammond, 'Town Major Henry Charles Sirr', in *Dublin Historical Record*, 4 1 (1941), pp. 14-33, pp. 26-27.

<sup>17</sup> 'Schedule of papers sent to Lord Redesdale', 1 April 1803, (NA 30/90/128/88).

<sup>18</sup> Geoghegan, *Emmet*, p. 138.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Durey, *William Wickham, master spy: the secret war against the French Revolution*, (London, 2009), p. 163.

<sup>20</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 284.

Michael Durey, Wickham's excellent biographer, suggests that Wickham 'has been criticised, wrongly, for being less of reformer than Abbot', and thus it seemed a new injection of fresh impetus would result in a change of direction for the Irish administration, allowing them to get on with real governance.<sup>21</sup> However, on 8 March 1802, Wickham wrote his first and very cordial official letter to Littlehales, the military undersecretary. It suggests an old acquaintance between the two men, not surprising considering Wickham's former line of work and both Littlehales previous and current employment. Wickham told Littlehales that he looked forward to 'having your official acquaintance and I hope as much as possible of your company in private life'.<sup>22</sup> But it was his self deprecating comments on the difficulty of following on from Abbot, his predecessor as chief secretary, that were most revealing. 'That this is a point I do not flatter myself too much, but I will do my utmost to follow his example'. And furthermore he assured Littlehales, 'I will do everything in my power to pursue your policy, to remedy the loss of my predecessor'.<sup>23</sup> This was important, as it indicates that Wickham embarked on his Irish placement clearly with the intent of supporting the administration there, and adhering to a policy that he felt was manifest in their mode of government.

Similarly, while Wickham arrived at what was still an ambiguous time for the Irish administration it was also partly a cooling off period in Dublin Castle's previously enduring battle to exert its authority in Ireland, specifically in relation to the Home Office. By 1803, Hardwicke had all but won his turf-war with Pelham; it made him more assured and even a little arrogant. On 9 January 1803, he received an official directive from the Home Office, in the form of a royal proclamation from the king in council that looked to continue restrictions on the Irish trade in provisions. A prickly Hardwicke informed

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<sup>21</sup> Durey, *Wickham*, p. 166.

<sup>22</sup> Wickham to Littlehales, 8 March 1802, (EBL private collection, Box V-File 5W).

<sup>23</sup> Wickham to Littlehales, 8 March 1802, (EBL private collection, Box V-File 5W).



Pelham of the 'injurious effect' such restrictions would have on not only Irish trade but agriculture too.<sup>24</sup> He pointed to an act of parliament, passed in the last session, which was to 'empower the lord lieutenant and council of Ireland to issue a proclamation for this purpose'. This left to the Irish administration, Hardwicke argued, 'a discretion in regard to restraining the export of provisions, as may appear advisable at the time.' He went on to make assertions about 'political expediency' and 'circumstance of abundance [of provisions]', but struck cleanly on his true concern when he told Pelham, 'your...letter has taken no notice of the authority under which the lord lieutenant and privy council of Ireland are empowered to act'. He concluded nonetheless, that he had made the proclamation, 'similar to that which has been issued in Great Britain, conceiving that it was the object of his majesty's minsters'.<sup>25</sup>

It is easy to criticise Hardwicke in this instance. By all accounts he had every intention of complying with the orders he received from London, but felt obligated to again raise the issue of the conflict of interests between his administration and the Home Office. In the context of his previous struggles though, this persistence can maybe be forgiven. He told Addington that the 'irregularity and omission' occasioned by this type of unsolicited direction from London, 'is certainly of considerable importance' and had caused 'some embarrassment' amongst the Irish privy council. In fact it was 'on the suggestion of the chancellor', the recently enrobed Redesdale, that he felt obligated to set out his stall with Pelham. 'This proclamation of restraint without any ground being laid for it or any explanation given has excited some surprise and occasioned some conversation at the council, which did not escape my observation nor that of the chancellor.'<sup>26</sup> These observations certainly sit well with the argument that Redesdale, 'worked closely

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<sup>24</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 18 January 1803, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 83).

<sup>25</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 18 January 1803, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, ff. 83-84).

<sup>26</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 18 January 1803, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 81).

with...Hardwicke...to establish a degree of independence for the Irish government under the new constitutional arrangements.<sup>27</sup> However, while Hardwicke spoke about his apprehension for the Irish 'provisions trade with Spain and Portugal which is now in the hands of the Danes [and] will not be easily recovered', alongside the 'encouragement' that trade gave to Irish farmers, underlying it all was the (old) consistent concern that he, and the power of his office, would come under threat from the Irish political elite.<sup>28</sup> Under the scrutiny of Redesdale and the other members of the privy council, he could not afford to lose face. None of this though stopped Hardwicke from exclaiming to Pelham on 24 May 1803, 'I have not been treated by your lordship with the common attention or respect due to the situation in which it has been His Majesty's pleasure to place me',<sup>29</sup> summing up one of the major personal problems Hardwicke felt he faced throughout his time in office. Thus Wickham's commitment to the Irish administration as he told Littlehales at the beginning of March 1803, and as Durey rightly attests, drew him into the post-union maelstrom in Ireland.

Abbot had left Wickham and Addington an incredibly intricate report on 'Irish affairs' which summarized 'their present state, including a detailed account of the government transactions there during the last six months.' Coupled with this was an 'outline of the public business of Ireland for the year 1802.'<sup>30</sup> Wickham was tasked in some ways to continue on Abbot's reform minded approach to government, but was, like his predecessor and his new chief, caught up in many of the political and administrative anomalies created since the union. 'Redesdale was later to comment that Wickham had the

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<sup>27</sup> D.S. Greer, 'John Freeman-Mitford, (1748–1830)', *ODNB*.

<sup>28</sup> Hardwicke to Addington, 18 January 1803, (BL Add. MSS. 45031, f. 81).

<sup>29</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 24 May 1803, cited in Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 334.

<sup>30</sup> 'Irish affairs', January 1802, *Abbot Diary*, i, pp. 286-300.



measure of the Irish', telling Addington as much in October 1803.<sup>31</sup> Yet, he was still called upon to deal with many of the enduring problems of union, alongside those that could conceivably be argued to have maintained since before 1801. From the management of Irish MPs, whom Wickham referred to patronisingly as 'his flock of sheep'; some 'he found to be rather frisky, and others turned out to be wolves in sheep's clothing, but he was prepared to lose one or two once the government remained strong.' To the implementation of the government's policy or lack thereof, on religious issues; being told 'to stonewall any questioners' on certain points to do with the catholics and to steadfastly support the established church. And the 'even less enjoyable' task of 'fulfilling the union engagements' upon which he spoke privately to Addington in late December 1802. He counselled, 'it is *necessary* to be without ceasing on our guard against every body and every thing that is Irish.' The reason for this he continued was that, 'the system of jobbing, and supplanting and calumniating each other is so deeply rooted in *them all*, that I am bound constantly to mistrust [even] the very best.'<sup>32</sup> All of these issues remained after 1801, as Wickham's experiences attest, pressing concerns for the Irish administration.

### ***Ireland's champions***

At the beginning of 1803, Lord Castlereagh, from his cabinet post as president of the Board of Control, discussed the government's standing in parliament with his friend and long-time political associate Maurice Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald, who was MP for Kerry and the eighteenth Knight of Kerry, had been a committed supporter of the union in the Irish parliament, referred to by Cornwallis as a 'principal speaker in support of

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<sup>31</sup> Durey, *Wickham*, p. 166.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 166-168. [Emphasis in original].

government.’<sup>33</sup> Due in no small part to his support of the measure, Fitzgerald had gained the friendship and respect of Castlereagh, with the chief secretary repeatedly requesting that Fitzgerald meet with him before the opening of the crucial session in January 1799, so as to ‘have an opportunity of communicating with you upon the measures to be brought forward’.<sup>34</sup> Rewarded for his support in August 1799, being made a commissioner of customs for Ireland, he was also entrusted by Cornwallis, no doubt at Castlereagh’s behest, to circulate a commitment to emancipation to the Irish catholic hierarchy on behalf of the Irish administration.<sup>35</sup> Fitzgerald was much of the same mind on the measure as Castlereagh and ‘supported the union from honest motives’, seeing both its beneficial nature to an Ireland that was part of a united kingdom alongside its removing the final restrictions for catholic relief.<sup>36</sup> While he had been a supporter of Pitt, Addington believed that Fitzgerald’s commitment to government could be prevailed upon and included him as a recipient of a circular letter sent from Downing Street, requesting that he attend the opening of the parliamentary session on 29 October 1801.<sup>37</sup> True to form, Fitzgerald made a powerful speech in favour of Castlereagh’s call for a rereading of the Irish Martial Law Bill on 12 March 1801, calling on his fellow MPs to ‘strengthen’ the hand of government, ‘and not by speeches...paralyse their arms.’<sup>38</sup> Thus, on 22 December 1802, Wickham had the ‘satisfaction to inform [Fitzgerald] that the lord lieutenant has been pleased to appoint [him] trustee of the linen board’, seemingly confirming that both the London and Dublin Castle administrations counted Fitzgerald amongst their Irish friends in the aftermath of the union being affected.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Cornwallis to Portland, 23 January 1799, *Cornwallis Corr.*, iii, p. 41-43; Brown, Geoghegan and Kelly (eds.), *Irish Act of Union, 1800*, p. 179 and 192.

<sup>34</sup> Castlereagh to Maurice Fitzgerald, 7 January 1799, (PRONI, MIC639/4/16); Castlereagh to Fitzgerald, 9 January 1799, (PRONI, MIC639/4/18).

<sup>35</sup> *History of parliament 1790-1820*, iii, p. 752

<sup>36</sup> 20 April 1807, *Hansard I*, vol. 9, col. 500.

<sup>37</sup> Addington to Fitzgerald, 9 October 1801, (PRONI, MIC639/4/156).

<sup>38</sup> 12 March 1801, *Cobbett’s parl. hist.*, vol. 35, col. 1032.

<sup>39</sup> Wickham to Fitzgerald, 22 December 1802, (PRONI, MIC639/4/76).



On 5 January 1803 Castlereagh mused on both his and Fitzgerald's respective roles in parliament for the forthcoming session. 'I suppose your motions, like mine, must depend on the will of the first consul', Castlereagh suggested, hoping that he and Fitzgerald would meet 'before long on one side of the channel or the other.'<sup>40</sup> While they both might expect to experience an 'an active session', this, Castlereagh felt, 'like invasion, may blow over.' Certainly the disposition of some politicians might have been to make things difficult for Addington's ministers, but it was felt the desire 'of the parliament and of the country is certainly not at this moment inclined to embarrass government.' While the administration would 'of course be well watched', Castlereagh did 'not expect to see any very formidable struggle in parliament till some new events afford materials.'<sup>41</sup> Just six months later, on 23 July 1803, Robert Emmet duly obliged.

As John Bew rightly surmises, the Anglo-Irish novelist Charles James Lever, depicted Fitzgerald in *The Knight of Gwynne*, when his knight, Maurice Darcy, 'a country squire respected for his independence... [and] the hero of the novel comes out against the union.'<sup>42</sup> The real Fitzgerald would later attest that 'with a view to the security of all establishments', he 'had combated his earliest prejudices and feelings', supporting and voting for the union in the hope that it would result in 'the restoration of a firm and lasting tranquillity [in] Ireland.'<sup>43</sup> Emmet's brave, earnest revolt was to some later historians no more than a 'sordid fiasco'<sup>44</sup>, in which anything that could go wrong did go wrong. Yet, to Fitzgerald, the attempted *coup d'état* suggested that the union was not working, fanning

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<sup>40</sup> Castlereagh to Fitzgerald, 5 January 1803, (PRONI, MIC639/4/84).

<sup>41</sup> Castlereagh to Fitzgerald, 5 January 1803, (PRONI, MIC639/4/84).

<sup>42</sup> Bew, *Castlereagh*, pp. 137-138.

<sup>43</sup> 20 April 1807, *Hansard 1*, vol. 9, col. 502.

<sup>44</sup> MacDonagh, *The Union and its aftermath*, p. 51.

the flames of Irish discontent as opposed to dispelling them.<sup>45</sup> ‘There was nothing the rebel leaders dreaded so much’, Fitzgerald later claimed, as a viable, working union that had encompassed catholic emancipation, ‘as it would have taken the peasantry out of their hands entirely, and completely destroyed their hopes of establishing a republic in Ireland.’<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, it was to Fitzgerald to whom Castlereagh appealed in the weeks following the rising. ‘I have waited with considerable anxiety to receive, from a person whose coolness and accuracy I could depend on, information upon late events’, he told him in August 1803. Castlereagh was ‘distrustful of private letters from Ireland...well recollecting how that engine has often been employed, and never more effectively nor with less justice than when Lord Cornwallis governed Ireland, to shake and traduce the Irish administration on this side of the water.’<sup>47</sup> In fact by the end of the month Sir George Shee, trusted undersecretary to Pelham at the Home Office, praised Fitzgerald’s foresight in anticipating Emmet’s insurrection.<sup>48</sup> Fitzgerald had even been reproached by his guardian, Judge Robert Day, as recently as 11 June 1803, for bringing Irish grievances to the parliamentary floor. ‘What need have you to speak’, Day chastised, ‘when Ireland has two such champions as Lee and John Claudius [Beresford]?’<sup>49</sup>

It is not the goal of this thesis to re-examine Emmet’s rebellion. That work has already been done, spurred by bicentenary of the rising in 2003, most notably by Patrick Geoghegan and Ruan O’Donnell.<sup>50</sup> However, as one historian of the period justifiably asserts (and looks to remedy), there is ‘an important oversight in existing accounts of British high politics in this period’ which has failed to appreciate how ‘Emmet’s rebellion,

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<sup>45</sup> *History of parliament 1790-1820*, iii, p. 753.

<sup>46</sup> 20 April 1807, *Hansard 1*, vol. 9, col. 502.

<sup>47</sup> Castlereagh to Fitzgerald, letter endorsed 2 August 1803, (PRONI, MIC639/4/136).

<sup>48</sup> Shee to Fitzgerald, 26 August 1803, (PRONI, MIC639/4/148).

<sup>49</sup> Robert Day to Fitzgerald, 11 June 1803, (PRONI, MIC693/4/124).

<sup>50</sup> Geoghegan, *Emmet*; Ruan O’Donnell, *Robert Emmet and the Rising of 1803*, (Dublin, 2003).



and the response to it, actually altered the British high political landscape by providing a consensus on the union'.<sup>51</sup> What Emmet's failed revolt does show, is that many of the pre-union problems on how to govern Ireland had simply not gone away. There was something irredeemable about Irish dissatisfaction, innate and deep rooted, that the enactment of a legislative act could not overcome. As an Irish MP, the figure of Fitzgerald is important as he displays the competing pressures on parliamentary loyalties both before and after the rebellion. In a lengthy treatise on the state of Ireland in August 1803, Castlereagh attempted to convince Fitzgerald that the manner in which the country was being run was the best that could be hoped for in the immediate future. He stated, 'You know my sentiments about Irish government. I flatter myself our opinions are congenial upon this, as on most subjects.'<sup>52</sup> But it must be suggested that even at this early stage in the course of the new political scheme, the sentiments of these once resolute political allies and close friends, were not so acutely comparable. Emmet's actions were a great influencing factor in this regard and Castlereagh was forced to concede his and Fitzgerald's impressions on the state of Ireland differed by degrees. John Hely-Hutchinson, celebrated general, brother of Lord Donoughmore<sup>53</sup> and a close correspondent of Fitzgerald's summed up the predicament. As far as Ireland was concerned, he believed 'the prospect before us is very gloomy. There is some apathy and a great deal of despondency.' 'Now Maurice', he queried, 'if [the French] should [send?] 20,000 men to Ireland, what is to become of us?'<sup>54</sup> By 1807, Fitzgerald was secure in his support of the opposition in parliament and his overriding feelings were echoed later by another Irish MP, William Tighe, when he said, 'the promoters of [the union] had held out promises which were not

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<sup>51</sup> Kate Sproule, 'British high politics and the response to Emmet's rebellion of 1803', (BA dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2010), pp. 5-6. I would like to thank Ms. Sproule for allowing me the opportunity to examine and reference her work in this thesis.

<sup>52</sup> Castlereagh to Fitzgerald, letter postmarked 9 August 1803, (PRONI, MIC639/4/144).

<sup>53</sup> Peter Jupp, 'John Hely-Hutchinson, (1757-1832)', *ODNB*.

<sup>54</sup> John Hely-Hutchinson to Fitzgerald, letter postmarked 5 August 1803, (PRONI, MIC639/4/142).

fulfilled. They had promised a land flowing with milk and honey, but that promise was not to be found in the British constitution for Ireland.<sup>55</sup> Fitzgerald's opposition to government in this period was in fact so pronounced that his speeches at public meetings in Kerry were pointed to by the lord lieutenant in 1808, the duke of Richmond, as stirring up the disaffected there. So much so that it took the intervention of Richmond's predecessor, the duke of Bedford, to defuse the allegations. 'I am sorry to hear the outrages in the south of Ireland still continue and regret that the disturbed state of Kerry should be any degree attributed by you to the conduct of the Knight of Kerry.' As Bedford said, 'from what I know of him, I am persuaded he would be the last person in the world to say anything at a public meeting intentionally *mischievous*.'<sup>56</sup> Dublin Castle was not so sure. Yet, as Hoppen suggests, there was little thought of 'promoting any kind of shared United Kingdom "identity"', in the lead up to 1 January 1801. And while some 'integrationists' may have looked to change this after the fact; by 1803 no such identity existed.<sup>57</sup> This was the reality Emmet's rebellion unveiled. For Fitzgerald, and any others like him, it was a stinging indictment of the failing of the union.

What's more Fitzgerald was not alone in his worry, as Hardwicke was forced to admit to his brother, Charles Yorke the secretary for war, 'one cannot wonder at the loyal inhabitants and landlords of Ireland being highly exasperated and alarmed at the prospect of another rebellion', he said. However, he was quick to dismiss the claim that 'they should draw the comparison between the security they would have enjoyed at such a moment from the decisive and early measures of their own parliament in College Green, and the danger of their case not being so well understood by a parliament sitting in Westminster.'<sup>58</sup> Much

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<sup>55</sup> 2 April 1811, *Hansard I*, vol. 19, c. 690.

<sup>56</sup> Duke of Bedford to Richmond, 13 October 1808, (NLI MS. 72/1615).

<sup>57</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 341.

<sup>58</sup> Hardwicke to Yorke, 29 July 1803, in MacDonagh, *The viceroy's post-bag*, p. 303.



of the secondary work on Emmet's rebellion has focused on the point as to how Emmet was allowed to get so far in his endeavours, calling into question the ineptitude of the military forces and the culpability of the administration.<sup>59</sup> Contemporaries wondered the same. 'I ought not to conceal from you', Yorke told Hardwicke in August 1802, 'that very insidious attempts are making in various quarters to make the world believe that the Irish Government were surprised, that you had no intelligence or paid no regard to it, and that no proper military precautions were taken'.<sup>60</sup> Unsurprisingly it was 'people who are no friends to the present administration', with Yorke guessing it was 'Cooke and his friends' who had 'been sufficiently active in propagating these stories.' This was a direct attack on the abilities of the Irish administration to govern in the post-union era. As Yorke went on, 'another circumstance which has been dwelt upon, and which I confess gave me considerable uneasiness, was the total want of any official details as to what really did pass in the course of the 23rd.' As such he said the 'government have been able to publish literally nothing to quiet people's minds, or to set them right. The newspapers, therefore, with their exaggerated or false private statements, are completely in possession of the public ear.'<sup>61</sup> While Pelham was particularly gleeful at the misfortunes of Irish administration, noting 'that a treasonable and daring spirit of insurrection has manifested itself in Ireland, which has been marked by circumstances of peculiar atrocity in the city of Dublin', it would be one of his last admissions as home secretary.<sup>62</sup> During the winter sessions of parliament of 1803-1804, there were calls for an enquiry into the rising, with MPs, Irish and British, taking turns putting forth their own analysis on why the rising had happened and the problems of British government in Ireland.<sup>63</sup> Ultimately though, George III was happy 'that there had been no remissness whatever on the part of the Irish

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<sup>59</sup> Geoghegan, *Emmet*, pp. 165-172.

<sup>60</sup> Yorke to Hardwicke, 2 August 1803, in MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, pp. 303-304.

<sup>61</sup> Yorke to Hardwicke, 2 August 1803, in *Ibid*, p. 304.

<sup>62</sup> Pelham to Hardwicke, 29 July 1803, in *Ibid*, p. 301.

<sup>63</sup> Sproule, 'British high politics and the response to Emmet's rebellion of 1803', pp. 31-33.

government, and that he was much displeased at the reports that had been propagated upon the subject.<sup>64</sup> With Wickham the master spy having been in London, Marsden the civil undersecretary, and the commander of the forces, General Henry Fox, were made loose scapegoats.<sup>65</sup>

In London, where ‘doubts about Addington’s premiership were already widespread before Emmet’s rising’, events in Ireland can certainly be seen as having contributed to a ‘crystallisation of the opposition’, which resulted in ‘the fall of Addington’s administration’.<sup>66</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the rising Yorke was doubtful of the government’s ability to overcome the crisis. ‘With the exception of Lord Castlereagh, Lord Hawkesbury, and Lord Hobart, the cabinet is absolutely detestable’, he told Hardwicke.<sup>67</sup> However, there was one major upshot for Hardwicke. In March 1803, Pelham had expressed a wish to retire from his post as home secretary, in which he had been ‘appallingly negligent’. Therefore, in August 1803, in the immediate aftermath of the rising, ‘Addington unscrupulously replaced him with Charles Yorke’<sup>68</sup>, the latter receiving the seals of office on 17 August 1803, ‘which bye the bye, Lord Pelham never sent’, and after some fuss, the duke of Portland was ordered by the king to go and ‘fetch them’.<sup>69</sup> Tellingly, Yorke, who was reluctant to take on the role as part of, as he saw it, a sinking administration, made it clear as to why he accepted the office. ‘I must own to you’, he said to Hardwicke, ‘that I feel very little inclined, indeed, to this same elevation.’ However, he went on, ‘nothing should induce me to consent to it but the idea that we should be *co-operating*, and that I might be able to make the remainder of your government more easy

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<sup>64</sup> Yorke to Hardwicke, 4 August 1803, in MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, p. 305.

<sup>65</sup> Durey, *Wickham*, pp. 176-177; Geoghegan, *Emmet*, p. 189.

<sup>66</sup> Sproule, ‘British high politics and the response to Emmet’s rebellion of 1803’, p. 41.

<sup>67</sup> Yorke to Hardwicke, 2 August 1803, in MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, p. 304.

<sup>68</sup> D. R. Fisher, ‘Pelham, Thomas Pelham, (1756–1826)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>69</sup> Yorke to Hardwicke, 18 August 1803, in MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, pp. 305-306.



and comfortable.’<sup>70</sup> After his long, drawn out fight with Pelham, the primary obstacle to his administration, Hardwicke was ecstatic. He convinced Yorke on 5 August to take on the role insisting, ‘you will certainly be a support to the administration in the cabinet, and in the Home Office you will have an opportunity of being particularly useful to Ireland’.<sup>71</sup> Hardwicke had no qualms in stating how important a move this would be for his administration and it must be argued that Hardwicke’s influence and his position as lord lieutenant of Ireland, were determining factors in making his younger brother accept the promotion. ‘The disadvantage of a weak, inefficient and hostile secretary of state is greater than you can conceive’, he said, arguing that ‘so long, therefore, as I remain in my present office which, at present, I could not with propriety think of leaving...I shall feel a great comfort and support in having you at the head of the home department.’ And while he did suggest that, ‘I would not have you lay too much stress upon that consideration’ he somewhat ruthlessly played on his brother’s sense of family loyalty, concluding ‘so far as it affects me personally, though I assure you that I feel all the kindness of it.’<sup>72</sup>

***‘A populace as ferocious and sanguinary as any of whom we have any account in history’: Hardwicke, Wickham and Emmet***

While Emmet’s rebellion on 23 July 1803 could conceivably have ended Hardwicke’s tenure as viceroy, unusually his administration was in some ways bolstered by the events. Yorke’s appointment to the Home Office in particular ended the most persistent threat to Hardwicke’s authority as lord lieutenant. From that point on, Hardwicke could count on his brother’s support, at least until the collapse of Addington’s ministry in

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<sup>70</sup> Yorke to Hardwicke, 2 August 1803, in *Ibid.*, p. 304. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>71</sup> Hardwicke to Yorke, 5 August 1803, in *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>72</sup> Hardwicke to Yorke, 5 August 1803, in *Ibid.*, p. 305.

May 1804. Political developments in Britain, had directly affected the Irish administration, while administrative and social concerns in Ireland had had an equally powerful effect in Britain.

As one early historian put it, somewhat critically, 'the attempt on the part of Emmet to start a new rebellion failed miserably, and did not disturb the equanimity of Hardwicke.'<sup>73</sup> However, what this thesis would suggest is that Hardwicke harboured feelings that boarded on a sense of betrayal after the rising. In his mind he had been trying to work to union principles, somewhat naively believing that his administration should be construed as friendly to the Irish people. As Cooke told Castlereagh in February 1801, when Hardwicke had agreed to come to Ireland, 'he has accepted upon the principle of pursuing the same system with Lord Cornwallis of general conciliation.'<sup>74</sup> With tempers running hot in the immediate aftermath of the attempted *coup* against his government though, Hardwicke was far from conciliatory. In one of his last letters to Pelham he let his animosity loose. 'In consequence of the late serious insurrection in this city and the spirit of disaffection which seems to prevail in various parts of the country immediately around Dublin', Hardwicke demanded 'as a matter of *necessity* that some point in the neighbourhood of this city should be immediately fortified'.<sup>75</sup> 'If this measure is not adopted', he argued, 'I cannot answer...for the safety of the public records of this kingdom, or the money in the back'. However, his most fierce contention was for the safety 'of the lives of the loyal inhabitants of this city, who from their late conduct deserve all the attention and protection from his majesty's government'. Hardwicke insisted that as things stood, the citizens of Dublin, 'on that very account stand exposed'. Gone was any perception of a subdued Irish population, living happily under the union. Rather, those

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<sup>73</sup> O' Mahony, *The viceroys of Ireland*, p. 211.

<sup>74</sup> Cooke to Castlereagh, 27 February 1801, *Castlereagh Corr.*, iv, p. 63.

<sup>75</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 9 August 1803, (BL Add. MSS. 45032, f. 31).



loyal to the crown were now openly under threat from ‘the hatred of a populace as ferocious and sanguinary as any of whom we have any account in history.’<sup>76</sup> A decade after the horrors of the French Terror and just five years after the dark days of 1798, Hardwicke’s opinion of the people whom he was sent to govern considered them to be the worst yet. The Catholics too felt Hardwicke’s wrath, in private at least, and he told Yorke that their address of loyalty in the aftermath of the rising was nothing more than lip service to the government. While Archbishop John Troy’s pastoral letter abhorring the events he believed was ‘the greatest piece of craft, dissimulation, and hypocrisy that I ever read. It has the appearance of having been written some time, and of being well weighed and considered. Nobody’, Hardwicke stated, ‘can give the least credit to his total ignorance of the conspiracy. The students of Maynooth are, I fear, among the disaffected.’<sup>77</sup>

As his actions attest, Hardwicke clearly grew less trustful of the Irish in the aftermath of Emmet’s rising. However coupled with this, was the fact that his previously called for measures for the defence of the country, had gone unanswered. Frustrated on this point, and seemingly unsupported in his endeavours, he snapped, telling Pelham that he had received no answer from his dispatches dated 5 August 1802 or 22 March 1803 in which he had been ‘earnestly recommending that a system of permanent fortification for the island should be adopted without delay’. There was no better policy he believed that could ensure ‘the tranquillity and security of the country against both domestic and foreign enemies’, and without which ‘all calculations...for the defence of the country must necessarily be uncertain and illusory.’<sup>78</sup> Between 1 December 1802 and 1 December 1806, there would be only *one* year when Hardwicke would see a decrease in the number of troops stationed in Ireland, however, his call for the need for fortifications was an enduring

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<sup>76</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 9 August 1803, (BL Add. MSS. 45032, f. 31).

<sup>77</sup> Hardwicke to Yorke, 24 August 1803, in MacDonagh, *The Viceroy's Post-Bag*, p. 326.

<sup>78</sup> Hardwicke to Pelham, 9 August 1803, (BL Add. MSS. 45032, ff. 31-32).

fixation [see *FIG. 3*].<sup>79</sup> What's more, on 17 October 1804 orders were issued by the Admiralty to Lord Gardiner, stationed in Co. Cork, directing him to take command of a squadron of ten ships of the line whose sole establishment was 'for the purpose of protecting the coast of Ireland from any attempts which may be made by the enemy to invade it'.<sup>80</sup> Gardiner was given permission to act independently of the blockading force at Breast and to intercept any French vessels that might steer for Ireland. Yet, Hardwicke's persisted in his calls for more defences and again raised the issue when Pitt resumed office in 1804. He reiterated his concerns to the new home secretary Lord Hawkesbury and even suggested that he had been ignored by Yorke, Hawkesbury's immediate predecessor at the Home Office, when he had written to him previously on 7 December 1803.<sup>81</sup> Clearly, Emmet's rising had a lasting effect on Hardwicke, reminding him that the union, and his implementation of it, had not resolved all manner of British problems of governance in Ireland.

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<sup>79</sup> 'Comparative statement of the effective military force in Ireland', December 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-11).

<sup>80</sup> Admiralty order to Lord Gardiner, 17 October 1804, (NLI MS. 55, f. 215).

<sup>81</sup> Hardwicke to Lord Hawkesbury, 7 June 1804, (NLI MS. 55, f. 213)



*Comparative Statement of the Effective Military Force  
in Ireland, on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of December, in the Years  
1802, 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806.*

	<i>Country</i>	<i>Infantry of the Line</i>	<i>Artillery &amp; Cavalry</i>	<i>Total</i>	
<i>1<sup>st</sup> December 1802</i>	<i>3,322</i>	<i>12,399</i>	<i>1,327</i>	<i>—</i>	
<i>1<sup>st</sup> — 1803</i>	<i>3,463</i>	<i>21,140<sup>m</sup></i>	<i>—</i>	<i>18,535</i>	<i><sup>m</sup> including Two Battalions of Fusiliers</i>
<i>1<sup>st</sup> — 1804</i>	<i>3,925</i>	<i>26,438<sup>m</sup></i>	<i>—</i>	<i>19,416</i>	<i><sup>m</sup> do do do</i>
<i>1<sup>st</sup> — 1805</i>	<i>4,699</i>	<i>15,811</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>18,689</i>	
<i>1<sup>st</sup> — 1806</i>	<i>3,984</i>	<i>19,779</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>21,119</i>	

*Abstract of the Increase or Decrease in the Numbers*

<i>Periods</i>	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Decrease</i>
<i>Between 1802 and 1803</i>	<i>26,095</i>	
<i>1803 and 1804</i>	<i>6,661</i>	
<i>1804 and 1805</i>		<i>10,580</i>
<i>1805 and 1806</i>	<i>5,603</i>	

**FIG. 3: 'Comparative statement of the effective military force in Ireland, on the 1st day of December, in the years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806.'**

(Source: BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-11).



One point that has been discussed at length in the historiography of Emmet's rebellion, has been the effect it had on William Wickham, the chief secretary. Most significant was Emmet's final letter, written to Wickham in the moments before he was led to the scaffold, and which Geoghegan argues, that for Wickham 'it would change his life for ever.'<sup>82</sup> Durey is more sceptical, and it is not surprising that the biographers of the men on opposite sides of the rising differ in their conclusions. As Durey writes, 'Patrick Geoghegan has used the supposedly devastating impact of the letter on Wickham as the triumphalist climax of his biography of Emmet.'<sup>83</sup> Durey insists that the reality was more complex, that Wickham had for some time been looking for a way out of his post that could be seen as 'an honourable withdrawal that would not at the same time act as the trigger to bring down the government and leave him with the reputation of a wrecker.' Emmet's rebellion and its consequences gave Wickham his chance.<sup>84</sup> Importantly, by December 1803 General Cathcart had replaced General Fox as commander of the forces<sup>85</sup> and his instructions reawakened old animosities concerned with his position in relation to the lord lieutenant. As Wickham could not condone the war office's attempt 'to make the army the dominant power in Ireland', he hastened his retirement from the chief secretaryship.<sup>86</sup> These arguments are convincing and they certainly ensured Wickham's resignation and ultimate departure from Ireland on 20 February 1804, when his successor, Sir Evan Nepean was finally identified.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, Wickham's own admission made in the years after his retirement from public office, in which time Emmet's actions and letter made an undeniable impression on him, should not be so quickly cast aside. They are revealing in regard to his attitudes towards British government in Ireland and the

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<sup>82</sup> Geoghegan, *Emmet*, p. 262.

<sup>83</sup> Durey, *Wickham*, p. 181.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>85</sup> Cathcart was previously gazetted in October 'to be commander of his majesty's forces in Ireland', *The London Gazette*, 18 October – 20 October 1803, p. 1438.

<sup>86</sup> Durey, *Wickham*, pp. 184.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, p. 189; McDowell, *Public opinion*, p. 293.



failings of the union therein. The chief secretary who helped stamp out the dying embers of a United Irish styled, French Revolution inspired republicanism in Ireland was heard to say of his erstwhile enemy, that 'had I been an Irishman, I should most unquestionably have joined him'.<sup>88</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

With the departure of his second chief secretary, Hardwicke never again had a subordinate of such proven abilities as Abbot and Wickham. Nepean, who eventually succeeded Wickham in 1804, was only appointed after at least three other candidates turned down the position. He acted as chief secretary for thirteen months but 'was, from the first, desperate to leave.'<sup>89</sup> While too general in his assertion that 'Hardwicke's correspondence contains dozens of acrimonious exchanges with chief secretaries whose work he deprecated', particularly considering his close relationship with Abbot and Wickham, Edward Brynn's summation of Nepean's time in office is useful. Nepean was not prepared to fight alongside Hardwicke in retaining the viceroy's authority, as he already 'looked forward to higher office in England.'<sup>90</sup> Initial dislike turned to outright revulsion when Hardwicke accused Nepean 'of undermining his lord lieutenant's position through his access to the king and his influence with Lord Sidmouth'<sup>91</sup>, again bringing to the fore a consistent theme. The men clashed on nearly every point of business which led Hardwicke to declare that Nepean was 'positively the most unfit man that ever was appointed.'<sup>92</sup> When Pitt again took office as prime minister on 10 May 1804, much of Nepean's time was subsequently spent keeping an eye on a reanimated catholic movement,

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<sup>88</sup> Geoghegan, *Emmet*, p. 271.

<sup>89</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 338.

<sup>90</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 50.

<sup>91</sup> Elizabeth Sparrow, 'Sir Evan Nepean, (1752–1822)', *ODNB*.

<sup>92</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 50.

which saw Pitt's return to power as finally heralding their emancipation.<sup>93</sup> Numerous reports of catholic meetings crossed Nepean's desk between October and December 1804<sup>94</sup>, but Hardwicke 'was soon deploring in him a lack of judgement, a tendency to act on his own and a vanity which made him attach greater weight to his own discoveries than to reports received by often better informed colleagues.'<sup>95</sup> Nepean's successor, Nicholas Vansittart selected in January 1805, never even came to Ireland<sup>96</sup> and 'his undistinguished tenure of office had, however, been marred by his finding himself at odds with his lord lieutenant, Lord Hardwicke.'<sup>97</sup> Throughout this time Vansittart leaned heavily on Marsden, who remained in his position as undersecretary even after his supposed failings during the 1803 rebellion. An enduring preoccupation for both the office of chief secretary and undersecretary (and something which continued throughout the period) was summed up in May 1805 by Marsden when he told Vansittart, 'I send you a list which contains the names of, I believe, all the Irish members on this side of the water. Those marked are in the country and have been written to by the lord lieutenant or myself, in a way most likely to produce aspect of them going over.'<sup>98</sup> The management of Irish MPs in the new parliamentary set-up became a dominant concern for successive chief secretaries<sup>99</sup>, making sure 'that (often reluctant) Irish members turned up and voted the "right way".'<sup>100</sup> As the numerous lists of members and letters of excuses Marsden sent to Vansittart attest, it was

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<sup>93</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 125; Brian MacDermot (ed.), *The Irish Catholic petition of 1805: the diary of Denys Scully*, (Dublin, 1992), p. xvi.

<sup>94</sup> 'Proceedings of a meeting of the catholics at the house of James Ryan esq. in Marlborough St. Dublin on 27 October 1804', (NA HO 100/99/163-172); 'Proceedings of the 3rd general meeting of the catholics at Mr. James Ryan's in Marlborough St. Dublin', 17 November 1804, (NA HO 100/99/173-176); 'Proceedings of the 2nd meeting of the select committee at Lord Fingall's', 2 December 1804, (NA HO 100/99/177-178); 'Report of the sub committee appointed by the general committee of the catholics', 9 December 1804, (NA HO 100/99/179-81). See also: MacDermot (ed.), *The Irish catholic petition of 1805*, pp. 12-40.

<sup>95</sup> MacDermot (ed.) *The Irish catholic petition of 1805*, p. xxi.

<sup>96</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 338.

<sup>97</sup> John Plowright, 'Nicholas Vansittart, (1766-1851)', *ODNB*.

<sup>98</sup> Marsden to Vansittart, 31 May 1805, (BL Add. MSS. 31229, f. 256).

<sup>99</sup> See for example Robert Peel's detailed lists of Irish members and their political positions in 1818 and 1820, (BL Add. MSS. 40298, ff. 1-45).

<sup>100</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 338.



often a thankless and unfruitful labour.<sup>101</sup> With the appointment of Charles Long, Hardwicke's last chief secretary, in September 1805, things might have improved. He 'wrestled successfully with the various boards and undersecretaries', but also 'battled with Hardwicke as well.'<sup>102</sup> Yet, even at this stage, Long complained to Pitt, of the 'undefined powers and authorities of particular men and particular offices since the union'.<sup>103</sup> However, unbeknownst to its officials, the administration in Ireland had only limited time left in power, as with Pitt's death on 23 January 1806, an opposition coalition under Lord Grenville and Charles James Fox would ensure a change of direction at Dublin Castle.

As noted, Hardwicke stayed in office under the resumed but brief premiership of Pitt, although this was mainly due to the fact that his supposed successor in 1805, the earl of Powis, while nominated to the position of lord lieutenant, did not take up the office and never left for Dublin.<sup>104</sup> The fact that Powis 'would not come to Ireland'<sup>105</sup>, upon 'closer scrutiny of the nature of the office'<sup>106</sup>, meant that Hardwicke stayed put although the change of ministry had little effect on the Irish administration. Ireland was no longer much in Pitt's orbit.<sup>107</sup> Earlier in his term as lord lieutenant (and notably before Emmet's rising), Lady Moira had said of Hardwicke, 'surely the present governor conducts himself in a manner to satisfy the ministry, as well as the people he presides over'. With rumours circulating that Hardwicke was to be replaced she was sure to insist, 'they certainly both are, Lord and Lady Hardwicke, most amiable, excellent, worthy people....Amongst the various ones named as their successors by vague report I know not any from character who

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<sup>101</sup> For specific examples on this point see Marsden's correspondence with Vansittart for June 1805, (BL Add. MSS. 31230 ff. 1-25).

<sup>102</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 50.

<sup>103</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', pp. 338-339.

<sup>104</sup> D.L. Pior, 'Edward Clive, (1754-1839)', *ODNB*.

<sup>105</sup> O' Mahony, *The viceroys of Ireland*, p. 211.

<sup>106</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 28.

<sup>107</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, pp. 125-126.

would be near as eligible as they are.’<sup>108</sup> That eligibility was all but defunct in 1806, with the drastic change of face of the ministry in London. Nevertheless, and even if contemporaries were not acutely aware of the fact, the politics of implementing the union and by extension British government in Ireland was pioneered in the years under Hardwicke. The fact that ‘the post-union administration became from the start emblematic of the ambiguities of the Anglo-Irish relationship’ obviously made things more complicated.<sup>109</sup> But it was also representative of the fact that many of the problems in governing Ireland, whether pre- or post-union in origin, were still there when Hardwicke left office. Hardwicke was sent to Ireland with the express instruction to make the union work but, unwilling to blindly follow the instructions of the various offices in London, he tried desperately to implement the union as he thought best. In the end, it is probably fair to say that he left himself and the Irish administration somewhere in the middle ground between a pre-union reality and a post-union ideal.

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<sup>108</sup> Lady Moira to Scully, 15 February 1803, in MacDermott (ed.), *The Catholic question*, p. 63.

<sup>109</sup> Hoppen, ‘A question none could answer’, p. 132.



## SECTION THREE

### Chapter Seven

#### A mission to complete the union: Bedford and Ireland, 1806

'I am to hold out to Ireland a complete union not only in name but in substance with England'.<sup>1</sup>

(Duke of Bedford, 1806)

The death of Pitt on 23 January 1806 led to the creation of a new government, the so-called 'Ministry of all the Talents', with Lord Grenville as prime minister, Earl Spencer as home secretary, and Charles James Fox as foreign secretary. It also led to changes in Ireland, with the duke of Bedford replacing Hardwicke as lord lieutenant, and William Elliot, a Castle undersecretary at the time of the union, returning to Ireland as chief secretary. The accession to power of a government which supported catholic emancipation signalled a new direction in Irish politics. The talk was now of completing the union, of giving Ireland the intended benefits of the measure, while securing Irish loyalty for the empire. But this was largely rhetorical, because the new administration could not grant the single measure that would make the union complete: catholic emancipation. In fact, it would be the very issue that would bring about the collapse of the government in 1807. On 5 December 1803 Elliot had declared in the House of Commons that those who voted for the union had a special duty to Ireland, 'peculiar and indispensable obligations to watch over its concerns'.<sup>2</sup> This, then, was the opportunity for these men to implement their vision for Ireland, and not (as Elliot feared) 'live to repent' their votes. For Fox and

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<sup>1</sup> Bedford to Charles James Fox, [4 February 1806], (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

<sup>2</sup> 05 December 1803, *Hansard 1*, vol. 1, col. 90.

Bedford, who had opposed the union in parliament, it was an opportunity to show that they could succeed where their opponents had failed.

Bedford thus came to Ireland with a new approach, making reassuring noises to the catholics, and showing much less concern with fulfilling the union engagements. At the same time, some key office holders (like John Foster) were dismissed, to indicate that there was politically a changed direction. The objective was to apply conciliatory principles to Ireland, and to try and secure the benefits of the union for Ireland and Britain. This section of the thesis draws extensively on the Bedford papers, an archival collection at Woburn Abbey that has been neglected and often ignored by historians.<sup>3</sup> What emerges from these papers is a new interpretation of a short period of Irish history that is normally dismissed as an interlude.<sup>4</sup> In reality, it was much more significant. This was a period when there was an alternate mode in the attempt to complete the union which promised much, even if it ultimately delivered little. In this context the choice of the new lord lieutenant is worthy of examination. Bedford was not the first preference, and the discussions over Hardwicke's replacement provide a good insight into the thinking on Irish affairs. The idea of sending Lord Moira, the Irish-born friend of the catholics, who had been a vehement opponent of

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<sup>3</sup> In studying the viceroyalty of the duke of Bedford, this thesis will make use of various sources stored at the Bedford Estates Archives, Woburn Abbey, Woburn, Bedfordshire. I wish to reiterate my thanks to his grace, Andrew Russell, the 15th duke of Bedford for granting me access to this material. This National Register of Archives private collection houses a vast amount of material relating to the Russell family and the Dukes of Bedford. The focus of this study will centre on the collection of Irish papers of the sixth duke, John Russell, which have been largely ignored by historians to date. (The only two apparent exceptions being first, Trevor Robert Mc Cavery, 'Finance and politics in Ireland, 1801-17', (Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University Belfast, 1981) in which the author examined some correspondence from letter books HMC-96-B and HMC-96-C exclusively. And second, one minor reference by Hoppen in his 2012 essay, 'A question none could answer', p. 141). The collection is for the most part uncatalogued and unfoliated, though I have, in conduction with the Woburn Abbey archivist, provisionally ordered the material during my work on the collection. In the case of some of the bound material however [HMC-96 and HMC-97 for example], some pages are numbered. The following is a breakdown of the material that will be referenced throughout the thesis: Bound Volumes: HMC-96-A, HMC-96-B, HMC-96-C, HMC-96-C2 and HMC-97; 6D-Ireland-[Box]4-[Volumes]1 to 4. Unbound papers in 3 boxes: 6D-Ireland-[Box]1-[Bundles]1 to 10, 6D-Ireland-2-1 to 11, 6D-Ireland-3-1 to 9.

<sup>4</sup> For example, it is significant that the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, which has entries for almost every single lord lieutenant and chief secretary, does not bother with an entry on Bedford.



the union, would have been an audacious choice. In the event this did not happen, but the selection of Bedford, was a more subtle version of the same strategy.

In addition, the key instructions which were given to Bedford – hitherto unexamined in detail – serve as a full record of the new Irish strategy. The explicit message was that Bedford was to bring about a ‘complete union’, five years after it had come into effect. The new government was also keen to avoid the tensions of the early years of the Hardwicke administration. Then, there had been confusion over who the lord lieutenant reported to, but now it was made explicitly clear that the lord lieutenant would receive his instructions from the home secretary, and would report directly to him. This was also a part of completing the union, by finalising the structures which would operate between Dublin Castle and Whitehall. Bedford attempted to create his own structure, by opening a communication with his good friend, the new foreign secretary, Charles James Fox. This did not get far, partly because Fox was too busy in his new role, and partly because he was probably too shrewd to over-step his role and undermine a colleague. The instructions regarding the union engagements were also significant. The new government wanted a break from the past. This meant moving away from the corruption of the passing of the union, and start afresh. Bedford delegated responsibility for these issues to a subordinate, as he worked to build a new relationship with Ireland, and bring about the union of interest and affection that had been promised in 1800, but denied in 1801.

## *The formation of the new government and the challenges of Ireland, 1804-1806*

The new British government began in January 1806 despite the 'strong personal misgivings' of its prime minister.<sup>5</sup> Summoned to an audience with King George III on 27 January 1806, four days after the death of his first cousin and former chief, William Pitt, Grenville did not welcome the 'personal and physical strain' the undertaking would demand. While Arthur Bryant emphasises that, 'the moment of Pitt's passing was one of unrelieved defeat' for the British nation, it meant for Grenville an opportunity to finally move out of his cousin's shadow.<sup>6</sup> Grenville had been foreign secretary in Pitt's administration at the time of the union, and had played a key role in developing it on the British side. Like Pitt he believed in the necessity of accompanying the measure with catholic emancipation, and had resigned in 1801 on a point of principle. This marked the beginning of a break with Pitt, and when Pitt was making arrangements to return to office in 1804, Grenville did not join it, remaining firm on his 'underlying objective of a coalition of parties' to better direct the war effort against France.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, he was no longer in agreement with Pitt on Irish issues. He believed 'a union of parties and catholic relief were essential to the successful prosecution of the war.' and that therefore they needed to complete the work they had begun in 1799-1800.<sup>8</sup>

The same beliefs had made Grenville a critic of the Addington administration. In April 1804, for example, he attacked a bill that sought to enact legislation that would allow the king to accept Irish militia for service in Great Britain because it seemed to impugn

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Jupp, *Lord Grenville : 1759-1834*, (Oxford, 1985), p. 346.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Bryant, *Years of victory, 1802-1812* (2nd ed., London, 1945), p. 215.

<sup>7</sup> Jupp, *Grenville*, p. 336.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 332.



catholic loyalty and thus undermine support for emancipation. During the course of the debate in the House of Lords he argued that the religious denomination of the majority of militia soldiers in Ireland needed to be considered. He insisted the military arguments in favour of such a move were void as 'he insisted that there was no necessity for it, either for the security of this country' or as some had argued, 'for the better consolidation of the union.'<sup>9</sup> Ireland, he stated, 'would have right to complain', particularly considering 'that a considerable portion of the Irish militia regiments' professed the catholic faith, and so it would only 'increase the disaffection of that body.' Interestingly, William Elliot also attacked the bill in the Commons on 10 April 1804, as 'impolitic, imperfect and inadequate'.<sup>10</sup>

The bill passed its first reading by 77 votes to 49, giving the government a mediocre majority of 28, but by the time of its third reading on 24 April, Grenville sought to centre the debate on the catholic question. He proposed that a clause be included in the bill to protect catholics from any 'liabilities' or 'penalties', 'in consequence of their not taking or subscribing the oaths' that the law might require of them for service in Britain.<sup>11</sup> Again though, this clause was defeated 71 to 45, the governmental support led by Lord Chancellor Eldon, and Lords Hawkesbury, Ellenborough, Auckland and Sligo, who insisted that no such clause was needed and that the current law allowed 'every advantage, immunity and protection' for 'those dissenters from the established religion' who might be so affected.

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<sup>9</sup> 19 April 1804, *Hansard I*, vol. 2, cols. 161-162.

<sup>10</sup> 10 April 1804, *Hansard I*, vol. 2, col. 198.

<sup>11</sup> 24 April 1804, *Hansard I*, vol. 2, cols. 251.

The opposition was not convinced, and Lord Spenser, 'among other arguments', gave a passionate speech in favour of catholic rights.<sup>12</sup> He insisted he could see no way in which the clause could be 'detrimental, but was obviously of beneficial tendency.' The bill eventually passed in the lords, with the government increasing its initial majority. Nevertheless, it was clear that battle lines were being drawn upon these issues, with Grenville finding common cause with those such as Spenser, Fitzwilliam, and Bedford; all men who would take up key positions in the Talents ministry in 1806.

Following the collapse of Addington's government in May 1804, Pitt attempted to form a union of parties with Grenville. Pitt proposed the 'advantages...[which] would derive from the extinction of parties, and the establishment of a government uniting all the weight and talents of the day, and capable of commanding respect and confidence both at home and abroad.'<sup>13</sup> The catholic question proved, once more in British political history, an insurmountable obstacle. Pitt had promised not to put George III's patience (or his health) to the test, by agitating on catholic emancipation, and so any administration would be curtailed in what it could do in that area. These problems were nothing new, and were a legacy from the fall of Pitt's first ministry. George III's public resistance to concessions to the catholics of the United Kingdom in 1801 and again in 1804 were based on the grounds that it would contradict his coronation oath to uphold the Protestant constitution.<sup>14</sup> As Gustave de Beaumont, the erstwhile travelling companion of Alexis de Tocqueville, stated in 1839: Pitt and Grenville were, in 1801, 'powerless before [this] obstinacy'.<sup>15</sup> Following his visit to Ireland in July and August 1835, de Beaumont, a man consistently concerned

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<sup>12</sup> 24 April 1804, *Hansard 1*, vol. 2, cols. pp. 251-252.

<sup>13</sup> William Pitt to Lord Melville, 29 March 1804, in Philip Stanhope, *Secret correspondence connected with Mr. Pitt's return to office in 1804, chiefly compiled from the MSS. at Melville Castle*, (London, 1852), p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, pp. 166-169.

<sup>15</sup> Gustave de Beaumont, *Ireland social, political, and religious*. Edited by W.C. Taylor, (London, 1839), i, p. 246.



with social injustice and greatly influenced by his previous work and travels in the United States, was certainly sympathetic to the catholic cause, and produced 'a partisan work', *Ireland: Social, political, and religious* in which he equated the later 'catholic assertiveness under Daniel O'Connell with democracy on the American model'.<sup>16</sup>

George III had the same approach even when Grenville was prime minister. In 1807, with the government teetering on the brink of collapse, George III reiterated that he was to be 'the protestant king, of a protestant country, or no king.'<sup>17</sup> This constant refusal to budge on what was a key political and even social issue, suggested that 'the catholic question would have to sleep for the remainder of George III's reign.'<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, as Roy Foster suggests, immediate post-union emancipation had been 'short-circuited by local Ascendency pressure' in Ireland, particularly from the earl of Clare.<sup>19</sup> By 1804, Clare was dead but his legacy lived on. Therefore it is not entirely surprising that in the formation of his new cabinet, Pitt informed Lord Melville on 29 March 1804 that he had let the king know that if,

he resolved to exclude the friends of Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville, but wished to call upon me to form a government without them, I should be ready to do so as well as I could from my own immediate friends, united with the most capable and unexceptional persons of the present government.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> C.J. Woods, 'Gustave de Beaumont, (1802-66)', *DIB*. See also: Gustave de Beaumont, *Marie, ou l'Ésclavage aux États-Unis*, (Paris, 1836), [English translation: Gustave de Beaumont, *Marie, or slavery in the United States: A novel of Jacksonian America, translated by Barbara Chapman* (Stanford 1958)].

<sup>17</sup> Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, p. 169.

<sup>18</sup> Patrick M. Geoghegan, 'The Catholics and the Union', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 10 sixth series (2000), pp. 243-258, p. 258.

<sup>19</sup> Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972*, (London, 1989), p. 285.

<sup>20</sup> Pitt to Melville, 29 March 1804, in Stanhope, *Secret correspondence connected with Mr. Pitt's return to office*, pp. 14-15.

Pitt's remarks seem to support the proposition of Peter Jupp that upon taking up the reins of government and 'despite earlier protestations to the contrary', he was not fully dedicated to the political ideal of party unification.<sup>21</sup> Second, Pitt's commitment 'that the catholic question was not to be stirred' was in essence a personal undertaking, indeed a pledge, made by him to the king, 'effectively muzzling his colleagues on a vital matter of policy'.<sup>22</sup> As his comments to Melville attest, he knew that in all likelihood support for a new government would need to be found without Grenville's help if the catholic question was to be left entirely off the cabinet table. This was not something Grenville could stomach, and this coupled with his loss of 'faith in his cousin's candidness' and lack of commitment 'to the broadly based government that was so much Grenville's own purpose',<sup>23</sup> meant that by the end of 1804 his 'political separation' from Pitt 'was virtually complete.'<sup>24</sup> Grenville's preference was for 'an alliance which would concentrate upon two points of attack: national defence and Ireland.'<sup>25</sup> These were his two central tenets during his opposition to Pitt between the summer of 1804 and January 1806. They would in turn form the driving aspirations of his new government.

### ***The new coalition and the choice of a lord lieutenant for Ireland***

Irish politics was directly and intensely affected by any political changes in London. Any shift in the dominant political ideology at Westminster consequently directed how Irish politicians, catholic petitioners, peers and influential persons in general engaged with ruling elites both in Dublin and London. The role of the Ministry of all the

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<sup>21</sup> Jupp, *Grenville*, p. 330 esp. footnote 93 and p. 335.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 332, esp. footnote 98.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 333.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 335.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 337.



Talents<sup>26</sup> in shaping Irish political administration and policy during the period from February 1806 to the fall of Grenville's government in late-March 1807 underscores just how true this was in the period. Lord Castlereagh had joined Addington's government with a cabinet seat in July 1802 at Pitt's insistence (being appointed to the presidency of the board of control for India)<sup>27</sup>, and remained a steadfast supporter of Pitt throughout his second ministry. He looked hopefully, but ultimately fruitlessly, to Grenville to unite and lead the Pittites following the prime minister's death in 1806, as Grenville 'remained faithful to the alliance he had recently formed with Fox and the Whigs.'<sup>28</sup>

Having gradually separated himself from Pitt, as has been discussed above, Grenville had found political and indeed personal friendship in the figure of Charles James Fox. By 1805, both sections of the opposition, Grenvillites and Foxites, while not officially amalgamated, were in many degrees working in tandem to disrupt and counter first the policies of Addington's and then, to a lesser extent, Pitt's administration. Grenville saw this alliance 'as a means to an end' (his union of parties)<sup>29</sup>, and it was soon to form the basis for a ministry that would constitute the first overtly liberal-minded administration since the Fox-North coalition of 1783. This was a shift of the political pendulum, and the government formed by Grenville in February 1806, and the perceived attitudes of his new ministers, would have vast ramifications for Ireland. Thus, while the government remained in power for only a relatively short time, it is still remarkable how much it has been ignored, especially in terms of what it meant for Ireland. It was a defining moment in shaping how the union was perceived in both countries, and also how it would operate until at least the time when emancipation was granted in 1829.

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<sup>26</sup> For this thesis this classification includes ministers in London as well as their representatives in Dublin, namely the lord lieutenant the duke of Bedford and his chief secretary, William Elliot.

<sup>27</sup> *Hansard I*, vol. 2[1804], p. xiv; Bew, *Castlereagh*, p. 187.

<sup>28</sup> Bew, *Castlereagh*, p. 217.

<sup>29</sup> Jupp, *Grenville*, p. 337.

The inclusion of Charles James Fox in Grenville's cabinet as foreign secretary in 1806 directly affected how Ireland was to be governed during his time in office. While Ireland remained outside the remit of the foreign secretary, even before 1801, Fox had shown during the Rockingham ministry, that his 'keen interest in Ireland ensured his constant interference' with that country, corresponding regularly with the then lord lieutenant, Portland and his chief secretary, Richard Fitzpatrick.<sup>30</sup> Ireland was under the domain of the home secretary, Lord Spenser, but Fox was determined to exert an influence from behind the scenes. The choice of his friend, the duke of Bedford, as lord lieutenant facilitated this.

The union had blurred the lines between who had the authority to direct Irish policy. While Fox may not have directly set himself the task of shaping Irish administrative affairs in 1806 and 1807, he was fundamentally responsible for the appointment of Ireland's new lord lieutenant under the Talents. As Martyn J. Powell has noted, Fox's attitude towards Ireland was not as straightforward as has maybe been presumed, a perception that finds its roots with the likes of Henry Grattan as far back as 1783, when he described Fox as 'liberal to Ireland', 'just to those concerned in her redemption', and a man who 'wished sincerely for the liberty of Ireland without reserve.'<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Fox himself believed that of all English, and subsequently British, political alignments 'the Whigs alone could be credited with "just notions of liberty"' throughout their history, most notably during the reign of George III.<sup>32</sup> Powell focuses his work on Fox's relationship with Ireland from around 1779 through the 1780s and 90s, noting 'his

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<sup>30</sup> Martyn J. Powell, 'Charles James Fox and Ireland', in *Irish Historical Studies*, 33 130 (2002), pp. 169-190, p. 172.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. 169.

<sup>32</sup> J. R. Dinwiddy, 'Charles James Fox as historian', in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 12 No. 1 (1969), pp. 23-34, p. 30.



consistent sympathy for catholic relief, and his friendship with Irish patriots, radicals and rebels.’<sup>33</sup> However, he does briefly address Fox’s attitudes to post-union Ireland in the penultimate section of his study. Powell rightly draws attention to Fox’s problems with the Act of Union itself in 1800, particularly the manner of its passing; but also the continued enactment of martial law legislation after the union had come into being. Fox told Charles Grey on 6 January 1804 that ‘there must be a fundamental change in the system of governing Ireland’, if ever there was to be ‘even a chance of future quiet there’. The fact that martial law was consistently employed throughout the country during Hardwicke’s viceroyalty, suggested to Fox that this was ‘itself ground for considering at least the system by which [Ireland] is governed.’<sup>34</sup> In essence, Fox’s appointment as foreign secretary and in turn his personal role in selecting and securing a lord lieutenant for Ireland gravitated the Talents ministry towards a more conciliatory, rather than coercive, policy for Ireland. Powell notes that while the cabinet held no specific meeting on Irish affairs, Fox was ‘able to secure minor changes in Irish government.’<sup>35</sup> The appointment of a new lord lieutenant however, led to more than just ‘minor changes’. In particular, the appointment of John Russell, 6th duke of Bedford to the position of lord lieutenant of Ireland is crucially significant in the period under examination here, and this thesis will offer a re-evaluation of his time in office.

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<sup>33</sup> Powell, 'Charles James Fox and Ireland', p. 170.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 187.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 189.

FIG. 4



John Russell, 6th duke of Bedford

Engraving by George Garrard, published 31 May 1806

(Source: National Portrait Gallery, London)



## *Why Bedford?*

It should be noted that Bedford was not the first nor obvious choice for the viceroyalty, at least in Grenville's mind. His preference was for the 2<sup>nd</sup> earl of Moira, the Irish-born soldier and politician. Moira's 'expressed...wish', as John Milner, Catholic vicar apostolic of the English midland district,<sup>36</sup> would reveal in 1811, was for 'unconditional emancipation...whenever any kind of emancipation [was] practicable.'<sup>37</sup> Therefore by choosing him Grenville was making a powerful statement about the direction of his Irish policy.

This was a bold move particularly considering Moira was himself Irish, born in Dublin on 7 December 1754, and had subsequently served as MP for Randalstown, Co. Antrim in the Irish parliament. Previous to this he had had a distinguished military career, fighting at some of the key engagements of the American Revolution, notably Bunker Hill and White Plains, receiving particular praise from Cornwallis' for his victory at Hobkirk's Hill on 25 April 1781. Most notably however during his time in America, he appointed as an aide-de-camp the future United Irishmen leader Lord Edward Fitzgerald and would later be well acquainted and personally friendly with Theobald Wolfe Tone, who named his fourth child Francis Rawdon Tone, in Moira's honour. Furthermore, on his return from America, and having entered the Irish Lords, he was one of only 26 of the 101 Irish peers who voted on the union in 1800, to vote against it.<sup>38</sup> Most crucially of all though, he was an overt supporter of Catholic relief.<sup>39</sup> In March 1801, Denis Scully, the long time Catholic

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<sup>36</sup> Judith F. Champ, 'John Milner (1752-1826)', *ODNB*. See also: Michael P. Cahill, 'Church and state relations in Ireland, 1770-1829', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 2001).

<sup>37</sup> John Milner to Scully, 1 September 1811, in MacDermott (ed.), *The Catholic question*, p. 282. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>38</sup> Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, p. 105.

<sup>39</sup> Rosemary Richey, 'Francis Rawdon Hastings, (1754-1826)', *DIB*.

activist and lawyer, went so far as to suggest that in the aftermath of the union taking effect, those Irish MPs and gentry that did not support the emancipation of catholics, and who would see 'all things in confusion and ruin' rather than consent to such a measure, would never be found in Moira's company, 'for they dread him.'<sup>40</sup>

Sending a committed supporter of emancipation to Ireland, a former friend of the United Irishmen, an opponent of the union, and someone the unionists dreaded, was not a subtle message. It was not intended to be. On 31 January 1806 the new prime minister told the king that the lord lieutenancy of Ireland was still a position he had yet to determine; the decision resting with the earl of Moira and whether he 'shall be willing to undertake the situation'.<sup>41</sup> Moira was at that moment absent from London and Grenville claimed he put forward his name to the king 'without his lordship's knowledge'. Nevertheless, that Grenville wanted Moira to act in this role should not be doubted, and he deliberately inserted Moira's name in his list of nominees as his proposed candidate for the lord lieutenancy.

There was a certain audacity in proposing Moira's appointment in 1806, particularly considering the king's reluctance to even contemplate a position for *Grenville* in Pitt's ministry in 1804, because of his pro-catholic emancipation standpoint.<sup>42</sup> That audacity can be better understood however, when one considers Fox's statements to Grenville in February 1806. He suggested on 1 February that he felt, 'the king cannot patch up an administration; but even if he can it is a great satisfaction for us to stand on the public ground and not on that of a particular arrangement.'<sup>43</sup> He had 'little doubt of the

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<sup>40</sup> Scully to Major Richard Huddleston, 5 March 1801, in MacDermott (ed.), *The Catholic question*, p. 49.

<sup>41</sup> Lord Grenville to George III, 31 January 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, pp. 1-2.

<sup>42</sup> Jupp, *Grenville*, p. 332.

<sup>43</sup> Fox to Grenville, 1 February 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 3.



public being with us, unless we manage our cause very ill.' Therefore, he believed that if the former opposition could indeed establish a new government, it would be one founded on a position of strength and not subject to specific conditions. Lord Fitzwilliam too echoed Fox's statements on the same day, indicating that Grenville's plans for a new cabinet would 'be found gratifying to the public'. Nevertheless, while Fitzwilliam 'approved of the attention paid to the king's feelings and prejudices', there was to be limited pandering on the Irish question. It was in this context that the new Irish administration was being contemplated.

In 1806 Moira was a respected general and an astute political player. His predilection to alleviate catholic grievances and his Irish birth would have made his appointment extremely significant in the new ministry's policies for Ireland and even the *suggestion* that such a man as Moira, given his character and persuasions, could take up the leadership of the Dublin Castle administration was a clear statement of intent on behalf of the Talents government. 'Should the king approve the plan, and the change of adm[inistratio]n take effect' said Fitzwilliam, then Ireland and the catholic question were to be central issues for this new government of the United Kingdom.<sup>44</sup> By proposing Moira as lord lieutenant in the first instance, Grenville set out his stall on Ireland.

In the event, Moira did not go to Ireland, and instead was appointed master-general of the board of ordinance. It is not entirely clear why Moira was not given the role: whether he declined it, the king vetoed it, or Grenville changed his mind. In the *Oxford dictionary of national biography* it is suggested that the prince of Wales, with whom Moira had a strong friendship, wanted 'to keep him near', and so he was given a cabinet seat and

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<sup>44</sup> Lord Fitzwilliam to Grenville, 1 February 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 4.

a privy councillorship.<sup>45</sup> It is likely that Grenville knew there would be tension, hence the tentative way he had proposed his nomination to the king, and was not willing to press the case too strongly. An alternative nomination probably suited all sides. In any case, as has been discussed in chapter six, the fact that the earl of Powis did not take up office in 1805, and Bedford's initial reluctance to do so (as will be explored below), indicate just how the lord lieutenantcy in Ireland had come to be viewed since 1801. This was no longer (if it had ever been) a prestige posting.

'The character and permanency of the new government', Lord Auckland would reflect, 'must depend eventually on the wisdom...and...the providential results of [its] measures'. While there would be many 'subordinate points', which would 'occur from day to day', no matter 'however inferior in their importance' they 'ought not to be neglected'.<sup>46</sup> It certainly seemed that Ireland was not to be relegated to this category, but it remained to be seen how beneficial the government's Irish policy was to prove.

With Moira out of the reckoning, Fox took the opportunity to press the case of his friend, the duke of Bedford, the grandson of a lord lieutenant for Ireland. Bedford was a radical Foxite Whig and had been a member of parliament until 1802, where he had represented the family interest of Tavistock in the House of Commons.<sup>47</sup> There he spoke infrequently, although he did vote against the union in February 1799. One of only 24 against the motion compared to 149 in favour.<sup>48</sup> It is therefore revealing that the second choice for the role of lord lieutenant was another opponent of the measure he would be required to uphold, implement, and complete. In 1802, the death of his older brother

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<sup>45</sup> Roland Thorne, 'Francis Rawdon Hastings, (1754–1826)', *ODNB*.

<sup>46</sup> Auckland to Grenville 1 February 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> F. M. L. Thompson, 'John Russell, (1766–1839)', *ODNB*.

<sup>48</sup> *Cobbett's parl. hist.*, vol. 34, col. 388.



Francis had seen Bedford succeed as 6th duke of Bedford, and he was considered 'respectable in debate' while in the Lords.<sup>49</sup> The Russell family had a lasting association with Ireland, Bedford being the grandson of a former Irish viceroy, his namesake John Russell, the 4th duke. Bedford's son was Lord John Russell, later prime minister during some of the worst years of the Great Irish Famine.

Bedford was initially reluctant to accept the role, but did so because of his close friendship with Fox. He also secured a promise from Fox that they would correspond frequently together – and thus bypass to a degree the home secretary. Bedford was sworn in as lord lieutenant for Ireland at the Queen's Palace on 12 February 1806.<sup>50</sup> Critics of Bedford have suggested that he 'was no politician', and was unequal to the duties he was called upon to perform in Ireland.<sup>51</sup> Connolly suggests he 'was too reticent'.<sup>52</sup> As will be argued, this was an unfair description. Bedford was clever enough to secure some agreement on his duties before setting out for Ireland, and did enough work before leaving Britain to protect his position.

In a vital document which has until now been ignored by historians, Bedford specified the distinct and explicit reasons as to why he agreed to take on the mantle of the lord lieutenantcy.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, he candidly detailed how he saw his role in the country,

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<sup>49</sup> George Ticknor, *Life, letters and journals*. Edited by G.S. Hilliard 2 vols. (Boston, 1909), i, p. 270 cited in Georgiana Blakiston, *Lord William Russell and his wife, 1815-1846* (London, 1972), p. 18 and F. M. L. Thompson, 'John Russell, (1766-1839)', *ODNB*.

<sup>50</sup> Certificate of appointment 'to declare his grace John duke of Bedford lieutenant general and general governor of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland, 12 February 1806', (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

<sup>51</sup> O' Mahony, *The viceroys of Ireland*, p. 211.

<sup>52</sup> S.J. Connolly, 'The catholic question, 1801-1812', in Martin, Byrne, Vaughan, et al. (eds.), *A new history of Ireland*, 5, p. 32.

<sup>53</sup> Bedford to Fox, [4 February 1806] n.d., (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9). The letter to Fox is undated but Bedford prefaced it with 'Stable Yard, Tuesday morning'. Moira was still being considered for the vicerealty on 31 January 1806, a Friday. Similarly, Grenville writing to Fox on the 8 February 1806 [HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 21], the Saturday of the following week, indicated that Bedford would need to be consulted on

and the path he and the new Irish new administration would follow. In a letter written from the Stable Yard at Woburn Abbey, his family seat in Bedfordshire, he told Fox, 'My mind is entirely made up. If you wish it and think I can be of use, I will go to Ireland.' Crucially however, he unequivocally stated, 'no other considerations upon earth would tempt me to do it.' In an articulate and unguarded letter, Bedford noted that he only accepted because of Fox insisting of the 'importance that a known and decided friend of yours should go to Ireland at this moment'. 'If from among these' Fox could find 'no one better qualified for it than I am', he declared, 'I submit'. His explanation went much further than this, as will be shown. Here were two close friends, as well as political allies.

This was to be Bedford's manifesto, and in undertaking this new role in Ireland he insisted on only one thing. He told Fox, 'All I have to ask is a free, unreserved, and confidential communication with *you*', stressing his desire to keep in contact with the foreign secretary throughout his term. Fox conceded to such an arrangement, even though it was a little unorthodox, and went against what the new government wanted to achieve in terms of having the lord lieutenant report to the home secretary. 'To prevent omission on either side', Fox later said, 'I will agree, if you will, to write regularly once a-week...and this to hold even if we have nothing more to say than common news.'<sup>54</sup> This agreement, coupled with Bedford's belief that the Irish viceroy had to be 'a known and decided friend', namely a person of corresponding political convictions, provides an insight into Fox's political beliefs on Irish policy during this administration. Clearly Bedford was to follow a Whig agenda.

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appointments to the new Irish administration, thus indicating that he knew of the former's acceptance by this date. The only Tuesday available between these dates, therefore fell on 4 February 1806.

<sup>54</sup> Fox to Bedford, 13 April 1806, in Lord John Russell (ed.), *Memorials and correspondence of Charles James Fox*, 4 vols., (London, 1853-57), iv, p. 134.



Of course the pressures of work ensured that Fox had little time to devote to Ireland. He admitted to Bedford that he had 'terribly failed' in maintaining a close correspondence, the rigours of the foreign office taking up the majority of his time.<sup>55</sup> This was almost certainly tactical as well. The government wanted the home secretary to be the key contact, and so Fox discreetly disengaged from an advisory role so as not to alienate Spenser or Grenville. Nevertheless, Bedford's close ties with him and the influence Fox held therein represented a real change in British policy for Ireland in contrast to holding principles set down by Addington and Pitt, and implemented by Hardwicke. Fox acted as Bedford's political compass in this instance and thus, British government policy for Ireland would now follow a policy of conciliation.

Bedford established the very principles upon which his administration was to be maintained. Considering his family's close association with Ireland in the past, there is no doubting his claim that, 'I have not been an indifferent observer of the political state of Ireland for the last ten years of my life and I have a confident expectation that I can do some good there.' He went further and pledged, 'the moment I feel disappointed in that expectation I assure you I will [expect] my recall.'<sup>56</sup> These personal motivations were of course important, and this thesis argues that such underlying aspirations are essential in assessing the actions of Bedford's administration. They were certainly a deciding factor influencing many of his political and non-political decisions alike. As will be detailed later in this section, Bedford moved beyond the general realms of politics in attempting to realise his aims of improving the lot of the Irish people. He told Fox, 'I understand that I am to carry out a system of kindness, of conciliation and justice to the people of Ireland'. This was to be 'in short, such a system as they would look to and expect from Lord

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<sup>55</sup> Fox to Bedford, 9 June 1806, in *Ibid*, iv, p. 141.

<sup>56</sup> Bedford to Fox, [4 February 1806], (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

Fitzwilliam or Lord Moira.’<sup>57</sup> Bedford’s reference to both these individuals is extremely significant. Moira’s clear pro-catholic leanings have been discussed previously, and thus Bedford’s rather specific allusion to the kind of government he would be inclined to instigate in Ireland is most telling. More revealing, is the fact that Fitzwilliam had of course *already* served as lord lieutenant of Ireland, until his own recall in February 1795, having ‘exceeded his instructions’<sup>58</sup>, ‘in favour of catholic emancipation’.<sup>59</sup> Bedford went to Ireland then in 1806 with the express belief that he would, if given the opportunity, alleviate catholic grievances. He would be a symbol of the new direction, like Fitzwilliam had been in 1795, and like Moira would have been if he had been appointed in 1806, and send a message that catholic emancipation would follow someday and make the union complete.

In taking up his new office Bedford set his sights clearly on the job in hand and addressed the fundamental political issues at stake. His overriding ambition concerned the very foundations upon which the United Kingdom was built. ‘I am to hold out to Ireland’, he proclaimed, ‘a complete union’, a union which would exist, ‘not only in name but in substance with England’.<sup>60</sup> By sending Bedford to Ireland with such explicit orders also shows the view of the government on the union.

Bedford committed himself to the realisation of a true union of both countries, and not simply the implementation of a legislative measure. This was a clear departure from the narrow mentality in Britain and Ireland during the first years of Hardwicke’s viceroyalty. It was a clear statement that although a union had been achieved, with a single

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<sup>57</sup> Bedford to Fox, [4 February 1806], (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

<sup>58</sup> Boyce, *Nineteenth-century Ireland*, p. 16.

<sup>59</sup> Geoghegan, *The Irish Act of Union*, p. 138.

<sup>60</sup> Bedford to Fox, [4 February 1806], (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).



parliament, it did not mean that it was a *complete* union. While Hardwicke and his chief secretary, Charles Abbot, might have thought they acted within the confines of a fully realised union of kingdoms, legislatures and even peoples, Bedford in 1806 dismissed this out of hand. Furthermore, coupled with Grenville's continued aim to resolve the issue of catholic emancipation, the argument must be made that in 1806 the new ministry believed the union could never be complete without some such measure being introduced. Ironically, Pitt, Cornwallis, Castlereagh (and later Hardwicke) would all have agreed.

### ***Governing Ireland: the new direction***

With Bedford's appointment on 12 February and subsequent arrival in Dublin on 28 March 1806, there was not a complete end to the complex nature of cross-channel governance of the United Kingdom.<sup>61</sup> The Irish Sea still maintained a physical divide between the two countries and various issues concerning the incorporation of Ireland and Britain into one kingdom had not been entirely resolved. That said, the Hardwicke viceroyalty had succeeded in clarifying some of the issues. For example, the debate about whether a lord lieutenant should remain in Ireland at all was, for the time being, put to rest. Charles Long was appointed chief secretary in 1805 and found 'that it was quite impossible to "obtain from His Majesty's ministers their ideas as to the changes (if any)"' in the role of the lord lieutenant or chief office holders in Ireland, and ultimately it seemed prudent to leave well enough alone.<sup>62</sup> As Hoppen points out, 'eventually the business simply ran into the sands'.

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<sup>61</sup> MacDermott (ed.), *The Catholic question*, p. 130.

<sup>62</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 334.

The Grenville administration was determined to avoid the mistakes of the Addington administration. It did not want to have the lord lieutenant at war with the home secretary, and fixed this by making it explicit from the beginning where the reporting lines existed. Bedford was sent to Ireland in no doubt that he was to report directly to the home secretary, Lord Spenser and work closely with him. In turn, Spenser directed Bedford on the line he was to follow in accordance with government policy. On a practical level then, this meant Bedford avoided much of the administrative infighting his predecessor was forced to contend with (something which massively hindered Hardwicke). In his important essay published in 2012, Hoppen indicates that Bedford's instructions from London in 1806 'attempted a greater clarity' in setting down how he was to communicate with the British cabinet.<sup>63</sup> By making use of the archival material available, it is possible to conduct an in depth analysis of those instructions (something not done by historians to date<sup>64</sup>) in an attempt to better ascertain the administrative policies and governing mindset in place during Bedford's tenure.

Bedford brought with him to Ireland, not one, but four separate documents which directly alluded to the way in which he was to manage his government in Ireland. Two of these formed part of his letters patent, bearing the seal of George III, while the other two came from the cabinet and home secretary. They consisted of three separate notices of instructions<sup>65</sup> along with a private and confidential letter from Spenser to Bedford.<sup>66</sup> The

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<sup>63</sup> Hoppen, 'A question none could answer', p. 141.

<sup>64</sup> As will be noted later, Douglas Kanter has examined *some* of the material analysed here, but this thesis will make distinct claims of that material as well as using other archival evidence not referenced by Kanter. See Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, esp. pp. 132-133.

<sup>65</sup> 'Instructions for...John Duke of Bedford...appointed to be our lieutenant general and general governor of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland...' [Hereafter: 'Bedford instructions'], 14 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9); 'Additional instructions for...John Duke of Bedford... appointed to be our lieutenant general and general governor of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland' [Hereafter: 'Bedford additional instructions'], 15 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9); 'Heads for consideration to make the subject of instructions to the lord lieutenant of Ireland on the general outline of the measures of government in that part of the United Kingdom' [Hereafter: 'Bedford cabinet instructions'], n.d., (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9). Kanter



format and layout of these documents, as well as the actual text contained within them, is crucially important in granting further insight into some of the major concerns of the British administration in February and March 1806 with relation to Ireland. They were official plans, depicting Grenville's Irish policies, and unlike Bedford's communications with Fox in the previous month, these instructions came from the key ministers in the area. What they attempted to do then was to draw the most prudent line on how Ireland was to be managed, how the Irish administration was to operate, and upon what footing the Anglo-Irish relationship would be maintained throughout the life of the government. What is maybe most telling however is the inconsistency in what seems to have been the primary concerns of each of these documents. The two papers of instructions bearing the king's sign-manual engage with some of the key political issues of the day, and they also, for obvious reasons, address the more mundane processes of British government in Ireland, collectively addressing twenty eight separate points. In addition, the instructions directly sent by the cabinet, which Spenser had 'the honour of putting into...[Bedford's] hand, the other day', contained nine explicit points, five of which dealt directly with the catholic issue, the union itself and the importance of maintaining open communication between Dublin Castle and Whitehall, specifically between the lord lieutenant and home secretary.<sup>67</sup> These contained, said Spenser,

nearly all that it appears necessary to say on the subject of the general system and spirit by which I think we are all agreed that your grace's government in Ireland should be conducted.<sup>68</sup>

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notes the date on another copy of this document as 6 March 1806, [Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 132].

<sup>66</sup> Lord Spenser to Bedford, 21 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

<sup>67</sup> These being points 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9.

<sup>68</sup> Spenser to Bedford, 21 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

These latter instructions were the perceived *modi operandi* of British rule in Ireland in 1806 and when coupled with Bedford's own perceptions outlined above, give a rounded picture of the administrative plans that were to be put into operation during his and the government's time in office.

Through a comparative analysis of each set of instructions, those signed by the king, acting as official policy, and those issued separately by the cabinet in a private, classified and somewhat restricted manner, a number of observations can be made. First and most apparent, as the documents themselves attest, was the fact that even with the seemingly harmonised collaboration of home secretary and Irish lord lieutenant, there was still inconsistency and uncertainty about the operation of a political union of the two countries. Multiple plans and instructions on how to govern Ireland effectively were still forthcoming, with no standard set of policies in place. Spenser drew Grenville's attention to this fact on 10 February 1806 by sending him a copy of a letter from the outgoing Lord Chancellor Redesdale, which he was 'afraid of producing' in company, for what it said of the Irish administration and some of the officials therein.<sup>69</sup> He noted that Redesdale had identified clear issues within the Irish administration, and had said as much to William Wickham in January, speaking of the continued 'confusion of characters' when it came to the workings of the union, before he vacated his post to accommodate the government's appointee, George Ponsonby the following month.<sup>70</sup> Second, and in the opinion of cabinet ministers, the union itself remained high on the list of those measures that needed to be addressed, notably in the area of patronage and the ever present union engagements. Third, the catholic issue, which affected both Ireland and Britain, was also foremost in the cabinet's mind. However, that issue was consistently an area of concern, and one which

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<sup>69</sup> Spenser to Grenville, 10 February 1806, (HMC, *Fortescue MS.*), viii, p. 24.

<sup>70</sup> Redesdale to Wickham, 30 January 1806, (HMC, *Fortescue MS.*), viii, p. 25.



the king's official policy and the cabinet's commitment to addressing differed. And finally, as both sets of instructions bear out, an Irish administration, complete with lord lieutenant, chief secretary, commander of the forces and all the paraphernalia of government (much like that instituted before 1801) would continue to directly oversee Irish affairs; be they political, legal, religious, militaristic and so on.

Similarly, the king's instructions made only two references to the promotion of what might be considered 'union principles' and then specifically on issues concerned with trade<sup>71</sup> and the board of ordinance.<sup>72</sup> An allusion to union was obscurely outlined but there was no single unequivocal recommendation to work towards a better operation of the union or any order to firm up and consolidate the union of the Ireland and Great Britain. It would not be imprudent to say that in the cabinet's instructions at least, there is a suggestion as to where priorities lay in terms of policy for Ireland. The key areas in that document will be discussed in detail later in this chapter but the fact that it leads with two articles relating to Irish catholics, followed by a third point on arranging a new Irish administration, and courting Irish politicians, with a direct reference to the consolidation of the union itself is significant.

These areas represented the key high political factors which permeated the Anglo-Irish relationship and the operation of the Act of Union in this period. But the inconsistency of the various instructions sent to the lord lieutenant in assigning priority of importance led to two competing views of Ireland. One view continued to represent the belief that the union had solved all of the inherent problems in the relationship between Ireland and Great Britain, while the other, signified the clear shortcomings of the union,

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<sup>71</sup> 'Bedford instructions', 14 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

<sup>72</sup> 'Bedford additional instructions', 15 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

and its failure to address those major points of contention (catholic relief and the workings of the Irish administration for example) at the heart of these problems.

*A Talented response to the union: (i) Ireland and the formation of the coalition*

On 21 March 1806, Spenser followed up on the cabinet's instructions to Bedford by drawing his attention to a detail he felt required the latter's special consideration. He was 'so particularly anxious that everything should be fully and explicitly understood, 'that he felt it his 'duty, in addition to the points alluded to in that paper [of instructions]', to recall' to Bedford's 'recollection the principle' that he had 'ventured to lay down' at a meeting held at his house attended by a number of their colleagues. Spenser's principles were directly concerned with the union and how Bedford was to address its operation. Crucially, 'the conduct or opinions of any persons in Ireland upon the question of union', he said, 'ought not under an administration constituted like the present, to be made the criterion by which their respective claims on the attention and favour of government should be estimated'. Under Bedford's and the government's administration therefore, pro- or anti-union politics were not to dominate the political landscape in Ireland.

The changes in Britain were matched by changes in Ireland. It was decided to dismiss twelve of the most powerful officeholders in Ireland to send a clear signal that there was a change in direction and policy.<sup>73</sup> The Irish lord chancellor, the chancellor of the Irish exchequer, the head of the post office, and the commissioners of the revenue were among those dismissed. John Foster was the most significant casualty, and he was replaced by John Newport at the exchequer. But that was as far as the British government

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<sup>73</sup> 'Memorandum on dismissals' n.d., (NLI MS. 60/263).



wanted to go. It was anxious not to replicate the disaster of the Fitzwilliam viceroyalty in 1795, when a coalition government had led to a new administration in Ireland, and an impetuous lord lieutenant had inflamed tensions by dismissing too many officials in attempting to employ his friends. Clear instructions were given that Bedford was not to go beyond the twelve who had already been dismissed.

In the spring of 1806 Lord Spencer worked closely with Bedford on these instructions. Much of the advice centred on avoiding mistakes of previous administrations. He was determined that Bedford should not follow in the footsteps of another cabinet colleague, Lord Fitzwilliam, and purge office holders like in 1795. This would also apply to those who had received a job as a result of their support for the union. This was important for two reasons. The Whigs had a tendency to reward their supporters when given half a chance, and use the guise of reform to engage in their own form of jobbery. This was certainly the case in 1795, when George Canning had mocked the Whigs in Ireland for 'one continued *job*, covered with the thin pretext of punishing jobbers'.<sup>74</sup> The second reason is that they could not risk alienating potential supporters. The thin support base of the coalition required support, from whatever quarter it could be secured.

As Spencer made clear, 'Those persons...who are in possession of offices received at the time of union', he stated, 'should be protected'.<sup>75</sup> If civil servants and office holders in Ireland had 'not since taken any such political point as ought to supersede their pretensions to such protection', then Bedford's administration would not uproot them. The ship of state governance in Ireland was not to be rocked and political manoeuvring was not to be agitated for a point of principle. Spencer was in this instance bluntly reiterating a

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<sup>74</sup> David Wilkinson, 'The Fitzwilliam episode, 1795: A reinterpretation of the role of the duke of Portland', in *Irish Historical Studies*, 29 115 (1995), pp. 315-339, p. 328. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>75</sup> Spencer to Bedford, 21 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

point already made by the cabinet in their private instructions to Bedford, a point second only to their instructions on catholic issues. 'The new official arrangements' of the Irish administration were,

to be made in a spirit of as much moderation, and on a scale as limited as may be consistent with the reasonable and equitable claims of the friends of the different parts of the new administration.

In fact any 'official changes' to the administration were to 'affect as little as possible the subordinate departments of government'. Significantly, the cabinet urged Bedford that particular 'attention [was] to be paid to conciliate the support and consult the wishes of such considerable persons in Ireland', especially if they 'may show a disposition to maintain with the government the same habits of confidence and support as with their predecessors.'<sup>76</sup>

For the most part then, anyone who was willing to throw in their lot with the new government would be secure in their posts and could rest assured that no wholesale cull was planned. Bedford therefore worked to cultivate the support of prominent personages in Ireland, once they were prepared to back the coalition government in London. Spenser insisted on the 'importance' that he and others in the Talents circle could not 'avoid attaching to it', and was certain he told Bedford, of the 'essential' nature of such a policy 'to the justice as well as the tranquillity of your future government.'<sup>77</sup> Jobs and positions already enjoyed and inhabited by stakeholders in Ireland would be honoured and not

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<sup>76</sup> 'Bedford cabinet instructions', (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

<sup>77</sup> Spenser to Bedford, 21 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).



undone retrospectively. Again, the government was looking forward, and not back to a time of corrupt promises and divisive measures. This was another break with history.

It was vital to ensure that Irish place holders could be courted by an administration with such diverse constituent parts as that of the Grenville coalition ministry. In many respects Spenser, through Bedford, was ensuring that a very particular perception of the government was being maintained. This was a pro-union government, committed to that ideal. Grenville had been one of the architects of the union and was determined to show that his government did not have an anti-union agenda. Liberal did not therefore mean anti-union. 'The Irish government', was therefore given instructions to 'sedulously direct its views towards such measures as shall appear best adapted to contribute to the consolidation of the union'. Furthermore, it was to 'complete and confirm the incorporation of the two parts of the United Kingdom.'<sup>78</sup> This was a clear indication that the challenge of completing the union was a key preoccupation.

So the union was not seen as a complete measure. Douglas Kanter follows a similar line in his work and asserts 'that the Grenvillites were anxious to prevent the Foxites from dominating the Irish Offices' upon their coming to power after Pitt's death.<sup>79</sup> The fear for men like Spenser, Grenville and William Elliot was that alliance with Fox would be perceived in parliament as an alliance with a fundamentally anti-unionist philosophy. Fox's attitudes to union with Ireland were far from consistent. In 1798 he did 'not know whether...to be glad or sorry at the scheme of union with Ireland being dropped' and believed 'that the 1782 settlement created by his administration was the way forward'

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<sup>78</sup> 'Bedford cabinet instructions', (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

<sup>79</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 130.

in the years before the act was passed.<sup>80</sup> Such a stance was reiterated in 1806 when Fox ‘implied in the commons that he would like to see the union repealed.’<sup>81</sup> On 3 February 1806, responding to the statements of Charles O’ Hara, MP for Sligo, who thought the union to be ‘fatal to the interests of Ireland’, Fox said he believed the act and the manner of its completion to be ‘one of the most disgraceful that ever happened to that country.’<sup>82</sup> However, by March 1806 he insisted that he would not expect Grenville to support any motions that were fundamentally at odds with those policies he had implemented or attempted to implement during his time with Pitt. This was implicitly a reference to the union.

Before joining the coalition Fox had described both Grenville and his brother Thomas, as ‘obstinate men’, with whom he was afraid to argue, ‘lest one rivet them faster in their absurdities’.<sup>83</sup> However he was determined to make the arrangement work, and promised that the coalition ‘should be carried on with goodwill and fairness, nay with the most perfect cordiality’. ‘If it is not’ he suggested, ‘it shall never be my fault.’ These assurances of unity in early-March came following a discussion in cabinet of the union engagements and Bedford’s approach to them.<sup>84</sup>

Spenser had in fact asked Grenville in late-February to proof-read the letter he planned to send Bedford ‘on the subject we discussed in cabinet’ and as he was ‘so little in habit of drawing up this kind of paper’, he wished Grenville ‘to look it over and suggest any corrections, alterations, or additions’ that he saw fit. He said this was particularly as it

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<sup>80</sup> Powell, ‘Charles James Fox and Ireland’, p. 186.

<sup>81</sup> Jupp, *Grenville*, p. 363.

<sup>82</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 130.

<sup>83</sup> Fox to Lord Holland, 1 January 1806, in Russell (ed.), *Memorials and correspondence of Charles James Fox*, p. 128.

<sup>84</sup> Fox to Grenville, 1 March 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, pp. 45-46.



was 'not unlikely to be a matter which will come into public discussion, and it is therefore of more importance to have it correct.'<sup>85</sup> Politics makes strange bedfellows, and thus Spenser's instance that the union engagements were not to be made a central tenet of the Irish administration's strategy in developing relationships with various Irish politicians and powerbrokers, can be seen as a reciprocal gesture to Fox and his allies. It ensured that they would not ultimately be party to the perceived distasteful manner of the union's passage through the Irish parliament. Fox was kept fully apprised of developments in Dublin on these lines, and Spenser believed the three men could have 'some private conversation on the subject of them before they go any further.'<sup>86</sup> Thus Fox was, by supporting this particular agenda (as Kanter notes he did unequivocally by 10 March<sup>87</sup>), and by coming into power with the Grenvillites, while conceding that Grenville could never support any kind of repeal programme, 'further committing himself to the union', having expressed as much to the House of Commons by the end of February.<sup>88</sup> As he told Bedford in June 1806, 'a job and a fraud are very different things'. 'You may as well look for an Irishman free from the brogue' he mused, 'as one free from job.'<sup>89</sup> Under the coalition government then, the union would be committed to, maintained and strengthened, but not through the same means or on the same terms, as it had been implemented until then.

Thomas Grenville however, informed his brother in late-February that arranging the new administration in Ireland along these lines was going to be a tough task. Within the coalition there were obvious divisions on who would be best appointed to the administration in Ireland and to what office. The establishment of John Newport as the

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<sup>85</sup> Spenser to Grenville, [February] 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii., p. 45.

<sup>86</sup> Spenser to Grenville, 10 March 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 51.

<sup>87</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 132, footnote 4.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>89</sup> Fox to Bedford, 16 June 1806 in Russell (ed.), *Memorials and correspondence of Charles James Fox*, vi, p. 143.

new chancellor of the exchequer for Ireland was a clear example of the balancing act the coalition ministry was forced to manage in the early months of its existence. Newport was a hard line supporter of Grenville. As he stated in 1804, 'I will readily own that I do take to myself no small pride that through life I can claim on most essential points that (I may call it) identity of opinion.'<sup>90</sup> Later in office he worked closely with Bedford and Elliot, endeavouring to use the union in a manner which he, it must be argued, as a pro-unionist believed it should be used. Newport attempted to engage with the union in order to get the best deal for Ireland within the United Kingdom.<sup>91</sup> While not always receiving unconditional support, he was kept close in Bedford's confidence on various issues<sup>92</sup> and represented a medium through which the Grenvillite portion of the Talents coalition could exert influence on the Irish administration. Upon Fox's death, Newport's heartfelt commiserations with Bedford on the passing of his close friend showed how far the coalition, in Ireland at least, had come. He insisted upon 'the great and vital interest which England and still more strongly Ireland, Europe and indeed the civilised world had in the preservation of his valuable life.'<sup>93</sup>

But in 1806 and having met with Elliot and Spenser, Thomas Grenville believed that Grenvillites would indeed 'be pressed upon a successor to [Alexander] Marsden, just as they have been upon [Sir John] Newport'.<sup>94</sup> He 'urged them' therefore, 'to be prepared with some candidate of their own' so as not to have to 'receive any that is preparing for

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<sup>90</sup> Sir John Newport to Grenville, 18 May 1804, (QUBL, MS. 7/10).

<sup>91</sup> William Elliot to Sir John Newport, 14 April 1806, (NLI MS. 796/10); Elliot to Newport, 15 April 1806, (NLI MS. 796/11); Elliot to Newport, 27 April 1806, (NLI MS. 796/12); Elliot to Newport, 27 April 1806, (NLI MS. 796/12).

<sup>92</sup> Bedford to Newport, 3 December 1806, (NLI MS. 796/2); Bedford to Newport, 29 December 1806, (NLI MS. 796/3); Bedford to Newport, 31 July [1807], (NLI MS. 796/1).

<sup>93</sup> Newport to Bedford, 20 September 1806, (QULB, MS. 7/13).

<sup>94</sup> Marsden was the outgoing undersecretary in the civil department, replaced by James Trail, while Newport took up the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer of Ireland under the Talents government.



them in [Richard Brinsley] Sheridan's shop.'<sup>95</sup> Sheridan, having 'persuaded Fox to beg Elliot not to move Newport's writ' opted to 'make the prince's name a bar to Newport, and an introduction to [George] Tierney.'<sup>96</sup> Thus, even within the new government's supposed support, there were disagreements on who was best suited for the various governmental jobs, particularly in Ireland. While Sheridan would soon relent, stating that he was 'serving the general cause'<sup>97</sup>, Thomas Grenville's comments must be taken at face value as he played an important role in keeping his brother apprised of the sentiment within the new coalition. His close proximity to the prime minister, both personally and politically, saw him act as 'a great channel of communications' to Grenville, 'which as they must be made', he said, 'perhaps pass with no great inconvenience through me.'<sup>98</sup> Similarly, in speaking of bringing Lord Sidmouth (formerly Henry Addington) into the cabinet he noted, 'you do not know or feel the sentiments of our friends', he told his brother, 'upon the unbounded administration of Addington and his followers.' Thus while Fox and Grenville may have found common cause, Thomas enquired as to 'what can have made Fox and you so regardless of your friends'.<sup>99</sup>

Nevertheless, Grenville's government worked hard to espouse a united front on the matter of union. The perception of a pro-union coalition was vital and their policies for Ireland were indicative of this. Bedford's cabinet instructions on this point were clear but his official patent expressed as much in a less direct manner. The king urged Bedford, in the areas of trade and finance for example, to observe the various acts of parliament that granted Ireland the rights to engage in trade with the diverse parts of the empire. He was further to 'pay due attention...to duties and drawbacks in order that the commerce of both

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<sup>95</sup> Thomas Grenville to Grenville, 18 February 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 35.

<sup>96</sup> Thomas Grenville to Grenville, 17 February 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 33.

<sup>97</sup> R.B. Sheridan to Grenville, 18 February 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 37.

<sup>98</sup> Thomas Grenville to Grenville, 10 February 1806, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 23.

<sup>99</sup> Thomas Grenville to Grenville, 7 February 1806, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 19.

parts of...[the] United Kingdom may be carried on with the same advantages' (point 14). However, a follow-up point called for 'a severe prohibition against the transportation of wool to any parts beyond the seas' and that measures should be taken to ensure that those cargos 'shipped for... Great Britain be truly brought and landed...and not carried (as we are informed is but too commonly done) into foreign ports' (point 15). Matters relating to the revenue would, 'for the time being', be passed to the commissioners of the treasury in Britain while 'all other dispatches' from Ireland would be directed to Spenser for dissemination amongst the cabinet (point 23).<sup>100</sup> This point was a clear attempt to better direct communications between Dublin and London, the problems with which had been so prevalent in Hardwicke's time, and it was a point reiterated by the cabinet themselves.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, the king granted Bedford the 'authority to forbear...the execution' of any instructions which Bedford felt were counterproductive to the good governance of Ireland, until such time that he gave 'information of the reasons inducing' that postponement (point 24).<sup>102</sup> Thus, while the perception of a fully functional, active union of kingdoms was officially (and possibly publically) maintained, the lord lieutenant would still act as the primary decision maker on the ground in Ireland. The conflicting nature of the cabinet's instructions with those issued in Bedford's patent, in both substance and general impression, lead to the conclusion that the union was not complete, and this fact was acknowledged by British politicians and policymakers in the early nineteenth century. The question was whether or not they cared to do anything about it.

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<sup>100</sup> 'Bedford instructions', 14 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

<sup>101</sup> 'Bedford cabinet instructions', (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9); It is this point in fact that constitutes Hoppen's single reference to the Bedford papers, [Hoppen, 'A question none could answer', p. 141].

<sup>102</sup> 'Bedford instructions', 14 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).



*A Talented response to the union: (ii) A new approach on the union engagements*

Bedford was also given new instructions on the union promises. He was told that the promises which had been made should be honoured, but only when it was convenient. In other words, they were no longer a priority. This administration was making a break from the past. As Spenser made it clear 'those few engagements made to individuals at the period of union, which still remain unperformed should be fulfilled', but only he indicated, 'when convenient opportunities shall occur for their accomplishment'.<sup>103</sup> Spenser was paying only lip-service to the phantom-like engagements that had mortgaged the patronage of the country. This is what had haunted the previous administration, and caused Hardwicke so much anxiety. It also meant that Bedford could reward new people for their support, something that had not been possible for Hardwicke.

A fine historian, Douglas Kanter interprets these instructions differently and suggests that Spenser was in this instance ensuring 'that the new viceroy would honour the union commitments'.<sup>104</sup> However, Spenser's rather lacklustre reference to but a 'few' remaining and unfilled union engagements, suggests a reluctance, even an unwillingness, to be drawn into such messy business. This is supported by the fact that upon his departure from Ireland Hardwicke left for Bedford a 'Patronage Book', forty-eight pages in length containing approximately three hundred names for preferment in the 'civil and military departments', the 'church', the lord lieutenant's 'household' and for inclusion on the pension list. Probably compiled around March 1806 before he left Dublin Castle, they were 'engagements which Lord Hardwicke recommends for consideration', and something

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<sup>103</sup> Spenser to Bedford, 21 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

<sup>104</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 132.

he was most 'anxious to leave with the duke of Bedford', hoping to see them fulfilled 'if sanctioned by government.' To this end he included his own personal comments and recommendations following a number, but not all names on the list, particularly in relation to church engagements. The 'Patronage Book' clearly denotes that there were vast amounts of claims from all areas of post-union Irish society looking to secure the sponsorship of government.<sup>105</sup>

Hardwicke had consistently refused to entertain any new applications for preferment during his time as lord lieutenant except those he had inherited from Cornwallis. In April 1802 for example, Hardwicke was called on by Lord Donoughmore to place his brother Abraham Hely-Hutchinson in the position of collector of excise at Cork, on the event of the death of the incumbent. Donoughmore pointed to 'the subject of union, so interesting to the British Empire, and on which so hard a battle was fought' and believed he,

could with confidence refer your excellency to Marquis Cornwallis, your excellency's predecessor in the government of Ireland, from whom, as well as from Lord Castlereagh, I have the satisfaction of having in my possession the strongest and most honourable acknowledgments of my exertions, and those of my family, on that occasion.<sup>106</sup>

Believing those exertions to be worthy of subsequent reward, Donoughmore had no qualms in soliciting Hardwicke on the strength of his family's endeavours, but Hardwicke could not comply. There was, 'no circumstance', said Hardwicke in reference to

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<sup>105</sup> 'Patronage Book', (BEA, 6D-Ireland-4-2).

<sup>106</sup> Lord Donoughmore to Hardwicke, 8 April 1802, in MacDonagh, *The viceroy's post-bag*, p. 17.



Donoughmore's request, 'which has occurred since my arrival in this country which has made me regret more sensibly the very particular situation in which I am placed in regard to engagements'. He had been 'apprised of the numerous engagements which Lord Cornwallis had been obliged to make' before his arrival in Ireland, and was 'therefore, under the necessity, in the disposal of whatever situation may become vacant, of looking to the satisfaction of one or other of the engagements which I have adopted'.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, those seeking less lucrative recognition of service rendered to the government at the time of the union also fell victim to Hardwicke's determination. In the summer of 1802, in answer to the claims of Thomas B. Clarke, a Protestant clergyman and political pamphleteer, who believed his work at the time of the union debates merited compensation<sup>108</sup> and who wished also to dedicate a collected volume of his union pamphlets to the lord lieutenant<sup>109</sup>, Hardwicke replied,

I am well aware...as I doubt not Lord Cornwallis was, of the services rendered to the cause of the union by your literary labours...But when I recollect that to this hour the heavy mortgage left by my predecessor on the patronage of this country has precluded me from paying attention to any claim, however strong, and whether of a public or private description, I am sure you are not surprised at my declining to make any new engagements or add to those which have already been productive of so much embarrassment.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, pp. 17-18.

<sup>108</sup> Thomas B. Clarke to Hardwicke, 28 May 1802, in Ibid, pp. 29-34.

<sup>109</sup> Clarke to Hardwicke, 8 June 1802, in Ibid, p. 34.

<sup>110</sup> Hardwicke to Clarke, 21 October 1802, Ibid, p. 36.

Even as late as July 1804 Hardwicke directed his secretary to inform Rev. Philip Johnson, that it was not in his 'power to comply with his request on the account of the number of engagements to which [he had] been obliged to pay attention'.<sup>111</sup>

Hardwicke did note however in his patronage book that there had been an increase in the pension fund from 25 March 1802, from £1,200 per year to a sum almost triple that of £3,300, with a further £600 having 'been since added by particular desire from England.' He also pointed out that a Mrs. Edwards was to be granted £100 from this fund as 'this was positively promised in Nov[ember] 1804 in my name by Mr. Edward Nepean'.<sup>112</sup> Such a considerable enlargement in 1802 could certainly be attributed to an increased demand on the Irish pension fund following the promises made during the passing of the union and Hardwicke's promise of inclusion on this list in 1804 does indicate that he was not beyond adding to this particular source of patronage. Nevertheless, it is justified to conclude that the 'Patronage Book' left for Bedford in 1806 contained many names of those people who, in some way, great or small, contributed to the successful passing of the Act of Union in 1801. Spenser, writing in early March 1806, before Bedford had arrived in Dublin, may not have been aware of the sheer number of claims requiring the Irish administration's attention, but such evidence does indicate that by simply brushing over the engagements in the manner he did, meant that the Grenville government was not going to concern itself unduly with them, either in Britain or Ireland. Notably, Charles Ross in editing his work on Cornwallis's correspondence would indeed later state that while Hardwicke had,

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid, pp. 28-29.

<sup>112</sup> 'Recommendations for the pension list, left by Lord Hardwicke', (BEA, 6D-Ireland-4-2).



recognised the engagements...and as far as he was able fulfilled them, but he also resigned before all the claimants had been satisfied, and the duke of Bedford, who succeeded him, did not consider himself bound by the antecedent promises.<sup>113</sup>

This attitude was further propagated by Bedford himself in September 1806. Concerned with a vacancy in the Order of St. Patrick, Bedford informed his very capable chief secretary, William Elliot, that Lord Roden 'had a promise of the Ribbon from Lord Hardwicke when Pitt gave it to Lord Waterford.' While he conceded that Roden's 'weight and respectability in the country' did indeed 'give him some claim', the promise made by Hardwicke he told Elliot, 'of course does not bind us'.<sup>114</sup> This is yet further evidence of the fact the Bedford would not be automatically constrained by the engagements enacted by his predecessors or feel compelled to live up to their promises.

Furthermore, Kanter points to the cabinet instructions issued to Bedford, and notes that 'Spenser...had intentionally omitted any mention of these engagements' in that document, but, he contends, by the time of his letter of 21 March he wrote to Bedford to ensure he followed up on their completion.<sup>115</sup> Similarly, by the middle of March (after the compilation of the cabinet instructions) Spenser may have had some idea of the extent of the remaining union engagements, as Alexander Marsden 'had apparently apprised Elliot of the extent of the remaining promises'.<sup>116</sup> Again however, this thesis would suggest that rather than indicating that the satisfaction of the union engagements was a primary policy issue with which the new Irish administration was to concern itself, such an omission from

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<sup>113</sup> *Cornwallis Corr.*, iii, p. 340

<sup>114</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 30 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 209.

<sup>115</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 132.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132. [Kanter's evidence for this is a letter from outgoing chief secretary Charles Long to Hardwicke written on 17 March 1806, which references this possibility. (Long to Hardwicke, 17 March [1806], BL Add. MS. 35716, ff. 199-200)].

the final document, which Spenser placed in Bedford's hands, is evidence of the lack of priority placed on the engagements. Kanter notes an earlier draft of the cabinet instructions in which 'Spenser had referred to union patronage obligations' but left them off the final instructions.<sup>117</sup> As for Elliot's or Marsden's possible suggestion that the union engagements still remained an unresolved issue, one must again note Spenser's specific instructions in his letter of 21 March 1806. Here the home secretary clearly stated that 'the conduct or opinions' of those leading figures in Ireland, 'upon the question of the union', should not and could not 'under an administration constituted like the present' be made the criteria upon 'which their respective claims on the attention and favour of the government' would be judged.<sup>118</sup>

Instead of re-evaluating the government's position on the engagements in light of the extent of those promises, Spenser made it explicitly clear that the actions of certain individuals at the time of the union were not to constitute how government would deal with them from here on. Suffice to say then that Bedford and his administration in Ireland did not actively work towards fulfilling the previous government's promises made at the time of union. The union engagements, those means by which the union passed - all the bribery and corruption, 'the perjury and fraud'<sup>119</sup> - were, in just six years after their endorsement, with a clear change in political ideology and personnel, unceremoniously relegated to a lesser concern.

A complementary point should also be made at this juncture. Strikingly, Bedford seems to have followed in Hardwicke's footsteps in one regard, by making allusions to the

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<sup>117</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 133, footnote 6.

<sup>118</sup> Spenser to Bedford, 21 March 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-9).

<sup>119</sup> Wilkinson, "How Did They Pass the Union?", p. 224.



long list of engagements set before him, in order to refuse other advances.<sup>120</sup> Notably however, he seems not to have dwelt on these requests to any great degree, further emphasising the prevalent attitude in Dublin Castle with regard to patronage. Moreover, Bedford only dealt personally with patronage issues for two months upon his arrival, before delegating it to a subordinate. In May 1806 he gave the task of responding to such claims to Revd. Philip Hunt.<sup>121</sup> Hunt's role in this regard is noteworthy. In many respects he worked in a job much like that of Hardwicke's private secretary Charles Lindsey. Yet, the archival evidence does suggest that he directed a substantial amount of his efforts to responding to the various claims for patronage.<sup>122</sup> This was certainly not due to lack of ability however. Hunt had been employed as the chaplain and secretary to Lord Elgin, who from 1799 until 1803, had served as the British ambassador to the Ottoman Sublime Porte at Constantinople.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, recent scholarship has suggested that while Elgin is maybe infamously remembered as the man who took the various ancient treasures from the Greek Acropolis at Athens, it was Hunt who worked out the finer details of these arrangements with the numerous Ottoman authorities and he, not Elgin, who selected and arranged for the ultimate removal of many of the artefacts, acting in accordance, as he saw it, with the Ottoman granted *firman*, or letter of permission.<sup>124</sup> Clearly then, he was an able administrator and secretary and probably came to Bedford's attention through Lord Upper Ossory, a member of the Bedfordshire whig circle and Hunt's patron.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Philip Hunt to Revd. H. Boyd of Rathfriland, 17 July 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), p. 43.

<sup>121</sup> See various correspondence throughout 'Letter Book A' at Woburn Abbey, (BEA, HMC-96-A).

<sup>122</sup> BEA, HMC-96-A, *passim*.

<sup>123</sup> John Henry Merryman, 'Thinking about the Elgin Marbles', in *Michigan law review*, Vol. 83 No. 8 (Aug., 1985), pp. 1880-1923, p. 1882.

<sup>124</sup> Dyfri Williams, 'Lord Elgin's *firman*', in *Journal of the history of collections*, (2000), pp. 1-28, p. 20 and pp. 22-23. See also: Sydney Checkland, *The Elgins 1766-1917: A tale of aristocrats, proconsuls and their wives* (Aberdeen, 1988). Hunt would later in 1816, be brought before a House of Commons select committee to defend his and his superior's actions, [Merryman, 'Thinking about the Elgin Marbles', p. 1906].

<sup>125</sup> Williams, 'Lord Elgin's *firman*', p. 20; Martyn J. Powell, 'Bedford whigs (*act. c. 1748- c. 1784*)', *ODNB*.

In Ireland, Hunt was tasked with dealing on a daily basis with the inundation of requests sent to the lord lieutenant from all areas of Irish society. These were not the grand calls for peerages or positions that were held out to the leading political figures in Ireland at the time of the union, but more conventional requests, often concerned with jobs in government administration and ecclesiastical appointments of the minor sort. Coupled with these were a number of requests to be added to the government's concordatum fund, for widows and bereft families of the clergy. They were the type of patronage requests that had plagued consecutive pre-union and post-union Irish administrations and 'dominated the correspondence of successive viceroys.'<sup>126</sup> Often not concerned, at least not on the surface, with bringing down governments or deciding the fate of the empire, they were the day to day dealings of the Irish government, and were simply representative, as Brynn suggests, of the need 'in Ireland [of] the Protestant caste...to look almost solely to the state for support and nourishment.' While Bedford initially attempted to address each request individually, Hunt was, by July 1806, following a very specific template in his negative responses to two or three letters per day. Initially acknowledging receipt and thanking the sender for their correspondence, he would then reference the long list of engagements weighing on the lord lieutenant, stating that he could not offer anything or hold out hope in that regard. In May 1806 Hunt informed the rather aptly named Mr. Leech of how Bedford had 'at present such numerous engagements on his hands'<sup>127</sup>, while on 7 July he in fact made specific reference to Hardwicke's 'Patronage Book', when he told Revd. H. Boyd that 'in the long list of ecclesiastical preferment which was left to [Bedford] by Lord Hardwicke your name does not occur'. Hunt went on and stated, 'from the numerous and indispensable engagements which his grace has on his hands, he regrets he cannot hold out

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<sup>126</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 78.

<sup>127</sup> Hunt to Mr. Leech, 'Fredrick Street Dublin', 17 May 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A).



to you any encouraging prospect of being able to promote your wishes.’<sup>128</sup> An almost identical answer was delivered to Thomas Francis later that month with Hunt indicating ‘that owing to the very limited patronage vested in the lord lieutenant of Ireland, and the number of engagements he has on his hands, he regrets he cannot hold out to you any encouraging prospect of being able to promote your wishes.’<sup>129</sup>

In December Lieutenant Clifford of the Carlow Militia was informed that his request for preferment was also being rejected with Bedford forced to ‘express his regret that the numerous and pressing engagements he [was] under for appointments in the very limited patronage of government’ prevented him from holding out any possibility of promotion to Clifford.<sup>130</sup> Similarly, Hunt was forced to reiterate Bedford’s initial rejection of the claims of Alexander Plunkett in favour of his son in March 1806, when the latter was told that Bedford was ‘not aware’ of any ‘vacancy in any situation connected with the government of Ireland, which might answer the object of your application’. Understandably however, he was happy to keep in mind the recommendation which had come ‘from such a character as that of the late duke of Leinster’, William Fitzgerald, the powerful whig magnate, older brother of the United Irishman leader Edward Fitzgerald, kinsman of Charles James Fox and formerly ‘the symbolic leader of the opposition’ in the Irish house of lords.<sup>131</sup> Even with such prestigious backing Plunkett again failed in May 1806 to secure a position for his son in the barrack inspection, and Hunt ‘lost no time’ in passing on Bedford’s commands which he had ‘to regret’ he told Plunkett, as ‘they are unfavourable to the hopes you may have entertained.’<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Hunt to Boyd, 7 July 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), p. 43.

<sup>129</sup> Hunt to Thomas Francis Esq., 23 July 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), p. 50.

<sup>130</sup> Hunt to Lieutenant R. Clifford, ‘Carlow Militia, Tralee’, 17 December 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), p. 98.

<sup>131</sup> Bedford to Alexander Plunkett esq., 31 March 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), p. 1; Patrick M. Geoghegan, ‘William Robert Fitzgerald, 1749-1804’, *DIB*.

<sup>132</sup> Hunt to Plunkett, 1 May 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), p. 19.

It would be wrong to suggest that Bedford simply handed over all power of decision making in this regard to Hunt, but the latter was certainly given some power to act on his own initiative, especially when it came to the concordatum fund. While he was forced to decline the request of Margaret Tyrell to be included on the list in April 1806, claiming that the vast amount of names already on the list acted 'to render the sum allotted to it inadequate to granting any allowance to many whose distress as well as services of their relatives give them strong claims to the attention of government', he did however, have more positive news for Matilda and Mary Jones the following month in May.<sup>133</sup> Even though the fund was 'so heavily charged with names of persons applying for relief' that the lord lieutenant could not 'give any hope of being soon able to grant any further allowances from it', Hunt stated that 'supported however as the prayer of your memorial is by such highly respectable signatories', Bedford gave orders to include their respective names on it.<sup>134</sup> Support from such quarters was of the utmost importance to claims from the middling sort and gives credence to Brynn's assertion that 'the "reign of jobs" continued' in post-union Ireland to a certain degree. Hunt comments in September 1806, further emphasise this point. Stating that a request for an appointment of the applicant's husband to a county surveyorship could not be granted, 'as, independently of other obstacles that may present themselves to such an arrangement', the power of 'the appointment itself' was 'not vested in the lord lieutenant.' He did however, in wanting to 'render any service' to a family 'in such a state of distress' as that described to him,

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<sup>133</sup> Hunt to Mrs. Margaret Tyrell, '40 Great Britain Street Dublin', 30 April 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), p. 18.

<sup>134</sup> Hunt to Miss Matilda and Miss Mary Jones, 15 May 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), p. 43.



venture to suggest to you, as the most possible means of obtaining some slight alleviation from hence, to lose no time in forwarding to his Grace , under cover to me, a second memorial applying specifically for relief from the concordatum fund.

Even with Hunt's personal assurance that he would 'use such means that may be in my power to procure for it the favourable attention of his grace', that memorial still needed to be 'supported by the recommendation and certificate of some persons of respectability, favourably known to this government.'<sup>135</sup>

The routine workings of Irish political life and the reliance on the administration to ensure promotion and place did not end with the Act of Union. However by side-stepping the union-specific engagements themselves, and the claims for patronage more generally, Bedford could justifiably concentrate on more pressing government concerns. The employment of Hunt in this instance does suggest that Bedford did not want to allow the almost constant claims on his government's power of patronage to take up his time. Hunt's proven abilities ensured that a capable mind would oversee the maintenance of an erudite and comprehensive correspondence to flow specifically from the lord lieutenant's office. The Castle would not be a closed shop to the Irish public, and through this continued correspondence with various members of Irish society, the lord lieutenant remained linked to the community to a certain degree. In Bedford's case, one might suggest that this was due to a genuine desire to maintain a government that worked on such principles. As he told the duke of Northumberland,

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<sup>135</sup> Hunt to Mrs. Bagnall, '38 Liffey Street Dublin', 1 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), pp. 69-70.

I am persuaded you feel fully assured that in the important station to which his majesty has been pleased to call me, my earnest wish and best endeavours will be used to promote the happiness of the people of Ireland.<sup>136</sup>

This willingness to engage with Irish society was made more apparent in June 1806 for instance, following the application of Revd. Thomas Gamble of the house of reform in Dublin. Gamble, the man who accompanied Robert Emmet to his execution in September 1803 and who ‘debate[ed] the morality of insurrection with him, hoping to make him recant’,<sup>137</sup> appealed to Bedford to act in 1806 in commuting the sentence of ‘a young criminal’<sup>138</sup> and remove the order of transportation imposed on him.<sup>139</sup> Having made its way through Marsden’s office, at this time still acting as undersecretary in the civil department, the application was subsequently placed before Bedford. Hunt informed Gamble that if he still felt ‘that the boy is a proper object for the interference of the society’, following his reading of ‘the opinion of the recorder, before whom the boy was convicted, and on whose judgement great reliance is placed’, Bedford would order ‘the commutation of his sentence, agreeably to the tenor of your letter...under the restrictions of the act of parliament.’<sup>140</sup>

Furthermore, the following month Bedford heard that Lord Henry Petty (the chancellor of the exchequer) had ‘introduced the subject of vaccine inoculation’ in parliament.<sup>141</sup> This related to an official enquiry into the work of Edward Jenner against smallpox. Bedford insisted ‘that Dr. Jenner’s merits and labours should obtain that justice

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<sup>136</sup> Bedford to the duke of Northumberland, 17 May 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 64.

<sup>137</sup> Geoghegan, *Emmet*, p. 20.

<sup>138</sup> Hunt to Thomas Gamble, ‘Paradise Row Dublin’, 18 June 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), p. 38.

<sup>139</sup> Hunt to Gamble, 13 June 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), p. 37.

<sup>140</sup> Hunt to Gamble, 18 June 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-A), pp. 38-39.

<sup>141</sup> Bedford to Grenville, 7 July 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 224.



from government which has been withheld from him.’ But most importantly he stated, ‘I trust the enquiry will be extended to Ireland.’ As he told Grenville,

I have taken some pains since I have been here in acquiring information as to the progress vaccination has made in this country, and as to the increase or decrease of the ravages of the smallpox, since vaccine has been introduced; and the more knowledge I obtain on this subject, the more I am persuaded that we shall never succeed in the great object we have in view, namely the extermination of the smallpox, without legislative interference; and, however, we may be shocked at the idea of compulsory measures, yet sure I am that it can never be inconsistent with the principle of a wise government to stop, or at least to confine the fatal progress of a pestilential and destructive disorder, by which thousands are annually swept from the population of the country.<sup>142</sup>

This thesis does not suggest that Bedford’s viceroyalty drastically changed the connection between Dublin Castle and the Irish people. In many respects as has been noted, Bedford continued in a similar vein to his predecessors. However, influenced by the relatively liberal agenda prevalent in Grenville’s ministry in London and reinforced by his own political ideology as a Foxite whig, he was able to set himself apart from former administrations, particularly that headed by Hardwicke. In positioning himself as a friend of reform, he gained a sort of moral authority in relation to the union engagements in particular which allowed his government to look past these ‘antecedent promises’, which ultimately ended their prevalence as a defining factor in Irish politics.<sup>143</sup> Bedford could not however end jobbery in Ireland. Cornwallis had warned in February 1801 that post-

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<sup>142</sup> Bedford to Grenville, 7 July 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, viii, p. 224.

<sup>143</sup> *Cornwallis Corr.*, iii, p. 340.

union Ireland would require a 'man of very superior qualities' to act in his stead. That man would need to 'take the government upon himself, and make himself independent of the influences...which ruined the administration' of previous viceroys.<sup>144</sup> The great huff, puff and bluster at the time of union, especially on the part of the king who he insisted that 'the union had closed the reign of Irish jobs',<sup>145</sup> did not necessarily take that much doing though and for the most part Bedford simply ignored the system when it suited him. The great success of the Bedford administration is that it sent out a clear signal that this was a new direction in Irish politics. Unfortunately it was not long before this came to a dramatic end.

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<sup>144</sup> Cornwallis to Ross, 26 February 1801, *Cornwallis Corr.*, iii, pp. 340-341.

<sup>145</sup> George III to Addington, 11 February 1801, *Addington Life*, i, p. 303.



## Chapter Eight

### ‘The saviour of the country’?:

#### A new approach to Irish affairs, 1806-1807

To the duke of Bedford: I confine myself to the expression of that gratitude for your grace’s wise and conciliating administration, and that regret for its termination, which I feel in common with every Irishman.<sup>1</sup>

(William Parnell, *An historical apology for the Irish catholics*, 1807)

Even though Bedford could not grant catholic emancipation, there was still things he could do to pacify the country. At his core he was a realist, and he wisely recognised that, ‘the impetuous desire to do everything in an instant too frequently ends in doing nothing.’<sup>2</sup> So, instead, he decided to gradually build up trust in the country, and show that there was a genuine new direction. One of the most controversial decisions he made, which will be examined in this chapter, was to recommend that the United Irishman leader, Archibald Hamilton Rowan, could return to Ireland from his exile abroad. This did wonders for his reputation in some quarters, but it enraged ultra-protestant loyalists, who viewed it as condoning treason. In 1807 the new chief secretary, Arthur Wellesely, lamented that Bedford would have preferred to ‘reward a rebel’ than defend the interests of loyalists in Ireland.<sup>3</sup> Bedford’s gains with the catholics were always at the expense of the support of the ultra-protestants.

One question which was sometimes asked at Whitehall was why the Irish were still unhappy, despite the passing of the union. The simple answer, as far as the Grenville

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<sup>1</sup> William Parnell, *An historical apology for the Irish catholics*, (Dublin, 1807), dedication.

<sup>2</sup> Bedford to Fitzpatrick, 23 April 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Wellesley to Richmond, 14 July 1807, (NLI MS. 58/26).

government was concerned, was that the union had been incomplete, and the catholics had not been included within its terms. Of course there were deeper problems, relating to land ownership, the treatment of tenants and particularly the paying of tithes, problems which no British government wanted to consider at this time, but which consistently caused great unrest throughout the country. Later in March 1807 Bedford did suggest that he had 'been turning my attention to the particular causes of those disorders, with the view of suggesting if possible, a permanent remedy for preventing in future the recurrence of so great an evil.'<sup>4</sup> His secret opinion was that *the* major cause of Irish animosity was tithes, which he argued meant that catholics and dissenters were paying tithes to the established church at a ratio of seven to one, relative to their protestant counterparts.<sup>5</sup> However, as Bedford noted himself such considerations could only be embarked upon after the suppression of disorder. His response to disturbances in Ireland in 1806 then was innovative. He decided to break with tradition and embark on a tour of the country, and it is a testament to his growing popularity that it did much to ease the tensions in the areas he visited. Ironically, he ended up falling under the sway of some of the ultra-protestant loyalists he met along the way, and by the end of his tour was prepared to support some hard line measures he had previously opposed. Nevertheless when the Grenville ministry collapsed in 1807 there was much sadness in Ireland at the loss of a reforming lord lieutenant. In a short time he had established a reputation as a man who cared about the plight of the catholics, someone who was determined to implement the union, but who wanted a fair union. Similarly, as will be discussed in Chapter Nine, there was a grudging respect after Bedford's return to England for the way he handled Irish issues, particularly agrarian disaffection during his

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<sup>4</sup> Bedford to Grenville, 14 March 1807, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-3-2). This was a draft originally prepared by Bedford to be sent to Grenville. He seems however, to have sent a final, unchanged copy to Spenser instead, who in turn passed it to Grenville. See: Bedford to Spenser, 14 March 1807, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, ix, p. 82.

<sup>5</sup> 'Hints respecting a commutation of tythes in Ireland [prepared by James Trail]', n.d., (BEA, 6D-Ireland-3-2). Bedford's discussion, which was evidently, in terms of length alone, the fruit of detailed deliberation and investigation, speculated that tithes were the key factor in determining Irish disaffection. He saw the removal of the tithe system as *the* defining move for quelling Irish discontent.



vicerealty from the conservative opposition, who took power again in 1807. Bedford did not succeed in completing the union, but he can be seen as having done much to take the heat out of it as an issue.

In some of his work Bedford was aided by his chief secretary, William Elliot, the former disciple of Burke. But Elliot's declining health ensured that Bedford could not rely on him completely and 'was compromised in the eyes of many by his earlier service as under-secretary in the military department (1796-1801).'<sup>6</sup> In fact, Elliot had attempted to decline the posting, fearing 'the fatigue of any very active employment', but had been persuaded at Grenville's insistence.<sup>7</sup> Nicknamed 'the Castle spectre' during his first spell at Dublin Castle, Elliot was now referred to as 'Le revenant'.<sup>8</sup> Much of his work was concerned with the Irish elections, and liaising with the catholic leaders, although he was criticised by Grenville's other brother, Buckingham, for 'his want of management' in this area. This ensured that Bedford was the undisputed dominant figure in the administration, although he did form a strong relationship with his chief secretary during their time in office and depended upon his advice.<sup>9</sup>

### ***The curious case of Archibald Hamilton Rowan***

In April 1806 Bedford received a request from Archibald Hamilton Rowan to be allowed to return to reside in Ireland, something denied to him since his escape from Newgate jail in May 1794. Rowan was an Irish radical and a founding member of the Dublin Society of the United Irishmen, and was viewed as a traitor. Following stints in

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<sup>6</sup> S.J. Connolly, 'The catholic question, 1801-1812', p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> *History of parliament 1790-1820*.

<sup>8</sup> Patrick M. Geoghegan, 'William Elliot, (1766-1818)', *DIB*.

<sup>9</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 20 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p.197.

France and America, Rowan had been allowed to seek refuge in Denmark, after having been assured by Castlereagh in 1799 that his return to the European continent would go unchallenged, as long as he did not do anything to 'give offence.'<sup>10</sup> This small reprieve came in the wake of the considerable efforts of his wife and other friends in Ireland. Rowan had refused however to support a petition to George III for clemency, made on his behalf, because he would not admit to being 'misguided by false lights and hurried away by presumptuous self-sufficiency'.<sup>11</sup> His reaction was unequivocal and he told his wife,

I will never sign any petition or declaration in favour of the British constitution in Ireland which embraces such flagrant abuses as I have witnessed and which I have been in some measure the victim; yet this seems requisite to be an integral part of any application made in my favour.... But my opinions were not hastily adopted; they were neither the result of pride, of ambition, nor of vanity; they were the result of the most mature reflection of which I was capable: they cannot alter.<sup>12</sup>

After continued lobbying Rowan was eventually granted an 'unconditional pardon' in 1803, thanks in part to the support of Castlereagh, but agreed on 'his word of honour that he would not reside in Ireland after his liberation without the express permission of government.' By April 1806 Rowan wished to secure that permission and Bedford admitted that he had made 'a very strong impression' in Ireland 'at the time he received his pardon'.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, he told Spenser 'that there is every reason to believe that Mr. Rowan's future conduct will be that of a loyal and peaceable subject'. As Woods notes

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<sup>10</sup> Castlereagh to Mrs. H. Rowan, 9 September 1799, in William Hamilton Drummond (ed.), *Archibald Hamilton Rowan* (Dublin, 1840), p. 355; C.J. Woods, 'Archibald Hamilton Rowan, (1751-1834)', *DIB*.

<sup>11</sup> 'To the king's most excellent majesty, the humble petition of Archibald Hamilton Rowan', in Drummond (ed.), *Archibald Hamilton Rowan*, pp. 352-353; Liam Chambers, 'Archibald Hamilton Rowan, (1751-1834)', *ODNB*.

<sup>12</sup> Rowan to Mrs. Rowan, December 1796, in Drummond (ed.), *Archibald Hamilton Rowan*, p. 354.

<sup>13</sup> Bedford to Spenser, 5 April 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 1.



'Rowan's liberalism was not in decline, nor was his impulsive radicalism'<sup>14</sup>, while Rowan himself had made it clear in 1796 that with such strong beliefs, he 'might desist from acting on them' yet he would 'never disown them.'<sup>15</sup> So the strong endorsement of Bedford carried weight.

Certainly Rowan desired to return home, particularly following the death of his father in April 1805 which had allowed his agent Archibald Hamilton to take possession of the family estate of Killyleagh, Co. Down, contributing to Rowan's more than modest yearly income of £4,000.<sup>16</sup> He told Bedford from Dean Street in Soho, London, 'my affairs would be essentially benefited if my residence in Ireland was to be unlimited', and the allure of financial and economic stability inducing him to directly contradict his own vehement declarations. Should his application be accepted, Rowan promised that 'his majesty will not have in that kingdom a subject more loyally attached to his person and the British constitution'.<sup>17</sup> C.J. Woods attributes the granting of the permission to Rowan to the fact that his son Gawen entered the British navy thus demonstrating the family's loyalty to king and country, while Liam Chambers makes no reference as to why he was finally allowed to return to Ireland.<sup>18</sup> Woods is supported in his conclusions by the editor of Rowan's 1840 'autobiography', William Hamilton Drummond, who also notes the influence of numerous prominent persons in Ireland and Britain, acting to promote Rowan's wishes, yet he too makes no reference to Bedford's direct appeal to Spenser in this instance; this evidence thus seems to have been missed by historians to date.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> C.J. Woods, 'Archibald Hamilton Rowan, (1751-1834)', *DIB*.

<sup>15</sup> Rowan to Mrs. Rowan, December 1796, in Drummond (ed.), *Archibald Hamilton Rowan* p. 354.

<sup>16</sup> C.J. Woods, 'Archibald Hamilton Rowan, (1751-1834)', *DIB*.

<sup>17</sup> Archibald Hamilton Rowan to Bedford, n.d. (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> C.J. Woods, 'Archibald Hamilton Rowan, (1751-1834)', *DIB*; Liam Chambers, 'Archibald Hamilton Rowan, (1751-1834)', *ODNB*.

<sup>19</sup> Drummond (ed.), *Archibald Hamilton Rowan*, pp. 378-379.

While serving as chief secretary to Bedford's successor, the duke of Richmond, Arthur Wellesley decried that 'Bedford would have preferred to reward a rebel' than look to the needs of 'loyalists' in Ireland.<sup>20</sup> This indicates that in Ireland, at least, Bedford's intervention was seen as having made a difference. And so Rowan was allowed return. He 'returned in triumph' on 27 July 1806 and set about establishing himself as a country gentleman<sup>21</sup>, 'a man of fortune, a landlord, husband, father, citizen'.<sup>22</sup> The fact that a pro-catholic government was in power, with a sympathetic lord lieutenant in Ireland, must also have influenced his desire to return. This was a small but subtle indication that Bedford's new approach was bearing dividends.

### *Unrest in Ireland*

That said, Bedford's time in office did not coincide with a period of calm or quite throughout the country. Ireland was still an unhappy place. Thomas Bartlett notes that from the 1760s right through to the beginnings of the nineteenth century, 'no decade was ever free of rural disturbances.' Organisations and secret societies such as the Whiteboys, Defenders, Threshers, Caravats, Shanavests and Ribbonmen were embodiments of a continuing sense of discontent amongst the lower orders and the peasantry.<sup>23</sup> They were, as Boyce contends, 'organised by those at the bottom of the social scale, namely labourers or very poor tenants.'<sup>24</sup> However, that discontent was not exclusively a result of opposition to the union itself or even British power in Ireland and often the political ideology or ultimate goal of these societies was hard to ascertain, as 'organisation and

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<sup>20</sup> Wellesley to Richmond, 14 July 1807, (NLI MS. 58/26).

<sup>21</sup> C.J. Woods, 'Archibald Hamilton Rowan, (1751-1834)', *DIB*.

<sup>22</sup> Drummond (ed.), *Archibald Hamilton Rowan*, p. 380.

<sup>23</sup> Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation*, p. 317.

<sup>24</sup> Boyce, *Nineteenth-century Ireland*, p. 25.



purpose differed according to local conditions and local problems.’<sup>25</sup> If anything, these organisations found their links to late-eighteenth century radicalism through ‘something more vague: a sense of grievance.’ Moreover, Ribbonism, probably the most noteworthy representation of ordered, organised agrarian unrest in the early-nineteenth century counted the majority of initiates amongst the lower middle class, including tradesmen and artisans and often had ‘a strong urban basis’. The most important historical contribution of these societies was that they ‘provided an important vehicle for the perpetuation of the tradition of popular disaffection’.<sup>26</sup> Significant research has already taken place on these groups, but what is worth exploring is how Bedford’s administration approached the problem.<sup>27</sup>

In previous years, Hardwicke had received his fair share of reports of a disgruntled populace, but he had been reluctant to act. Bedford however chose not to dismiss the reports he received from outlying districts, particularly in the west and north west of the country that spoke of disturbances and atrocities being committed. The fact that such disturbances took place meant that many British politicians did worry about the revival of revolutionary activity in Ireland. For example, in Lord Melville’s papers for this period there are copies of United Irishman oaths<sup>28</sup> prominently placed, and show the continuing fear of radical or revolutionary ideals.

The biggest fear, of course, was France. It was in this context then that Bedford’s government considered the various reports that were presented to Dublin Castle. In April

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 98.

<sup>26</sup> S.J. Connolly, ‘Aftermath and adjustment’, pp. 19-20.

<sup>27</sup> Other than the references already set out above, see also: Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800*, p. 17; and more generally Samuel Clarke and J.S. Donnelly (eds.), *Irish peasants: Violence and political unrest, 1780-1914* (Manchester, 1983); Michael Beames, *Peasants and power: The Whiteboy movements and their control in pre-famine Ireland*, (Sussex, 1983); S. R. Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant : the threatening letters of pre-Famine Ireland, 1801-1845*, (Dublin, 2004); T. Desmond Williams, *Secret societies in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1973).

<sup>28</sup> ‘United Irishman Oath’, n.d., (NLI MS. 55/226). The document is notably bound in the collection between letters dated December 1806 and January 1807.

1806, he told Spenser of his growing concern surrounding the removal of troops from Ireland which he felt had resulted in the 'considerable diminution...within the last six months in the effective strength of the regular forces in Ireland.'<sup>29</sup> A new commander of the forces had not at this stage been appointed to Ireland (a point of continuing consternation for the lord lieutenant), and even when he was, Bedford insisted that he, 'with the rest of his majesty's servants' ought to take 'into serious consideration the force necessary for the defence, and internal tranquillity of Ireland.'

Bedford warned the government not to trust fully 'in the important victory of Trafalgar, together with those which followed it.' While such actions he admitted placed Ireland 'in a degree of security which was not, previous to those events, to be relied upon', he and other officials in Dublin were nevertheless 'not to be off our guard'. Ireland was certainly in his thoughts in terms of security, and he noted that 'although Bonaparte's mind may be for the moment absorbed in other projects', Bedford predicted, 'he will never cease to direct his hostile and ambitious views to this venerable part of the British empire.' Like Hardwicke then, Bedford sought to fight Ireland's corner within the wider context of imperial security.

By September of 1806, however, Bedford was indeed forced to turn his attention to internal unrest with rumours and reports of disturbances in the west of Ireland, particularly in the areas around Limerick, moving north through counties Galway, Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim. He informed Elliot that a report from Sligo indicated that 'eight offenders in the disturbed part of the country had been apprehended: two of whom were ringleaders', however 'no particulars' were further mentioned. What's more, 'an informer' who had

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<sup>29</sup> Bedford to Spenser, 18 April 1806 (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 8-9.



'come in' had been '*carded*, (a mode of punishment) by the rioters' but, he told Elliot, nevertheless 'seems desirous of giving full information'. Upon the suggestion of local authorities, Bedford ordered that he be moved 'to a place of safety...with Dublin...the most secure from danger.'<sup>30</sup> While such reports may at first have only contained snippets of information, Bedford was wary of putting into action any plans that might help an ever elusive enemy. Following the application for the publication of a military map, he was reluctant to give the project his approval. 'Would it be prudent or politic in government to authorise or encourage the publication of a military map at this moment?' he asked Elliot. The intelligence that might be contained therein was already available to the Irish administration he believed, noting the officer in question, Major James Taylor, and the fact that his 'knowledge is of course at our disposal'. But he said, 'I conceive we had better, at least for the present keep it to ourselves, and not suffer the enemy to have it.'<sup>31</sup>

Bedford's chief 'enemy' was still the French, but he was also aware of enemies closer to home. He knew that Ireland was not as secure a dominion as he would like, and that enduring tranquillity had not been achieved, despite the personal goodwill towards him. As he told Elliot (at this point in London), on 20 September 1806, 'the unpleasant accounts from the west still pour in daily upon us, though we have no reports directly from Gen. Dunne [commander of the centre district]'. Yet such accounts were often contradictory, and Bedford was careful not to place too much trust in them. Furthermore, he was pleased to see that a summation 'on the disturbances in the west' sent from the Bishop of Elphin to Lord Ellenborough was 'a fair statement', and, he told Elliot, though 'it may surprise you', it was 'not overcharged.'<sup>32</sup> As the days passed he became more exasperated and started to complain 'we have no accounts from General Dunne' and 'the

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<sup>30</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 16 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 190. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>31</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 16 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 191.

<sup>32</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 20 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 197-198.

loose and unauthenticated statements we receive from various quarters are calculated only to mislead.<sup>33</sup> This was not uncommon, ‘attempts were, of course, made to invest rural protest with an ulterior political motive...to see...grand revolutionary conspiracy’,<sup>34</sup> with ‘subversive intent...in the eyes of the authorities’, and nothing more.<sup>35</sup> However, when Dunne’s official military report did finally materialise by 26 September 1806, Bedford was not impressed as ‘the information it contains’, he informed Elliot, ‘appears to be very general’ and would not ‘lead to any satisfactory conclusion.’ That conclusion may have involved a government crackdown in the disturbed districts had better intelligence been available, but the administration was, on the protestations of the attorney general William Plunket, reluctant to consider any further steps than those ‘already done’ in addressing the problems. ‘With the scanty information we have before us’, Plunkett advised Bedford to act cautiously and not proclaim the area. Plunket also feared that ‘the various accounts’ available to Dublin Castle were ‘much exaggerated.’<sup>36</sup> Bedford therefore refused requests from various counties for strong handed measures to be instigated, stating the use of a proclamation ‘must be resisted until we have more decisive evidence before us to justify such a measure.’<sup>37</sup>

At the same time, in late-September there was an ‘unpleasant’ but again ‘loose account of nocturnal assemblies [and] outrages’<sup>38</sup> at Limerick with Major General Mervyn Archdall informing Dublin Castle that by early October the country was ‘in a disturbed state especially near the town of Limerick’. Yet again, undersecretary James Trail noted alternative reports from the chief baron giving a ‘description of the county very different

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<sup>33</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 23 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 201.

<sup>34</sup> Connolly, ‘Aftermath and adjustment’, p. 18.

<sup>35</sup> Bartlett, *Fall and rise of the Irish nation*, p. 312.

<sup>36</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 27 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 203.

<sup>37</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 30 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 211.

<sup>38</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 27 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 204.



from Major General Archdall's<sup>39</sup>, with the bishop of Limerick concurring that the military reports 'from that district are very much exaggerated.'<sup>40</sup>

Bedford decided to find out for himself how much faith could be placed in these reports. He also knew that a tour around the country by the lord lieutenant would both placate and intimidate the disaffected. Thus, while the administration continued to question the substance of various reports and correspondence relating to the issues in the west, Bedford decided to take action. Interestingly, he levelled the blame for the continued progression of 'the spirit of disorder and outrage' throughout the region on the government officials employed there. The disturbances 'certainly acquired strength from the supineness and want of energy in the magistrates' and he believed that 'stimulating them to activity and exertion', as well as demanding a better intercourse with military leaders in the area were 'the only measures advisable in the present state of things.'<sup>41</sup> It is maybe not surprising then that Bedford took it upon himself to investigate the disturbances first-hand. Thus with Elliot in London trying to find time to address Irish issues with ministers, Bedford decided to leave Dublin and travel 'through the disturbed baronies and see and converse with the principle magistrates and gentry upon the causes and extent of these disgraceful proceedings.'<sup>42</sup> Such a journey was not unprecedented. Hardwicke had taken 'a short tour' of the military road through Wicklow in August 1801, at a time when 'lights at night upon the mountains of Wicklow and Wexford, and the reappearance of the disaffected in Dublin, excited considerable alarm'<sup>43</sup> But Bedford's was a longer and more personal mission aimed at addressing the issue of disturbances in rural Ireland, and has not been analysed by historians to date. In fact, George Boyce suggests that the violence in

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<sup>39</sup> James Trail to Bedford, 3 October 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-8).

<sup>40</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 30 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 212.

<sup>41</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 27 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), pp. 203-204.

<sup>42</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 27 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 204.

<sup>43</sup> *Abbot Diary*, i, p. 276.

Connaught in 1806-1807 was really the beginnings of a resurfacing of agrarian crime that would consistently trouble the government well into the 1810s and therefore Bedford's vigorous approach, at this early stage was important and should be further examined.<sup>44</sup>

Bedford departed from the viceregal lodge early on 3 October 1806. Having despatched a communication from 'Phoenix Park' to the duke of York the previous day<sup>45</sup>, Bedford was subsequently informed, between 3 and 18 October, of the various goings on and reports from around the country by James Trail, the civil undersecretary, and this allows for a reconstruction of his journey.<sup>46</sup> There is therefore sufficient evidence available to establish Bedford's general route through the country [See *FIG. 5*]. Previously he had told Elliot on 27 September that he intended to visit Ballinasloe and Westport before he ventured through the volatile areas<sup>47</sup>, and he noted on 30 September that he would speak with Lord Sligo 'when I meet him at Westport.'<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Trail informed Bedford on 4 October that Colonel King, who had arrived in Dublin from Ballina, 'regrets exceedingly that he did not know of your grace's intention to visit the county of Mayo'.<sup>49</sup> Certainly, within two days of his departure, Bedford had reached Gabally in Limerick on 5 October 1806.<sup>50</sup> It is difficult, though not at all impossible, to plot his movements from here. He had certainly made his way north to Gortanabla, just east of Ballinasloe, in Roscommon by 16 October 1806 and thus it is likely that he visited Westport in the intervening ten days, considering his twice noted intent to do so before departing Dublin. Furthermore, Westport House was the seat of Lord Sligo, the brother of Denis Browne, a man who made a big impression on Bedford in late September and

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<sup>44</sup> Boyce, *Nineteenth-century Ireland*, p. 25.

<sup>45</sup> Bedford to York, 2 October 1806 (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 212.

<sup>46</sup> Trail sent at least one letter per day to Bedford between 3 and 18 October 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-8).

<sup>47</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 27 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 204.

<sup>48</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 30 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 212.

<sup>49</sup> Trail to Bedford, 4 October 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-8).

<sup>50</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 5 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 215.



October 1806 and thus it seems likely that Bedford would make a point of visiting there.<sup>51</sup> Also, before beginning his return journey, Bedford stopped at Hazelwood House, Sligo, home of the Wynne family, one of the leading political interests in Sligo and long time prominent figures therein. Dublin Castle had in fact received some of its early reports<sup>52</sup> of the problems in the western counties from Owen Wynne, the current head of the family and until September of 1806 the MP for the closed borough of Sligo.<sup>53</sup> Bedford thus used his time at Hazelwood in mid-October to personally direct the ongoing efforts against the disturbances.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Bedford to Trail, 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 223; Bedford to Trail, 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 225.

<sup>52</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 16 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 190.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Jupp, 'Irish parliamentary representation, 1801-1820', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Reading, 1966), p. 447.

<sup>54</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 227.

FIG. 5



An approximate sketch of the duke of Bedford's tour of Ireland using modern mapping technology, 3-18 October 1806. Dates in red represent periods spent in respective areas (including travel).

*Timeline and places visited:*

*Starting point:* 3 October 1806 - (F): Viceregal Lodge, Phoenix Park, Dublin

5 October 1806 - (B): Galbally, Co. Limerick

5-15 October 1806 - (C): Westport House, Co. Mayo; (D): Hazelwood House, Co. Sligo<sup>55</sup>

16 October 1806 - (E): Gortanabla, Co. Roscommon

*End point:* on or after 18 October 1806 - (F): Viceregal Lodge, Phoenix Park, Dublin

<sup>55</sup> Bedford sent a letter from Hazelwood on 16 October 1806, presumably in the morning before he started out on his journey south to Gortanabla [(D) to (E)]. He reached Gortanabla before the end of the day.



Here then was a lord lieutenant actively and directly responding to a crisis and attempting to rouse local authorities to prevent further violence. Most importantly as he informed Trail from 'Gortanarabley' (a misspelling of Gortanabla), Co. Roscommon, on 16 October 1806, 'if measures of extremity must be resorted to in the end we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have not done so without having first tried every other means.'<sup>56</sup> Later in December 1806 for example, Buckingham would advise his brother Grenville that this 'system of conciliation to which the duke of Bedford and the Irish government from very obvious reasons leant', was no longer applicable and that the ministry 'must look immediately to systematic coercion'. The 'mischief' in Ireland, was in Buckingham's mind at least, 'even deeper, much deeper, than I had imagined even in my most gloomy moments'. However, even he was forced to admit 'that my opinions were openly talked of as unfounded, and *mischievous*, and as being in direct opposition to the ideas on which the Irish government acted.'<sup>57</sup> Grenville, while cordial and agreeing that Buckingham's arguments had some merit clearly saw his brother as reactionary. Particularly, his references to French influence in Ireland, to which Grenville said, 'no trace – or next to none – has yet appeared in the disturbed counties'. Indeed, he believed 'these disturbances appear to have much more Irish in them than French.' Accordingly, he asked Buckingham, 'pray turn your thoughts' to other subjects.<sup>58</sup> The government in London thus supported Bedford's efforts, and Grenville in his conversations with Buckingham even alluded to convictions that were made in Sligo, in large part due no doubt to Bedford's vigorous approach.

Lessons had been learnt from both the rebellion in 1798 and Emmet's rising in 1803, culminating during Bedford's viceroyalty in an active engagement with Irish society

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<sup>56</sup> Bedford to Trail, 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 225.

<sup>57</sup> Buckingham to Grenville, 11 December 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS*, viii, p. 463. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>58</sup> Grenville to Buckingham, 14 December 1806, HMC, *Fortescue MS*, viii, p. 468.

to stamp out disaffection, but to do so in the first instance through ordinary application of the law. Certainly, this attitude sat in line with the Grenville government's conciliatory policies for Ireland, and Dublin Castle, through Bedford, therefore can be seen as extending those policies nationally.

Yet, Bedford could also be unpredictable. He was not beyond issuing orders and putting into action plans that ran counter to such policies and certainly his attitude towards the disturbances in the west of the country altered during his time on the ground. Crucially, he fell under the spell of some of the hardliners he met, and was persuaded of the merits of their case. In particular, he was much influenced by Denis Browne, the MP for Mayo, who had earned the nickname 'Dennis the rope' during the 1798 rebellion because of his fondness for hanging suspected rebels.<sup>59</sup> Bedford had first met Browne on 28 September when the latter had called upon him for a 'long and very warm visit' in Dublin.<sup>60</sup> Jonah Barrington would later describe Browne 'as a forlorn hope', the man 'first to mount the gallery' during Barrington's narrative of a perceived attack on the Irish parliament in 1799 during the union debates.<sup>61</sup> James Quinn depicts Browne as a man of 'brusque military bearing', a former officer in the Royal Irish Dragoons and captain of the Murrisk yeomanry, who supported coercive methods in the early nineteenth century 'claiming the tranquillity of the country was deceptive.'<sup>62</sup>

Browne had an 'insatiable appetite for patronage' and was a man entirely focused on maintaining complete control over his Mayo powerbase.<sup>63</sup> Bedford's contemporary assessment certainly supports this conclusion, as he told Elliot how Browne 'urged

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<sup>59</sup> James Quinn, 'Denis Browne, (1763-1828)', *DIB*.

<sup>60</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 30 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 211.

<sup>61</sup> Barrington, *Rise and fall of the Irish nation*, p. 476.

<sup>62</sup> James Quinn, 'Denis Browne, (1763-1828)', *DIB*.

<sup>63</sup> James Quinn, 'Denis Browne, (1763-1828)', *DIB*.



strongly the pretensions of his family to the exclusive patronage of government in the county of Mayo.’ Before any deal was made in this regard at least, Bedford wanted ‘some understanding...as to the degree and extent of support they mean to give us in return.’<sup>64</sup> The intelligence Browne supplied to the Castle in September and October 1806 ensured a vigilant attitude prevailed amongst the Irish administration.<sup>65</sup> Browne may have been ‘lukewarm’<sup>66</sup> towards Grenville’s ministry in general, but he supported Bedford as a result of their friendship, and his assessment of the developments in the western counties made a considerable impression. Bedford maintained a regular correspondence with Browne until his departure from Ireland in 1807, and was particularly anxious to work with a man whom he saw as an active and able ally to government during the disturbances of 1806.

At his meeting with Bedford in Dublin in late September, Browne ‘dwelt particularly on the mischief done to the country by the doctrines of the patriot judge (as he terms him),’ and enthusiastically sought to put an end to the violent outbursts in his locality, particularly in Sligo and Mayo.<sup>67</sup> While Bedford might have been restrained in his actions before arriving in the western reaches, by 16 October he was willing to endorse plans to support Browne and his brother Lord Sligo in their efforts to quell unrest. ‘Upon the whole’ he stated, ‘I can think of no harm in indulging Mr. Denis Browne with the military force he asks for: if Lord Harrington [the new commander of the forces] should find it can be done without inconvenience.’ Furthermore, he directed Trail to grant Browne ‘£150 from the secret service fund, to be employed at his judgement and discretion.’ While he was still unconvinced of the legality and the propriety of directing any extraordinary measures in terms of the civil response to the instability in the region,

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<sup>64</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 30 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), pp. 211-212.

<sup>65</sup> Various letters from Browne to Bedford between early September and late October 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-1-8).

<sup>66</sup> James Quinn, ‘Denis Browne, (1763-1828)’, *DIB*.

<sup>67</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 30 September 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 211.

noting 'that there is no precedent for granting such a request and that it might lead to demands of a very inconvenient nature', he was nonetheless impressed with the need to support Browne's efforts. 'Lord Sligo and Mr. Browne have certainly been active in keeping the disturbances from spreading in their part of the country, and with great success', Bedford informed Trail. Though he still wished to allow 'for much exaggeration' he was disturbed by the 'very alarming degree' in which they were spreading 'to the north and north east of Sligo.'<sup>68</sup>

Bedford's move to clamp-down on the spreading disorder was a significant departure from the restrained approach up until this time endorsed by the administration and the fact that they were instigated by Bedford himself is significant. In particular the handing over of one hundred and fifty pounds from the secret service fund to a man of Browne's known reputation, without any restrictions, was a strong statement of intent. Certainly, weight must be placed on the influence exerted on Bedford by the fact that he was on the scene and very much at the epicentre of measures being contemplated that, as he put it, 'may effectually put a stop to these disgraceful proceedings.' As he informed Elliot from Hazelwood in Sligo, 'nothing shall be omitted on my part to rouse the magistrates to activity and a sense of their duty' and he very much committed to a policy that would 'encourage such measures' and bring about a satisfactory conclusion to his efforts there.<sup>69</sup> Back in Dublin reports had been warily noted but not necessarily acted upon and as has been shown above, such an attitude was adopted by Bedford himself. Even by early October, with Bedford on the road, Col. Edward Baker Littlehales, the long serving military undersecretary, was reluctant to act on reports of problems in Galway,

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<sup>68</sup> Bedford to Trail, 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 225.

<sup>69</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 228.



feeling there was little to be done on the subject.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, the firsthand report delivered to Trail by Col. King from Ballina, told how 'the country has been much quieter in the last month' and while there had been some robberies and 'atrocities' around the 27 and 28 September, there seemed little to concern the executive. Markedly though, Trail informed Bedford, 'Col. King thinks the reports of a French spy being in the country are totally groundless.'<sup>71</sup>

Events in the west transpired to suggest to Bedford that the reality was somewhat different. Acting on further reports 'of foreigners travelling through the country and distributing money amongst the lower orders of the people' he directed 'steps to be taken to ascertain the truth of these allegations' and ensure measures were in place to counter any subversive elements in the country. Bedford mobilised his recently made contacts in the region and 'Mr. Denis Browne in consequence apprehended three Italians in the neighbourhood of Westport and learnt from them that another Italian connected with one of them resided at Sligo.' Following express communication from Browne 'to Mr. Wynne, this person was also apprehended.' This was a group of Italian salesmen selling barometers among other things, but the fear of a French invasion was strong, and any foreigner was suspect. Bedford noted that the latter had been in the country 'three months and intended shortly to go to Galway.'

Bedford, however, stood over the arrest of the Italians. He insisted that 'the three persons taken in Mayo had a large sum of money about them', although he conceded 'perhaps not more than might be made in the way of their trade'. However he was a little sceptical about whether the men were foreign spies, particularly as he noted, 'the man at

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<sup>70</sup> Littlehales to Bedford, 6 October 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-4).

<sup>71</sup> Trail to Bedford, 4 October 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-8).

Sligo fainted when he was informed that his partner was in custody', not necessarily the traits required of a person involved in international espionage.<sup>72</sup>

Yet what is significant is the fact that Bedford's physical journey from Dublin to Connaught worked in parallel with an almost cyclical process that moved the authorities' fears of French invasion, to a concern about internal unrest, and back around again to the dangers of foreign influence in Ireland. The fact that Bedford's overarching policy to maintain a pacifying, liberal agenda in Ireland, did not supplant his duty to maintain British power therein was shown in this instance. Of the events in Mayo and Sligo in October 1806 he said that they were indeed 'suspicious circumstances' and that it did 'seem singular that persons selling barometers should be travelling through the wild and mountainous districts of Mayo.' The men in custody had 'no certificates, passports or licences of residence', and Bedford was convinced of the fact that 'it would be dangerous to suffer persons of this description to continue at such a moment along that extreme range of coast' as 'they certainly would be fit instruments in the hands of an active and insidious enemy'. Of particular note however was Bedford's concern that 'if mischief is to be effected by keeping alive a spirit of outrage and disturbance no persons could be better calculated to carry on the designs of the enemy than these Italian pedlars.'<sup>73</sup>

This was Bedford's greatest worry at this point in his viceroyalty: the possibility that foreign influence could stir up animosity amongst the Irish population. In essence he feared external factors would work to counter efforts, political or otherwise, of the Grenville government in securing the union with Ireland through a new, conciliatory agenda that could seek to quell animosity amongst the Irish population. Yet, even with

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<sup>72</sup> Bedford to Trail, 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 223.

<sup>73</sup> Bedford to Trail, 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), pp. 223-224.



possible spies on his hands, Bedford demanded that things be done by the book. His secretary Philip Hunt would transmit to the Castle 'the papers found in their possession', but after examination 'these of course will be returned to them', and while he was 'ignorant of how far the Alien Act is in force in Ireland' he 'thought it prudent to send all three men to Dublin' and from there they could 'not be better disposed of than by being sent out of the country, if the law allows it.'<sup>74</sup>

It wasn't until the establishment of a permanent, professional police force under the direction of Sir Robert Peel in 1814 that the British administration began to finally 'gain the upper hand' in their battle against rural disaffection and disturbance in Ireland, particularly in the western counties.<sup>75</sup> However, Bedford's efforts in this regard were notable for a number of reasons. First, his journey through the country lends weight to the adage stressed by Hoppen that the active engagement of the lord lieutenant of Ireland with specifically Irish issues, in the post-union world, 'continued to depend...much on individual commitment.'<sup>76</sup> Bedford wanted to solve these problems himself, with his own network of officials, working through Irish administrative channels. 'I shall not write Lord Spenser on the subject' he determined in mid-October, 'unless anything pressing occurs', or until he had managed to arrange 'such authentic documents of events' that would make a communication worthwhile, and clearly indicate that the Irish government had a handle on events.<sup>77</sup> Second, the value of intelligence that moved through the channels of communication between Dublin Castle and outlying districts depended largely on the enterprise of local appointees, gentry and military personnel. The union changed very little in this respect. For example, the commander of the centre district, General Dunne, whom

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<sup>74</sup> Bedford to Trail, 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 224.

<sup>75</sup> Boyce, *Nineteenth-century Ireland*, p. 25.

<sup>76</sup> Hoppen, 'A question none could answer', p. 141.

<sup>77</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 228.

Bedford had previously had trouble extracting information from, requested to be transferred from his post, as he was 'very impatient to get away from his present occupation' as he had 'not much communication from the magistrates.'<sup>78</sup> While his subordinates seemed 'much satisfied' with Dunne<sup>79</sup>, the military undersecretary Littlehales had begun to lose confidence in him<sup>80</sup>, whereas Elliot reproached Bedford when he agreed to grant Dunne's request. Bedford defended his decision stating that Dunne,

expressed so much anxiety to get away, and seemed so little satisfied with the situation, and so fully impressed with the idea that he could do no further good, that I inclined to tell him that I saw no objection to him giving up his command.<sup>81</sup>

Without anyone to take the initiative in such moments of violence or upheaval, clearly the lord lieutenant and the executive government were required to act in their stead.

In many respects these were the lessons learned in the first decade of the union that influenced the policies and conduct of active innovators like Peel. Bedford was motivated certainly, by his conciliatory agenda, but his actions in apprehending possible French (or Italian!) spies in October 1806, was an indication of what an active viceroy could achieve in Ireland, through the proper application of the law. The fact that his administration's efforts were focused on dispelling grievances expressed through rural unrest amongst the Irish population, unlike perhaps the more conservative lobby maintained by Peel's superiors, Richmond and Whitworth, only adds to the historical relevance of his actions in this case. Bedford remained nonetheless a British statesman and the representative of the

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<sup>78</sup> Trail to Bedford, 7 October 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-8).

<sup>79</sup> Trail to Bedford, 4 October 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-8).

<sup>80</sup> Littlehales to Bedford, 6 October 1806, (BEA, 6D-Ireland-2-4).

<sup>81</sup> Bedford to Elliot 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), pp. 227-228.



crown. His willingness to work to suppress internal agitation in Ireland and to mobilise his agents to do the same, was an indication of this, and he sought to look after 'the general interests and the security of the empire.'<sup>82</sup> He might have ventured to better the lot of the people in general but that betterment would come through the hands of a British administration working within the context of a united kingdom. However, what is notable in this period and throughout his entire viceroyalty was his anxious effort to have 'first tried every other means' before resorting to coercion and violent repression.<sup>83</sup> Finally, the offset of the case of Hamilton Rowan with that of rural disturbance throughout western Ireland represented in the Bedford years the complex nature of Irish engagement with the British ruling elite. Rowan took the opportunity in 1806 to end his years of exile at a moment when a liberal viceroy sat at Dublin Castle and he found in Bedford a man who was willing to personally endorse his return. The former radical United Irishman, it seemed was welcome in this newly constituted societal arrangement. Rowan was a man of landed wealth, political savvy and motivation and professed the faith of the established church. For him a conciliatory Irish administration suggested a new deal for post-union Ireland. On the other hand, for many of Ireland's poorer citizens, those who Connolly noted were at the heart of rural disorder in the early nineteenth century, the establishment in Dublin and indeed London, of a government seemingly positively inclined towards the betterment of the Irish people did not mean too much.<sup>84</sup> Bedford may have considered himself to be the man to implement a fairer more just type of British rule in Ireland, but ultimately for those on the periphery, less engaged with politics, and fighting a continued battle to simply survive in a harsh socio-economic environment, who was in charge at the top was simply a moot issue.

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<sup>82</sup> Bedford to Northumberland, 17 May 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 64.

<sup>83</sup> Bedford to Trail, 16 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 225.

<sup>84</sup> Boyce, *Nineteenth-century Ireland*, p. 98.

## *Assessing the Bedford viceroyalty*

‘Everything connected to the administration of affairs, and with the general system of policy laid down by government has proceeded as satisfactorily as possible’, Bedford informed the Rt. Hon. General Richard Fitzpatrick, former chief secretary of Ireland and mutual friend of Charles James Fox soon after taking office.<sup>85</sup> Fitzpatrick was a committed Whig and his politics were very much in line with those of Fox and Bedford respectively.<sup>86</sup> However, Bedford’s correspondence with Fitzpatrick was prophetic in some respects. ‘I have always had a dread of that fatal rashness which runs headlong to reform every abuse, and correct every evil at once’, he declared; the words of a man who believed time was on his side in his quest to implement the policies set out by his friends and superiors in London and for his own efforts to reform the relationship between Ireland and Great Britain in the post-union years.

‘The impetuous desire to do everything in an instant’ Bedford believed, ‘too frequently ends in doing nothing.’<sup>87</sup> This might very well read as the epitaph to the Grenville government of all the talents. Their greatest and lasting achievement (indeed one of the most important achievements of any British administration), the abolition of the African slave trade, was the exception in an otherwise ineffective time in office. The government lasted little more than a year, and the death of Fox irrevocably damaged the coalition, while Grenville’s commitment to catholic relief alienated the king.

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<sup>85</sup> Bedford to Fitzpatrick, 23 April 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 23.

<sup>86</sup> Patrick M. Geoghegan, ‘Richard Fitzpatrick (1748-1813)’, *DIB*.

<sup>87</sup> Bedford to Fitzpatrick, 23 April 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 23.



However, an assessment of the duke of Bedford's tenure as lord lieutenant of Ireland lends to a better understanding of this key period in the history of the early nineteenth century. Bedford came to Ireland with a commitment to change how the executive government at Dublin Castle dealt with the problems of managing Ireland, and he did so with a more clearly defined relationship with Whitehall. His whole viceroyalty was focused on the need to implement a conciliatory administration that sought to address the inherent problems of governance in Ireland, particularly through the realisation of a true union of both kingdoms. He hoped to do that by applying conciliatory principles to the government of Ireland, and to work closely with his like-minded superiors in London to achieve his goals. His policies with regard to patronage as well as his active personal engagement with rural disaffection represented a moment in post-union Anglo-Irish affairs when a new direction was attempted in how to best to maintain that relationship. Without the Irish parliament there was no filter, no buffer through which British policies could be discussed, adopted, or moderated. Thus, British policies, whatever their colour, were directly applied in their fullest sense in Ireland, by the lord lieutenant and administration in Dublin Castle. Bedford's government acted with a conciliatory agenda and during its short existence outlined a positive, progressive plan for the maintenance of the union arrangement as it existed in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

Just as before the union, British government ministers did not like spending time thinking about Ireland. 'I regret to hear so little leisure is found for the discussion of Irish affairs', Bedford dejectedly confided to Elliot while the latter attended cabinets in London.<sup>88</sup> There had never been much appetite for Irish affairs, and the incomplete nature of the union, and the unresolved issues, just made things worse. Just as in Hardwicke's

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<sup>88</sup> Bedford to Elliot, 5 October 1806, (BEA, HMC-96-C), p. 215.

day, the government found little time to address specifically Irish issues, unless they impacted directly on British politics. Grenville had staked much of his premiership on the need to address the Irish catholic problem, and in 1807 he attempted to implement a plan to supplement British military forces with Irish catholic regiments as well as remove restrictions on catholics holding certain ranks in the army and navy.<sup>89</sup> As Connolly notes this policy took root with the administration in Ireland and ‘the cabinet moved quickly to take up Bedford’s suggestion of immediate, practical concessions’ such as military service, as a way of steering clear of a showdown with the king, a bolstered opposition in parliament, but also to keep the catholics from presenting a petition for full emancipation. That was a fight they could not win and ‘they had no taste for political sacrifice.’<sup>90</sup> Ultimately, even this limited strategy caused the downfall of the government in March and April 1807.<sup>91</sup> Thus, Bedford’s administration came to an end after little more than a year.

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<sup>89</sup> *Addington Life*, ii, pp. 449-451.

<sup>90</sup> S.J. Connolly, ‘The catholic question, 1801-12’, pp. 33-34.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 34-35. See also ‘official correspondence relating to the Irish catholic question, from February 9 to March 18, 1807, as arranged by Lord Grenville.’ [HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, ix, pp. 100-120].



FIG. 6 (A)



FIG. 6 (B)



FIG. 6(A): 'New London Cries or All the Talents making themselves Useful!', May 1807, London. Members of Grenville's fallen government 'crying' their wares on the streets of London. (Source: Nicholas K. Robinson collection of caricature, TARA, TCD Library).

FIG 6(B): Detail from above.

Bedford is depicted as the quintessential country gentlemen (curiously dressed in green). He carries a bag labelled 'Irish bulls' in his right hand and a very big 'encyclopedia of experience', in his left. The caption above his head reads: 'Irish bulls and a large stock of experience just imported.'



In Ireland, Bedford had hoped to find a way to alleviate the grievances of the majority of the Irish population, and had considered ways in which he could secure catholic loyalty and support. The fact that he left Ireland in 1807 a popular, and much loved figure, indicates that he had succeeded to a certain degree. He told Grenville on 1 April 1807 not long before his departure, 'I feel conscious that my humble services have been faithfully and zealously exerted in support of the just views of the administration' and that 'as long as the sword of state continues in my hands, I shall endeavour to maintain the interests of the country, and to promote its safety by all means within my power'.<sup>92</sup> He believed that the catholics were 'patiently and peaceably disposed' and that 'the general impression...in this country has been most favourable to the late administration; a sentiment of almost universal regret appears to pervade all ranks and descriptions of the people of Ireland.' 'None but those who are under the influence of faction or prejudice', he said, 'rejoice at the change.'<sup>93</sup>

Bedford did not forget Ireland or its people when he left the country and continued to lobby for their betterment. On 13 October 1808, he wrote to his successor the duke of Richmond to advise him on the subject of disorder in the south of the country. Bedford, who was related to Richmond through marriage and was on friendly terms with him (even if both men were of dissenting political opinions) again pointed to tithe payments, a subject that was 'a ticklish one in Ireland', as a reason for disaffection. He told Richmond, 'it left me in a constant state of anxiety when I was there, as I am fully aware of all the difficulties which must attend any attempt to reform the present system.'<sup>94</sup> Tellingly though, Bedford felt inclined to reassure Richmond that neither he nor 'those of whom I have been in the habit of acting' in politics, wanted to 'turn you out' of his position as lord lieutenant. 'I

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<sup>92</sup> Bedford to Grenville, 1 April 1807, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, ix, pp. 129-130.

<sup>93</sup> Bedford to Grenville, 1 April 1807, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, ix, pp. 130.

<sup>94</sup> Bedford to Richmond, 13 October 1808, (NLI MS. 72/1615).



heartily wish you may all remain where you are', he said. Although, somewhat cheekily suggested, 'perhaps more so than you do yourselves – you are certainly not on a “bed of roses”'.<sup>95</sup>

However, Bedford's extra-official interventions on the welfare of Ireland after he left office were no more apparent than in February 1812 when he sent a powerful condemnation of government policy in Ireland to the then prince regent, the future George IV. He was 'called upon to exercise this painful duty', he said, 'from a consideration of the alarming situation in which Ireland is placed, by the conduct of the government of that country during the last six months, and the little prospect which appears now to be held out of a better and a wiser policy prevailing there'.<sup>96</sup> Bedford told the prince that *he* had long been considered the 'peculiar, and almost exclusive friend' of the catholics of Ireland and implored him to 'relieve the anxieties and heal the wounds of four millions of his majesty's subjects, labouring under disabilities and deprivations of the most galling and mortifying description'. Yet, he was also critical and reminded the prince of 'the assurance which your royal highness enabled [me] to give to the Roman Catholics of Ireland...that you acknowledged the full justice of their claims, and should not fail to redress the grievances of which they complained'. He asked the prince to empower the government 'of the united realm, as that of closing forever the mutual animosities of protestant and catholic, and the various afflicting evils under which the people of Ireland have so long suffered'. If he would not, and as Bedford had told the king in person upon his return to London in 1807, then it was his 'firm and conscientious belief that Ireland must inevitably be lost to the British empire'.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Bedford to Richmond, 13 October 1808, (NLI MS. 72/1615).

<sup>96</sup> Bedford to the prince regent, [February 1812], in Arthur Aspinall (ed.), *The correspondence of George, Prince of Wales, 1770-1812*, 8vols. (London, 1971), viii, p. 10.

<sup>97</sup> Bedford to the prince regent, [February 1812], in *Ibid*, pp. 10-11.

Bedford tried to work to offer a real union, and all the perceived benefits that would go with that, to the Irish people. However, British politics, directly affected by Irish issues, brought that short-lived project to an unceremonious end. He had told Grenville in April 1807, ‘the people of Ireland do look with dread to a change of that system, under which they felt the gradual return of harmony, confidence, and security to their unhappy country, and of which I was able to be that fortunate instrument.’<sup>98</sup> Likewise in February 1812 he told the prince, “‘the viceroy who may be empowered by your royal highness to offer the olive branch to the two conflicting sects, would be hailed almost with one voice, as the benefactor, or rather as the saviour of the country.’”<sup>99</sup> Bedford was not that saviour. He had failed to complete the union. But nevertheless, he had managed to offer a new understanding of how the Anglo-Irish relationship might work.

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<sup>98</sup> Bedford to Grenville, 1 April, HMC, *Fortescue MS.*, ix, p. 130.

<sup>99</sup> Bedford to the prince regent, [February 1812], in Aspinall (ed.), *The correspondence of George, Prince of Wales*, viii, p. 11.



## SECTION FOUR

### Chapter Nine

#### The early years of the Richmond viceroyalty, 1807-1809

'You have accepted this situation for the same reason I did, namely because you thought it right, and like me you come neither for *pleasure* nor *profit* nor to *learn the language*.'<sup>1</sup>

(The duke of Bedford, 1807)

#### *Introduction*

The appointment of the duke of Richmond as lord lieutenant of Ireland in 1807 marked an explicit rejection of Bedford's policy of conciliation. There was a fear that Bedford had been too soft in Ireland and that British control was beginning to unravel. Richmond and Bedford were close personally – not only were they friends but their wives were sisters – yet politically they were very different and they had very different approaches to governance. Richmond was sent to Ireland with instructions to show a tougher line, with demonstrations of military power to stop disturbances in the countryside, and expressions of support for the established protestant church to warn off the catholics. Amongst historians Richmond has had a hard time. He has been dismissed as a barely-functioning drunkard, who only took an interest in sports and who is best remembered for enabling the cricket ground at Lords to be constructed. But there was much more to his time in Ireland than that. This section of the thesis offers a new perspective on a neglected viceroyalty, one which helped illustrate that although the union was not complete, the new

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<sup>1</sup> Bedford to the duke of Richmond, 5 April 1807, (NLI MS. 72/1616). [Emphasis in original].

structures which had formed after it, were becoming fixed. During Hardwicke's time in office, as first lord lieutenant after the union, the prevailing concern was to figure out what happened next. Questions on how the union would be implemented, what needed to be done, and what kind of structures would be put in place, were constant worries. Would there be a lord lieutenant at all and what was the status of the military chief in Ireland, were primary considerations. The politics of implementation at this point centred on practical issues, with any bigger strategy behind the union ignored or forgotten. This was not about creating a union of minds, no matter what Hardwicke or Abbot might have believed. Rather, it was about ironing out the details of the new political reality. In Bedford's time there was a short-lived return to the idealism of Pitt, Cornwallis and Castlereagh. The politics of implementation were now about making the union complete, of securing catholic support and loyalty, and making Ireland an integral part of the empire. By Richmond's time however, these efforts to complete the union were explicitly rejected. As far as the British governments of this period were concerned – and Richmond was lord lieutenant under three different ministries – the union *was* complete. It had succeeded in uniting the two kingdoms, abolishing the Irish parliament and securing the protestant interest. The only thing that needed to be done now was maintaining that connection, enhancing protestant influence, and protecting the state from threats both domestic and foreign. The politics of implementation had been transformed into the politics of conservation.

To complicate matters though, the union had become the key grievance for the disaffected in Ireland. True, there were other issues: catholic rights, political rights, land rights, but they all seemed to feed into a single issue, and that was general disenchantment with the new political arrangement. This at least was the conclusion of Castlereagh and



Arthur Wellesley, the new secretary for war and the colonies and the new chief secretary respectively, who worked together on these issues. Together they explored ‘the means which...would be used to obtain adherents to the cause of rebellion’ in Ireland, and concluded that this was ‘viz. the union.’<sup>2</sup> So while the new government may have felt the union was complete, it was well aware that for some the priority was to break it.<sup>3</sup> During this period Richmond was constantly reassured that his work in Ireland was central to the war effort; upholding the ideals of the government at Westminster. Stability at home underpinned success abroad. And so with that in mind, everything depended on preserving the union.

Given this trend, it is perhaps surprising that the vicereignty of the duke of Richmond has received such little attention from historians. What attention it has received has tended to focus on the rise of catholic agitation in the period before O’Connell came to prominence.<sup>4</sup> Alternatively, historians have looked at two of his most interesting chief secretaries, Arthur Wellesley at the start, and Robert Peel at the end, but mainly because of what they achieved afterwards. Indeed, upon Peel’s appointment as Richmond’s final chief secretary one commentator remarked, ‘I think you will like Mr. Peel, he is very gentlemanlike, very clever, perhaps too young, but this last will, as we all find, be speedily mended.’<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Richmond was in Ireland under three prime ministers– the duke of Portland, Spenser Perceval and Lord Liverpool – and convinced them all of his value. More importantly, he convinced them all that he represented their values. However in the popular mind Richmond is plagued by the assumption that he was ‘a genial, though indifferent, viceroy’, a ‘drunk’ with a gambling-addicted wife, more interested in tennis,

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<sup>2</sup> Wellesley to Richmond, 20 December 1807, (NLI MS. 58/20).

<sup>3</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, pp. 139-146.

<sup>4</sup> Geoghegan, *King Dan*, pp. 123-130.

<sup>5</sup> Lord Clancarty to Littlehales, 6 August 1812, (EBL private collection, Box I – File 2C).

horse racing<sup>6</sup> and cricket<sup>7</sup> than his occupation as lord lieutenant. Norman Gash recognises that ‘both friends and enemies were well aware he was fond of the wine-bottle’, but gives him more credit than that, noting ‘he was conscious of his weakness and made...efforts to overcome it’.<sup>8</sup> Yet, according to one early-twentieth century account of the viceroys, Richmond was not ‘interested... in any of the subjects that intimately concerned the country he was supposed to govern’.<sup>9</sup> This was clearly not true. In the early years especially Richmond moderated the hard line approach being advocated in London. He was explicit in his desire ‘to avoid strong measures when mild will do’.<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, though, his time in Ireland would harden his resolve and this will be explored in subsequent chapters.

### ***The beginning of the end of conciliation: Richmond’s appointment***

It was an open secret that Richmond was not Portland’s first choice as viceroy, and that others were offered the position before him. At least two, if not three others refused the appointment.<sup>11</sup> These discussions were made public, and ‘several refusals were leaked to the press’.<sup>12</sup> One person who it was definitely offered to was the earl of Powis, who had been the choice of Pitt in 1805, and who had served briefly as governor of Madras, but who perhaps was best known as the son of ‘Clive of India’. According to D.L. Prior, Powis was ‘a persistent conservative’ in this period, ‘opposing parliamentary reform,

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<sup>6</sup> Patrick M. Geoghegan, ‘Charles Lennox, (1764-1819)’, *DIB*.

<sup>7</sup> T.F. Henderson, rev. Roger T. Stearn, ‘Charles Lennox, (1764-1819)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>8</sup> Norman Gash, *Mr. Secretary Peel : the life of Sir Robert Peel to 1830*, (London, 1961), p. 98.

<sup>9</sup> O’Mahony, *The viceroys of Ireland*, p. 213.

<sup>10</sup> Richmond to Maj. Gen. Mackenzie, 3 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/162).

<sup>11</sup> There is a discrepancy between the *DIB* which mentions two refusals, while the *ODNB* suggests three. Patrick M. Geoghegan, ‘Charles Lennox, (1764-1819)’, *DIB*; T.F. Henderson, rev. Roger T. Stearn, ‘Charles Lennox, (1764-1819)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>12</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 28.



catholic emancipation, and the abolition of slavery.’<sup>13</sup> The other person it was definitely offered to was the duke of Rutland, who was notable only because he was the son of a former lord lieutenant, and for his love of breeding racehorses.<sup>14</sup> Clearly the post was not seen as a prominent appointment. The government wanted a man who would follow orders, not a man of discernible talent.

The rejection of Powis and Rutland put pressure on Portland. It was this which undoubtedly led him to ‘assure [Richmond]...of the anxiety with which I shall wait for your determination’ when he approached him on 30 March 1807.<sup>15</sup> This was to be a return to hard line values, and Portland insisted that he wanted someone who would not be afraid to go to Ireland and impose order. Richmond it was hoped could be trusted to do what was deemed necessary to preserve the union. He could be trusted to do what he was told.

Richmond was informed that this would not be an easy posting, and was warned that there was a risk of losing Ireland unless he took strong measures. He accepted Portland’s offer the next morning, with a hastily written letter of acceptance.<sup>16</sup> Later that day he travelled to meet the prime minister to discuss the terms of the job. On 1 April 1807 he was sworn to the privy council<sup>17</sup>, and issued his instructions from the king twelve days later.<sup>18</sup> Portland was in no doubt of what needed to be changed in Ireland: this was a

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<sup>13</sup> D. L. Prior, ‘Edward Clive, (1754–1839)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>14</sup> Denis Gray, *Spencer Perceval: the evangelical prime minister, 1762-1812*, (Manchester, 1963), p. 92.

<sup>15</sup> Portland to Richmond, ‘London, Monday night’, 30 March 1807, (NLI MS. 60/243).

<sup>16</sup> The *DIB* entry states ‘Richmond was offered and accepted the duty on 1 April 1807’, but this was the date he was sworn of the privy council, as is shown here and noted by Richmond’s entry in the *ODNB*. However, neither biography is clear on the point that Richmond agreed to take up the viceroyalty on 31 March 1807, as is indicated by the primary evidence, noted above.

<sup>17</sup> ‘The oath of a privy counsellor taken by his grace Charles duke of Richmond and Lenox [*sic.*]’, 1 April 1807, (NLI MS. 60/257).

<sup>18</sup> ‘Instructions for...Charles Duke of Richmond...appointed to be...lieutenant general and general governor of that part of the United Kingdom called Ireland’, 13 April 1807, (NLI MS. 60/258).

rejection of 'the system which has prevailed there for the last twelve months'.<sup>19</sup> That system, he believed, had led to 'dangers' which 'threaten it and which are actually impending over it', and he hoped that Richmond would 'have the honor and satisfaction of preserving and maintaining' the connection between Ireland and Britain. This change of tact signified the interplay between the adoption of administrative policies in Ireland with political developments in Britain throughout this period.

Richmond agreed with Portland's negative assessment of the state of Ireland, and the burden that would be placed on him as lord lieutenant. 'This task I feel to be arduous' he said. Yet, he supported the change of ministry, and let Portland know 'how sincerely I rejoice that h[is] m[ajesty] has been pleased to take as his confidential servants those he has lately called into his service.'<sup>20</sup> Brian Jenkinson suggests, in speaking about two of Richmond's chief secretaries (William Wellesley-Pole and Robert Peel), that there was a return during this period 'to a form of Pittite Toryism, heavily influenced by the French Revolution and the prolonged war against France'. His administration thus supported the established church, 'treasured the balance of the constitution', 'considered large property holders the nation's natural governors, regarded the rule of law as the first essential for the enjoyment of liberty, and were fearful of the turbulent mob.'<sup>21</sup> While at the same time it 'took pride in the phenomenal expansion of the British empire, on which the Tories boasted the sun never now set.'

Bedford, the outgoing viceroy, was disturbed by such a drastic change. Although he and Richmond were friends - he always addressed Richmond as 'my dear Charles', and

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<sup>19</sup> Portland to Richmond, 30 March 1807, (NLI MS. 60/243).

<sup>20</sup> Richmond to Portland, 31 March 1807, (NLI MS, 60/244).

<sup>21</sup> Brian Jenkins, 'The chief secretary', in David George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds.), *Defenders of the Union: a survey of British and Irish unionism since 1801*, (London, 2001), p. 44.



Bedford's second wife, Georgiana, and Richmond's wife Charlotte were sisters<sup>22</sup> - he knew what the change of administration meant for Ireland. It was an explicit rejection of his approach, and he contacted Richmond before he set out expressing a hope that their friendship might continue, indicating that their 'political differences will I hope never disturb in my mind the feelings of private friendship'.<sup>23</sup> Bedford did admit that he was happier with Richmond than with any other of the leaked names, and said that 'among the many candidates to whom public rumour has given the lord lieutenancy, I assure you there is not one to whom I would so willingly resign the sword of state as yourself'. However, knowing the kind of government that now held sway in Britain, Bedford was wary, 'because I am anxious', he said, 'for the happiness of the people of Ireland'.<sup>24</sup> This was a revealing comment, suggesting that Bedford feared that such considerations would no longer be a priority. While Bedford consoled himself that 'I know whatever system may be adopted, [it] will be exercised with good temper and by a man of honour', he still worried that very different policies to those he endorsed in Ireland would now be followed.

Nevertheless, Bedford remained steadfast in his belief that Richmond could be a good lord lieutenant for the Irish people. 'Like me you come neither for *pleasure* nor *profit* nor to *learn the language*', he claimed, insinuating a shared approach, 'you have accepted this situation for the same reason that I did, namely because you thought it right'.<sup>25</sup> Whether this was a valiant attempt to influence the future progress of his successor or just an expression of goodwill for an old friend, Bedford was sure of one thing: the political landscape was now very different. 'If his majesty's ministers wish me to remain here until you relieve me I shall certainly do so, but for charity's sake come soon',

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<sup>22</sup> They were both daughters of Alexander Gordon, 4th Duke of Gordon.

<sup>23</sup> Bedford to Richmond, 5 April 1807, (NLI MS. 72/1616).

<sup>24</sup> Bedford to Richmond, 5 April 1807, (NLI MS. 72/1616).

<sup>25</sup> Bedford to Richmond, 5 April 1807, (NLI MS. 72/1616).

he implored, 'as you must feel that my situation cannot be very pleasant to me.' It was hard for Bedford to remain in Dublin with little to no authority now his replacement was guaranteed. Furthermore, the kind of policies that were to be looked to for the implementation of the union, were now far from those he would have endorsed.

Richmond arrived in Ireland on 19 April 1807 with a clear agenda to act in contrast to his predecessor. To emphasise the fact Richmond was furnished with the 1806 list of the twelve powerful office holders in Ireland who had been dismissed.<sup>26</sup> From the lord chancellor, chancellor of the exchequer and heads of the post office, to the commissioners of the revenue. These were to be restored, as far as was possible. Notably, John Newport departed and John Foster returned as chancellor of the Irish exchequer.<sup>27</sup>

The choice of Richmond's first chief secretary was not particularly significant at the time; it is only with the benefit of hindsight that the name of Arthur Wellesley has come to mean something much more. Upon his appointment, Wellesley was an emerging military commander, who accepted the job in Ireland, the country of his birth, only as a short-term measure until a military posting abroad became available.<sup>28</sup> Wellesley set sail from the naval dock at Sheerness on 31 July 1807 and joined Richmond in Dublin at the beginning of August.<sup>29</sup> Before he left England he attempted to gather intelligence on the state of play in the country from friends and influential observers. He attempted to track down Lord John Beresford (the incoming bishop of Raphoe) in London, but was thwarted on a number of occasions. He grew frustrated and joked that, 'It is so difficult to find an

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<sup>26</sup> 'Memorandum on dismissals' n.d., (NLI MS. 60/263).

<sup>27</sup> Malcomson, *Foster...improvement and prosperity*, pp. 222-223.

<sup>28</sup> Norman Gash, 'Arthur Wellesley, (1769-1852)', *ODNB*.

<sup>29</sup> Hawkesbury to Richmond, 1 August 1807, (NLI MS. 70/1339).



Irishman in London'.<sup>30</sup> His dry wit would be much in evidence during his two years in office. Even after he left, he kept in touch on Irish affairs, and joked in 1810 that 'the Irish peers are bad fellows!!', believing that their claims on government would be better served if they sought to behave more like gentlemen. Often, he found however, 'that the blackguard must break forth.'<sup>31</sup> For Richmond, who was not above at times declaring 'I am afraid some of the paddies have acted shabbily', it was a good match.<sup>32</sup>

Wellesley had been given permission to continue fighting abroad during his time in Ireland, and combine the roles of general and chief secretary. On two occasions in 1807-1809 he left Ireland to campaign overseas, leaving John Wilson Croker as his deputy. Nevertheless, as Peter Gray has argued, 'he proved conscientious and hard-working in his management of the 1807 elections, in allocating Irish patronage and in shepherding Irish business, including the Dublin police and Irish insurrection bills, through the house of commons.'<sup>33</sup> Later in this chapter the continuing problem of patronage will be explored, but Wellesley's activities in the British House of Commons is beyond the scope of this work, focusing as it does on the politics of implementation in Ireland, not the operation of the union at Westminster. Yet, what is significant is that Wellesley was not the dominant figure as chief secretary that Peel would later be, in part because of his absences, and in part because Richmond brought his own strong vision to the role. They formed what was represented as a formidable team and in April 1807, Dublin Castle was told of a popular ditty doing the rounds in the city, it ran:

In Ireland our matters will all go right,

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<sup>30</sup> Wellesley to Richmond, 14 Jul 1807, (NLI MS. 58/26).

<sup>31</sup> Lord Wellington to Richmond, 31 March 1810, (NLI MS. 63/604).

<sup>32</sup> Richmond to Lord Liverpool, 19 January 1811, (NLI MS. 61/322).

<sup>33</sup> Peter Gray, 'Arthur Wellesley, (1769-1852)', *ODNB*.

Under Charley the bold, and Sir Arthur the knight,  
And Charley shall reign like a jolly Nabob,  
And I warrant Sir Arthur will settle the mob.<sup>34</sup>

The change of government in Britain had also restored some key ministers to their old portfolios. Most crucially for Ireland, Lord Hawkesbury returned as home secretary in the new government. Upon his arrival in Ireland, Richmond was sent a reminder by Hawkesbury of the new principles for good governance in Ireland. The maintenance of imperial security was to be top of the list of priorities and, while he told Richmond 'we are aware that you are at present short of troops', he encouragingly stated 'something cannot be attempted by the French government for some time to come, and I trust it will not be long before we shall have it in our power to reinforce you.'<sup>35</sup> Next came the support and propagation of the protestant church in Ireland, and Richmond was told to confer with Foster and the new lord chancellor Lord Manners, who had been appointed in March 1807. 'As to the protestant church I am satisfied that there is no reasonable expense which parliament would not willingly sanction even under the present circumstances', Hawkesbury resolutely stated, 'which would furnish a prospect of adding to the respectability of the Church of Ireland and of extending its influence throughout the country.' The hope was to curb catholicism by spreading the protestant faith across the country. In fact, such plans could be seen more as a forerunner to 'the protestant crusade in Ireland during the 1820s...aimed at the conversion of Irish catholics *en masse*' addressed recently by historians such as Jennifer Ridden<sup>36</sup> and previously, Desmond Bowen.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> J.N. Musgrave to Littlehales, 9 April 1807, (EBL private collection, Box II – File 1M).

<sup>35</sup> Hawkesbury to Richmond, 1 August 1807, (NLI MS. 70/1339).

<sup>36</sup> Jennifer Ridden, 'The Forgotten History of the Protestant Crusade: Religious Liberalism in Ireland', in *Journal of Religious History*, 31 1 (2007), pp. 78-102, p. 78.

<sup>37</sup> Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland, 1800-70 : a study of Protestant-Catholic relations between the Act of Union and Disestablishment*, (Dublin, 1978).



Hawkesbury even saw the catholic college at Maynooth as a means of influencing the catholic church. In an ideal world it might have been closed, but he was forced to concede, reluctantly, that this was now impossible. '*As it is established* and it would be in vain now to think of subverting it' he begrudgingly stressed, 'it does appear of material convenience to endeavour to render the control which government *by law* possess over it in some degree effectual, and to make it if possible the instrument of some influence in the hands of government.'<sup>38</sup> Hoppen notes that under the guidance of Robert Peel in the mid-1840s, increases in the government grant to Maynooth was used as one way try to establish 'a Tory version of Drummondism', on a par with the policies prescribed by the Whig undersecretary Thomas Drummond in 1835-36.<sup>39</sup> These efforts sought to win over the moderate catholic clergy during the crisis occasion by agitation for repeal of the union, 'towards the quieter paths of accommodation and quiescence'.<sup>40</sup> There was very little of this kind of thinking behind Hawkesbury's proposals in 1807 however. He warned Richmond to remain vigilant to any threats against the regime. Thus, his instructions for Ireland completely encompassed the new political reality, in so far as he encouraged maintenance and expansion of the empire, support of the established church and protection of the social order and constitution.

Once again, Irish issues were interlaced with the more general problems of the United Kingdom and indeed those of the empire; specifically the war with France. The Home Office in particular was keeping a close watch on developments in the neighbouring island. With Wellesley now in Ireland, Hawkesbury insisted that Richmond would 'be so good therefore to address your correspondence in future to me'. However, he believed

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<sup>38</sup> Hawkesbury to Richmond, 1 August 1807, (NLI MS. 70/1339). [Emphasis in original].

<sup>39</sup> Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800*, pp. 27-32.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p. 32.

‘any information which may be *confidential* respecting the internal state of Ireland had better be sent in the form of an official letter that I may be able to circulate it amongst my colleagues’. In turn he could therefore ‘keep it separate from your private letters.’<sup>41</sup> This was an important move by Hawkesbury, as he clearly envisioned some kind of cabinet decision making process when it came to dealing with Ireland. Richmond was thus reassured that his personal letters to Hawkesbury would remain just so, but that responsibility for official Irish policy would be shared between a number of key people in London.

This was a far cry from the first post-union administration, when Hardwicke had reacted furiously to a similar attempt by Pelham. There had been a clear evolution of the structures of government from that time, with at least some clear reporting lines established. Hawkesbury also made it clear that ‘the commanding officers of the different districts...should be made to feel that government depend upon them for accurate information on the state of the country in their respective monthly reports.’ London wanted up to date information on Ireland, and Hawkesbury planned to get it. Intelligence supplied by Castlereagh of agitators in the country, in Cork in particular, confirmed for Hawkesbury that certain groups would have to be monitored if the union was to be maintained. For example, he advised Richmond that ‘the debating societies to which the writer alludes should be very particularly watched.’<sup>42</sup> The watchword of these early months for the new administration in Ireland was vigilance, and as Peter Gray has suggested, ‘Wellesley’s principle concern was for security’, a comment that can be applied to the administration on the whole, in Ireland.<sup>43</sup> This was security against foes both domestic and foreign, harking back to policies endorsed by Pitt in 1799 and in 1807 men

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<sup>41</sup> Hawkesbury to Richmond, 1 August 1807, (NLI MS. 70/1339).

<sup>42</sup> Hawkesbury to Richmond, 1 August 1807, (NLI MS. 70/1339).

<sup>43</sup> Peter Gray, ‘Arthur Wellesley, (1769-1852)’, *DIB*.



like Castlereagh believed the same thing. Reflecting on his time as chief secretary, he advised Richmond, 'I know full well of the importance of a strong army in Ireland, not merely to guard against external danger, but to keep the public temper quiet and discourage speculators in sedition'.<sup>44</sup>

Stability in Ireland was seen as integral to the security of the British empire. What is revealing is that Richmond was told that success in Ireland would contribute to success abroad. George Canning, the foreign secretary, told Richmond in December 1807 that he could 'participate in the triumph of our success in the Tagus', alluding to the British blockade of Lisbon under Admiral Sir Sidney Smith and subsequent evacuation of the Portuguese royal family, and more importantly, the Portuguese fleet, after the French invasion there. Canning was clear that while the accomplishment was 'important as it is in other points of view, it is not more so perhaps in any than as it relates to the safety and tranquillity of Ireland.'<sup>45</sup> Later when discussing a possible British victory in Denmark in August 1809, Canning remarked that, 'I hope (if we succeed as we ought) you will feel the effects of our success in Ireland'. As he ascertained 'for in all the reports of the language and expectations of the disaffected there, I see an invasion by a fleet from the Baltic is that which they reckon upon most confidently.' 'I trust', he quipped, 'that we shall disappoint them?'<sup>46</sup> Home Office, war office and foreign office all saw Ireland as an integral part of the war effort. It was a key location which underpinned success abroad. British interests depended upon a stable Ireland. But within Ireland there was one issue which threatened that stability. It was not catholic rights, or land rights, or political rights. It was the union.

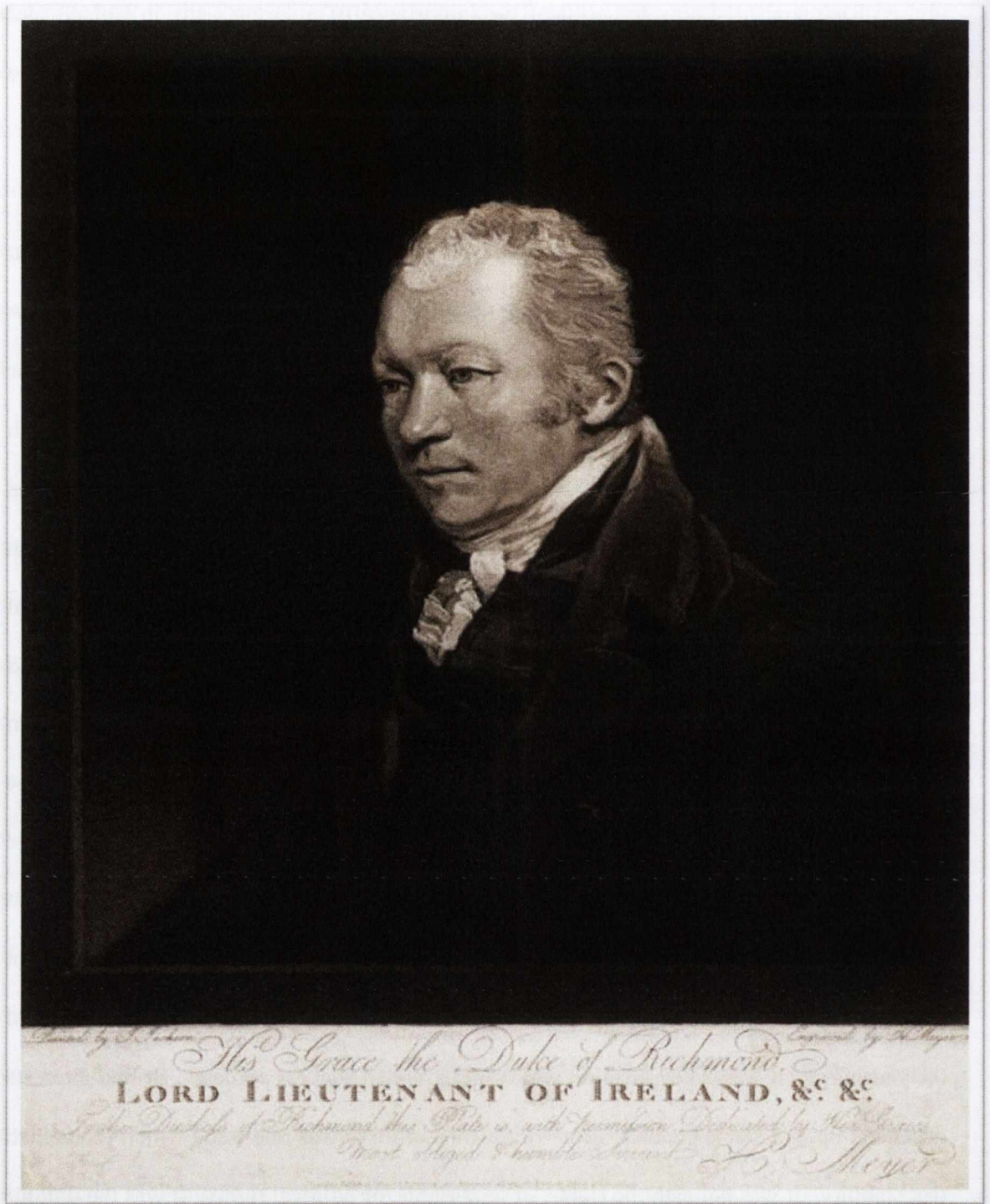
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<sup>44</sup> Castlereagh to Richmond, 8 August 1807, (NLI MS. 59/156).

<sup>45</sup> George Canning to Richmond, 21 December 1807, (NLI MS. 59/151).

<sup>46</sup> Canning to Richmond, 16 August 1809, (NLI MS 59/149).

FIG. 7



Charles Lennox, 4th duke of Richmond

Engraving by Henry H. Meyer, published 25 May 1807

(Source: National Gallery of Ireland)



*'The French have a party in Ireland': Reaction to disturbances, 1807-1808*

'Your grace will probably agree with me in opinion that we are not quite in our right senses in this country, and I have no doubt you will also concur with me in thinking that forbearance and concession are not the weapons with which Jacobins and traitors ought to be fought', Robert Dundas, Richmond's second chief secretary, told his superior in May 1809.<sup>47</sup> Speaking from London he said, 'I trust that some effectual measures will be adopted *in* the government and *by* the government to put down all attempts at revolution.' However, as early as December 1807 it was made clear to Dublin Castle that the prospect of a rebellion directed at overthrowing the union of Britain and Ireland was in the offing throughout the country. On 20 December the then chief secretary Arthur Wellesley, in correspondence with Castlereagh in London, passed to Richmond intelligence he had received concerning the sense of disenchantment in Ireland. Both Wellington and Castlereagh had been informed of 'the means which...would be used to obtain adherents to the cause of rebellion' in Ireland. As Wellesley told Richmond this was 'viz. the union.'<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Wellesley was sure to point out that it was 'maintained to me that great use was made of the union to gain adherents to the cause of rebellion among the higher orders'. Wellesley had received the intelligence from at least one informant and between him and Castlereagh they were trying to ascertain who might be preaching this anti-union rhetoric. While the report made for disturbing reading for the Irish administration, particularly with its references to the detestation for the union in Ireland amongst various social classes in the country, it would not have come as too much of a surprise to Richmond. Earlier in August Hawkesbury had nervously told Richmond that he was 'concerned to find by the letters received from Ireland in the course of the last

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<sup>47</sup> Robert Dundas to Richmond, 7 May 1809, (NLI MS. 59/167).

<sup>48</sup> Wellesley to Richmond, 20 December 1807, (NLI MS. 58/20).

few days that serious outrages still continue to prevail in Tipperary and the central counties'. Added to this, Hawkesbury was particularly distressed by 'the general deportment of the disaffected of all classes in Dublin'.<sup>49</sup> Even Charles Long, Hardwicke's last chief secretary and now paymaster general in Whitehall, was 'sorry to hear' from Richmond 'that many symptoms of disaffection begin to show themselves, but I fear that will always be the case in Ireland during the war and particularly when the armies of Bonaparte are not actively employed in continental operations.'<sup>50</sup> He counselled, 'that it might be very desirable to increase the castle police if you can find any' although he said, 'you know how little the police of Dublin ever did towards the detection of treason or sedition.' In October a letter sent to the protestant Archbishop of Dublin spoke of 'papists' and 'popish gentlemen' stockpiling weapons in Tipperary and insisting that 'government did not pay that attention they ought'.<sup>51</sup> 'The protestants must be supported', the author claimed, 'with a strong hand' lest the 'dominating spirit of papacy' overcome them. Such reports suggest that the difficulties experienced by the Bedford administration in curbing agrarian disaffection in the west of the country had not been unique. Just like the reports Bedford had received of possible French agents in the country stirring up the peasantry<sup>52</sup>, Hawkesbury put his immediate concerns with radical elements in Irish society down to a similar influence. As he stated 'there is reason to believe that they are looking with sanguine expectation by some attempt being made by a French force against Ireland.'<sup>53</sup>

Secret intelligence received in June from Rouen on a projected offensive by Napoleon against Ireland confirmed that there was at least some validity to these

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<sup>49</sup> Hawkesbury to Richmond, 6 August 1807, (NLI MS. 70/1340).

<sup>50</sup> Charles Long to Richmond, 8 August [1807], (NLI MS. 59/190).

<sup>51</sup> 'To the archbishop of Dublin', 3 October 1807, (NLI MS. 71/1394).

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 7.

<sup>53</sup> Hawkesbury to Richmond, 6 August 1807, (NLI MS. 70/1340).



rumours.<sup>54</sup> Reports from the general officers in Ireland also spoke of a dangerous spike in aggression against the gentry and landed interests, especially in the midlands. The commander of the central district, Major General Mackenzie, stationed in Tipperary told Richmond of the ‘the serious outrages which so much disgrace the police of this county’.<sup>55</sup> Aside from his formal reports, Mackenzie wished to use a previous acquaintance with Richmond to address in an ‘*extra-official* and confidential manner...a few facts and suggestions on the subject of the internal state of this country which appear to me you should be made acquainted with.’ Without the least ‘hesitation’, Mackenzie’s opinion was that ‘the lower orders of the community here are *infinitely* more disturbed, more disaffected and more generally organised than I had any idea of.’ ‘Every *recent* act of theirs’ Mackenzie warned, ‘tends clearly and more strongly to confirm this belief.’ He was shocked at the audacity of the some of the crimes: ‘murders, house breaking and burnings...in no small numbers...and at no great distance from my headquarters.’ However, he was certain that ‘their less hidden and more unreserved criminal proceedings will but too evidently establish the criminal object of their alternate views which indeed even now are made too conspicuous by many instances of most atrocious conduct.’ Mackenzie believed that there was a more sinister nature to these crimes than what might at first been apparent, something which he felt obligated his reporting to Richmond privately. ‘The *grand* object in all these appears clear to get possession of arms and I regret to say it has been too successful.’<sup>56</sup>

Some of these attacks are worth exploring, to gauge the extent of the anti-union feeling. In his meetings with the gentry of Tipperary, particularly the pro-government

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<sup>54</sup> ‘Secret intelligence’, 19 June 1807, (NLI MS. 58/1).

<sup>55</sup> Mackenzie to Richmond, 1 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/161). [Emphasis in original].

<sup>56</sup> Mackenzie to Richmond, 1 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/161).

Bagwell's of Clonmel<sup>57</sup>, headed by 'William Bagwell, a leading member of the "Protestant Party" in Tipperary'<sup>58</sup>, Mackenzie received a firsthand account of a raid on a house 'not half a mile from Mr. Bagwell's' on 29 September 1807 when, 'at 12 in the forenoon, seven men broke into a gentleman's house...and took from it many stand of fire arms'. The very deliberate nature of the robbery was apparent to Mackenzie. What's more as the men were leaving 'they were met and accosted by a man who asked them where they were going with the arms, on which one of the villains replied that he would soon show him and very cooly [*sic.*] drawing a pistol shot the unfortunate man.' However, most galling to Mackenzie was the unwillingness amongst the gentry and magistrates to try and apprehend the culprits, which Bagwell told him was due to an overriding opinion, 'that *every* effort of any description under the present system of terror which generally pervaded all ranks could not possibly be attended with success or produce any good.'<sup>59</sup> Whether this was due to a real sense of powerlessness in the face of such crime or, when considering the attitudes prevalent during Bedford's administration, it was representative of a more basic reluctance to act, was hard to say. Mackenzie certainly at first saw 'apathy and want of energy...amongst the gentlemen residing in the county' as the reason to which he could 'attribute most of the evil and outrage which took place.' However, following further investigations and 'many conversations with several respectable gentlemen and of the opposite party', he was 'induced in some degree to see the thing differently'. Tellingly, he said, 'I now really do believe that by threats and punishments a system is in force which *all* the lower orders and many of the upper classes do not and will not...attempt to counteract.' Yet, there was a third most important reason as to why such actions had gone unchecked in Tipperary, according to Mackenzie. 'That party feeling and a variance in party opinions

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<sup>57</sup> James Quinn, 'John Bagwell, (1752-1816)' and 'William Bagwell, (1776-1826)', *DIB*.

<sup>58</sup> Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation*, p. 290.

<sup>59</sup> Mackenzie to Richmond, 1 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/161).



have contributed much to produce *disaffection* and to increase and strengthen the ranks of the disaffected.’<sup>60</sup>

Political division amongst landholders and elites in the county had stilted any effective, single minded response to these crimes, an important observation considering the recent change in administration in Ireland as well as in London. Local issues were thus being influenced by larger political concerns. Nevertheless, ‘I have no doubt, but I am much mistaken ere *winter passes* over, if every consideration of a political and selfish nature does not fall into the necessity of uniting for *general* preservation’, Mackenzie said. He was particularly sure of this due to the sentiments expressed by a group of gentlemen in the area who told him of ‘the *very dangerous* and *alarming* state of the county at present’ and upon which ‘they all agreed in stating as their decided opinions that at *no time* in the rebellion of ‘98 were the lower orders so *disaffected* or so *well* organised.’<sup>61</sup> While such a claim was impossible for Mackenzie to corroborate, he felt ‘perhaps it may be no bad criteria to go by.’ Mackenzie insisted that government consider proclaiming the district and stated that if ‘the arm of the civil power in this county is not in *some way* strengthened and the military force allowed to act, we shall have a rather unpleasant winter.’ While ‘a rising of the people or a positive rebellion’ would ‘*most probably* not’ happen, Mackenzie believed that the unrest in the surrounding countryside meant ‘that there will be little tranquillity, no safety for the well disposed, and no security against the disaffected in the event of an enemy’s landing amongst us’.<sup>62</sup>

Richmond was not entirely convinced. ‘I am as you know strongly against the making use of anything but the common civil law’, he said, while giving orders to call out

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<sup>60</sup> Mackenzie to Richmond, 1 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/161). [Emphasis in original].

<sup>61</sup> Mackenzie to Richmond, 1 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/161). [Emphasis in original].

<sup>62</sup> Mackenzie to Richmond, 1 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/161). [Emphasis in original].

the yeomanry 'to give force enough to the magistrates'. At any rate he believed, 'it is at all events fair to try them [the magistrates], with their national force', indicating a strong desire to try to use ordinary, civil measures in curbing disaffection, while at the same time suggesting a reluctance to employ British soldiers haphazardly throughout Ireland.<sup>63</sup> It also supports the proposition that the growing feeling amongst the protestant elite in Ireland was one which saw the yeomanry as *their* army, in opposition to the Irish (catholic dominated) militia. As Thomas Bartlett has noted, 'the loyalist *esprit de corps* that lay behind them [the yeomanry] was found valuable by Dublin Castle.'<sup>64</sup> In 1807 Richmond would have endorsed this view.

Political considerations were not however, lost on Richmond either. 'I find in many instances those that were most adverse to the insurrection bill, are most anxious now to have it put in force. Many of those would attack us for doing it, when it had succeeded.' Furthermore, he was only too aware of his own position in Ireland, making a notable observation on that point. 'It is not however that I care what people say about it, but I feel it necessary in my situation', he told Mackenzie, 'to avoid strong measures when mild will do'.<sup>65</sup> This was the defining statement of the early years of the Richmond viceroyalty.

Richmond displayed a good knowledge of the political forces at work in parliament, and he made reference to the precarious nature of the government if it was to countenance an extraordinary response to unrest in Ireland. But he also clearly acknowledged that his appointment as lord lieutenant was not one which was celebrated by all elements in Irish society, either amongst the landed elite or the disaffected peasantry.

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<sup>63</sup> Richmond to Mackenzie, 3 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/162).

<sup>64</sup> Thomas Bartlett, 'Militarization and politicalization in Ireland, (1780-1820)', in Louis M. Cullen and Louis Bergeron (eds.), *Culture et pratiques politiques en France et en Irlande XVIe-XVIIIe siècle : actes colloque de Marseille 28 septembre-2 octobre 1988* (Paris, 1990), p. 136.

<sup>65</sup> Richmond to Mackenzie, 3 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/162).



The administration's restraint in this instance was more marked by the fact that Richmond accepted that 'we know that the French have a party in Ireland, that must always be looked after', yet still he trusted that in spite of this excessive use of martial law could be avoided.

<sup>66</sup> Incidentally though, the administration was not going to roll over in the face of ongoing dissent. While Richmond might have sought the application of policies that mediated between a hard and soft line, 'on that idea I will avoid extremities if I can'. He nonetheless determined, 'if I am forced to them' then those who pushed him, had better be prepared to face the consequences.<sup>67</sup>

While Mackenzie was supportive of the yeomanry's mobilisation he doubted their resolve to be placed on permanent duty throughout the midlands. 'And I am by no means certain that even if they were out and ready to act', he continued, 'the magistrates would be found ready and willing to act with them.' He was also forced to 'again repeat that almost all descriptions of power appear afraid and alarmed at the idea of adopting any active or hostile measures against those lawless dissenters, who are bound by most solemn oaths to unite and *avenge* any hostility directed against them.'<sup>68</sup> Stephen R. Gibbons has questioned the actual binding nature of these oaths amongst agrarian agitators in pre-famine Ireland stating that 'oaths might well be pressed into service, but action was what mattered.'<sup>69</sup> Certainly, 'evidence...emerged later in the period...which shows Ribbonsim to have been an organisation involving much paperwork and very concerned with oaths, passwords, catechisms and the like'.<sup>70</sup> There was adequate fear of such groups and possible reprisals, whether realistic or not, to result in a state of siege in Tipperary and its surrounds in October 1807, which Mackenzie believed could only be lifted with the

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<sup>66</sup> Richmond to Mackenzie, 3 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/162).

<sup>67</sup> Richmond to Mackenzie, 3 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/162).

<sup>68</sup> Mackenzie to Richmond, 5 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/163).

<sup>69</sup> Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant*, p. 13.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

reestablishment of the social hierarchy; by brute force if necessary. Wishing to know how far he could push his authority he even asked Richmond to 'order a copy of the Insurrection Act to be sent to me.'<sup>71</sup> Desperate to apply himself to the task, Mackenzie told the administration, 'in thus discharging my duties as a soldier I have the additional stimulus of earnestly wishing to render myself useful to a government in who's prosperity and success I am warmly and deeply interested'.<sup>72</sup>

The unrest in Tipperary nevertheless induced Richmond to dispatch Lord Harrington, the commander of the forces since July 1806, to form his own opinion on the problems in the disrupted areas. At the time of his appointment Harrington had been instructed specifically to 'support the civil authority', ensuring 'the suppression of tumults and insurrections and of all traitorous and rebellious practices'.<sup>73</sup> Almost immediately upon arriving in Tipperary, there was a clash between Harrington and his subordinate. Mackenzie had 'invited some of the most intelligent people to be here', so as Harrington could gauge their concerns for himself. But Mackenzie lamented 'he never once during his short stay touched on the subject not even with *myself*....I therefore concluded that his lordship did not in any way wish or intend to muddle with the internal state of the country.' Harrington was blunt with his fellow soldiers. 'After dinner some of the company started the subject of some recent outrage committed in the county on which Lord H[arrington] expressed himself to be completely disinclined to believe it'. His response was to say, 'that all these histories were without foundation and that he would bet 20 guineas to 10 that nothing of the kind had taken place.'<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Mackenzie to Richmond, 1 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/161).

<sup>72</sup> Mackenzie to Richmond, 5 October 1807, (NLI MS. 59/163).

<sup>73</sup> 'Copy of the instructions from H.R.H. the commander-in-chief to the Earl of Harrington commander of the forces in Ireland, Horse Guards July 1806', (BEA, 6D-Ireland-1-6).

<sup>74</sup> Mackenzie to Richmond, 16 August 1807, (NLI MS. 59/165). [Emphasis in original].



Throughout the early months of Richmond's viceroyalty then dissenting views on how best to manage Ireland were forthcoming. Union revulsion and possible invasion aside, Wellesley too, was careful not to give too much credence to reports of outright unrest in the countryside. 'There is a report of a renewal of Thresher riots in Mayo; but I believe there is no foundation for it', he told Richmond later in December, 'excepting in the gambols of Christmas which in Ireland are always of the nature of civil war.'<sup>75</sup> Wellesley insisted that a prudent approach was necessary and was even prepared to go against the government if he felt that the administration's interests in Ireland were better served by an alternative policy than that sanctioned in London. With the problems in the midlands continuing throughout October, a separate batch of particularly disturbing reports from Limerick and the surrounding area led Hawkesbury to send to Richmond 'an authority from the cabinet to proclaim that district'. However, having read the reports himself, Wellesley was extremely uncomfortable with applying this martial law-like solution. 'Although the state of the country is such as to require the most vigorous measures to restore tranquilly and to preserve the peace, the papers are not sufficient to warrant the proclamation of the district with the Insurrection Act.' Completely out of character, Wellesley pointed to the success Bedford had had in curbing the unrest, 'I feel this more strongly from a recollection of the case made out for the duke of Bedford when Connaught was disturbed last year.' In what must have been a bitter pill to swallow Wellesley remarked on 'the universal approbation which has been given by all (without exception) of his forbearance upon that occasion.' Maybe more telling was the qualifier that Wellesley added to his assessment. 'I acknowledge that I doubt much whether he was right but what has passed respecting his conduct should allow us pause before we put the Insurrection Act in force.' While he may have had 'no doubt that the Whiteboy and other

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<sup>75</sup> Wellesley to Richmond, 30 December 1807, (NLI MS. 58/13).

riot acts apply to the state of affairs at Limerick' he was convinced that 'a plan which will restore tranquillity' without the severe move to proclaim the area was a better option.<sup>76</sup>

Clearly Bedford's approach had won him some admirers in Britain, and even if Wellesley did not think a full endorsement of such policies were worthy, he was certainly aware of the public perception and obvious respect the previous administration had received in Ireland and Britain. He thus cannily cautioned Richmond not to be too hasty in establishing an overtly coercive administration at Dublin Castle. The middle path which Richmond pursued, partly at Wellesley's urgings, bore dividends.

### ***'What is usually called union promises': Richmond, Wellesley and the union engagements***

Issues of patronage, and specifically dealing with the remaining union promises, was an issue for Richmond and Wellesley. In 1807 Wellesley spoke freely of a major obstacle in the way of British government in Ireland: the union itself. Or rather more precisely, the legacy of the way it had passed. Far from being a keen defender of the measure, in private he admitted that he was 'pessimistic about the ultimate success of the recent union between England and Ireland'.<sup>77</sup> A very great part of the issue was the demands on the government for patronage. Having read a request for government preferment, he was forced to admit 'that there are not less than 50 similar cases, and no means of remedying even one of them.' The key issue was that 'the union absorbed all the patronage of government and prevented Lord Cornwallis from rewarding the few loyalists whom he might have been inclined to give a reward.' In Wellesley's opinion it was not

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<sup>76</sup> Wellesley to Richmond, 1 October 1807, (NLI MS. 58/23).

<sup>77</sup> Norman Gash, 'Arthur Wellesley, (1769-1852)', *ODNB*.



just Cornwallis who had failed to support such men, and he passed judgement on the two post-union administrations as well. 'Lord Hardwicke had no inclination to reward a loyalist', he complained, while, worst of all, 'the duke of Bedford would have preferred to reward a rebel.' There was little solace for Richmond, whom Wellesley told, 'they have all fallen to you; and there are no means of rewarding even one of them.'<sup>78</sup>

This all reinforces a primary argument in this thesis that here were the death throes of the union engagements.<sup>79</sup> Cornwallis had been bound by the engagements in his effort to pass the union; Hardwicke had complained bitterly of their limiting nature on his administration, while at least initially trying to fulfil them; and Bedford had sought to ignore them, ensuring his masters in London could espouse a pro-union political agenda without being tied to its distasteful heritage. But now Wellesley viewed the entire process as an explicit obstacle to proper governance in Ireland. In turn this symbolised the move away from seeing the union as the defining influence on Irish political life. Interestingly, such a guiding principle had begun to develop under the Grenville ministry. However, when he told Richmond of the fact that he had no means of rewarding loyal supporters of the crown or the administration, Wellesley was not speaking in terms of the union engagements. This was not the job that had fallen to Richmond. Rather, Wellesley meant that because of those means by which the union was passed, loyal men in Ireland were being left unrewarded because there was simply nothing left to give them. Instead of upholding the connection between Britain and Ireland, reinforcing and propagating adherents to the union, the measures sullied passing threatened its very existence.

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<sup>78</sup> Wellesley to Richmond, 14 Jul 1807, (NLI MS. 58/26).

<sup>79</sup> Douglas Kanter supports this proposition, but his discussion is limited to simply stating the fact. [Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 124].

Second, the language used by Wellesley was noteworthy. He spoke of 'loyalists', using the word on two separate occasions. Yet this description sat in opposition with anyone who may have expected rewards solely on the back of their union endeavours. Wellesley's deliberate contrast showed a marked distinction between those who supported the union in 1799-1800, with those who had since offered service to government, up to this point in July 1807. What's more, the way in which he phrased his comments should be taken as an allusion to who he actually judged to be loyal Irishmen, as opposed to union hangers-on. In a sense, in Wellesley's mind, there was a more simplistic view for the use of patronage than trying to follow through on seven and eight-year-old promises made by a ministry long since passed. It was one which envisioned a reversion in the use of patronage to reward those actively supporting the government in Britain and Ireland. In effect to bring policy full-circle to what could be classed as a pre-union modality. The idea that former government servants could come looking for some kind of backdated payment was a point of particular frustration. Even if he could 'acknowledge...[a] claim to be well founded' Wellesley complained, 'I do not much admire that kind of delicacy which keeps back a claim for ten year and then brings it forward without specifying any one ground upon which it is made.'<sup>80</sup>

Wellesley wanted a firmer kind of political management, that would help implement government policy. He insisted on seeing stated 'specifically the amount of... [a] demand, whether for secret service, for intelligence, or for the subsistence of police men or troops.' In one particular case, which obviously related to the time of the rebellion in 1798, he said that 'when this amount will be given in, it must be referred to Lord Camden [the lord lieutenant at the time] and Lord Chichester [formerly Pelham, then the

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<sup>80</sup> Wellesley to Richmond, 2 July 1807, (NLI MS. 58/31).



chief secretary], and if they should agree that the demand is a just one it will be easy to settle the payment of it.' 'Otherwise', Wellesley said blankly, 'it is impossible.'<sup>81</sup> It is not clear whether such specifics could in fact be given ten years after the event, but this attitude clearly resonated though Wellesley's overarching approach to claims on the Irish administration's patronage. If particular attention had to be paid, in order to secure votes in parliament, to the demands of Irish MPs, then so be it. He was savvy enough to suggest to Richmond in July 1807, 'I am afraid to say that you will find it necessary to attend to the applications of the members of parliament'.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, the opinion at Dublin Castle was clearly one that sought to use patronage not for past services - even if this meant assistance during the rebellion or helping to pass the union - but to reward currently active and loyal supporters of government.

Richmond shared this view. Right at the end of his tenure as lord lieutenant he received a memorial from Castlereagh seeking the advancement of William Johnson to the judicial bench.<sup>83</sup> However, Richmond told his then chief secretary, Robert Peel, on 5 March 1813, not long before he left office, that 'I must in the first instance say that I do not feel myself bound by any of what is usually called union promises.'<sup>84</sup> This was a hugely important statement by Richmond. After five years in Ireland he signified in no uncertain terms that he was against fulfilling the union engagements for their own sake. The view of Richmond's administration at the end of his tenure was the same as it had been at the beginning. Furthermore, Johnson had been marked as a man who 'received assurances of

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<sup>81</sup> Wellesley to Richmond, 2 July 1807, (NLI MS. 58/31).

<sup>82</sup> Wellesley to Richmond, 1 July 1807, (NLI MS. 58/25).

<sup>83</sup> While only referred to by Richmond in this letter as 'W. Johnson', this was certainly William Johnson who sat in the House of Commons of Ireland for the borough of Roscommon in 1800, [Brown, Geoghegan and Kelly (eds.), *The Irish Act of Union*, p. 187]. He supported the union, with Barrington stating that he was 'returned to parliament by Lord Castlereagh...appointed a judge since', as is elaborated upon here, [Barrington, *Rise and fall of the Irish nation*, p. 491].

<sup>84</sup> Richmond to Robert Peel, 3 March 1813, (NLI MS. 61/380).

legal provision' at the time of union, and he appears on the Home Office list of engagements, as someone who 'both wrote and spoke ably in support of the union, and is much respected in his profession.'<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, in 1804 when Hardwicke gave Hawkesbury a rundown on the remaining engagements, he made a particular point of indicating the many problems in accomplishing this task,

Great difficulty attends the fulfilment of this gentleman's engagement. He looks to the bench, but his brother being already an union judge, and not highly respected, it is scarcely possible to place him there also, with any regard to what is due to the profession.<sup>86</sup>

Richmond's refusal to countenance from the outset any further promotion of this long suffering claimant, even though the request came directly from Castlereagh for a man who had supplied noteworthy support of the measure both in and out of parliament, is telling. He was happy to accept that 'Mr. W. Johnson is a respectable man', but as Richmond said, 'I made him a king's counsel.' Yet, even leaving the engagements issue to one side, 'no vacancy has happened on the bench since I came here', and even if there was, Richmond felt 'there are several who might be promoted before him.'<sup>87</sup> Indeed Johnson had to wait until 1817 before he was appointed to the bench as a justice of the common pleas.<sup>88</sup> For Richmond in 1813, Johnson's union pretensions were, in a sense, old news. In that same year another claimant Arthur French met with similar refusals. French insisted that 'it is over ten years since Mr. Pitt had made the engagement with me, which I now seek to have

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<sup>85</sup> NA, HO 100/103/103.

<sup>86</sup> MacDonagh, *The viceroy's post-bag*, p. 51.

<sup>87</sup> Richmond to Peel, 3 March 1813, (NLI MS. 61/380).

<sup>88</sup> Francis Elrington Ball, *The judges in Ireland, 1221-1921*, 2 vols. (London, 1926), ii, p. 340.



ratified.<sup>89</sup> However, on this point Peel stressed ‘I know nothing of the engagements to which you refer as imposing an obligation on the duke of Richmond’. As neither Richmond nor the current government in London had ‘made such engagements themselves’ they simply could not have ‘recognised these as binding upon them if they were made by others.’<sup>90</sup>

Brynn has suggested that ‘at first the Portland ministry planned to settle these vexatious claims [the union engagements] directly; this would allow Richmond to focus on other matters.’<sup>91</sup> However, the primary evidence he (seemingly incorrectly<sup>92</sup>) cites, does not support this assumption. In fact, Hawkesbury told Richmond in the course of this conversation in 1807 that government would only back claims on patronage, even if ‘it may offend many of our friends who are in want of office’ if it conformed to ‘a most salutary rule, which appears to be readily resolved upon’. This was principally ‘that every person holding office tenable with parliament should be expected to bring himself into parliament.’<sup>93</sup> When placed beside Wellesley’s comments, with whom Hawkesbury was in close communication in these early months of the new administration, and both Richmond’s and Peel’s observations in 1813, there is a strong case to be made that real and current parliamentary support was the key to government preferment as the end of the decade approached. In the 1810s this policy was even more apparent. So while there may have been a perception amongst both Irish and British politicians that the reestablishment of a new anti-catholic, conservative government would lead to the fulfilment of pre-union promises, Richmond’s administration in Ireland was one with post-union sensibilities. As Hawkesbury put it rather simply in May 1807, political appointments needed to be

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<sup>89</sup> Arthur French to Peel, [5 June 1813], (NLI MS. 71/1416c).

<sup>90</sup> Peel to French, 5 June [1813], (NLI MS. 71/1416a).

<sup>91</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 83.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92, endnote 56.

<sup>93</sup> Hawkesbury to Richmond, 22 April 1807, (NLI MS. 70/1346).

disposed of 'in a way if possible that will add to our political strength.'<sup>94</sup> The union then was not the bargaining tool it once had been.

The Richmond viceroyalty therefore marked another new departure in post-union politics. It was one where the union was to be ignored as an issue when it came to advancement and preferment. The only place where it remained an issue was in terms of national security. Under Richmond there was to be a tougher line on law and order, but not an absolute crackdown, and no introduction of extreme coercive policies. Nevertheless in 1809 Robert Dundas, Richmond's second chief secretary, would exclaim 'that forbearance and concession are not the weapons with which Jacobins and traitors ought to be fought'; a stinging denunciation of previous conciliatory approaches.<sup>95</sup> It remained to be seen how the Richmond viceroyalty would change as Ireland changed in this period.

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<sup>94</sup> Hawkesbury to Richmond, 7 May 1807, (NLI MS. 70/1322).

<sup>95</sup> Dundas to Richmond, 7 May 1809, (NLI MS. 59/167).



## Chapter Ten

### The greening of a chief secretary: the case study

#### of William Wellesley Pole, 1809-1813

Of the ten men who held the office of chief secretary in the period under discussion in this thesis it could be argued that two of them ‘went native’ during their time in Ireland, and changed their beliefs regarding how Ireland should be governed. The first was William Wickham, the brilliant but brittle spymaster, who has already been discussed in this work, and whose political shift has been explored and debated by Michael Durey and Patrick Geoghegan in particular.<sup>1</sup> The other was Richmond’s third chief secretary, William Wellesley Pole, the younger brother of Arthur Wellesley, who was in office from 1809 to 1812, and whose transformation has been largely ignored and misunderstood.<sup>2</sup> During his time in Ireland Pole was considered, as he admitted himself, to be ‘a violent anti-catholic’.<sup>3</sup> However in 1812, while still in office though waiting to be replaced, he made a major speech in the House of Commons in support of catholic emancipation, backing a motion by Henry Grattan. What was even more explosive was that he followed this by denouncing British policy on the catholic question in 1813, and in such a public manner that he drew stinging rebukes from the home secretary, his successor as chief secretary, and other former colleagues. What had happened in the period to bring about this transformation will be explored in this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> Durey, *Wickham*; Geoghegan, *Emmet*.

<sup>2</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, pp. 145-146; G. Le G. Norgate, rev. John K. Severn, ‘William Wellesley-Pole, (1763–1845)’, *ODNB*; Patrick M. Geoghegan, ‘William Wellesley-Pole, (1763–1845)’, *DIB; History of parliament 1790-1820*.

<sup>3</sup> Pole to Richmond, 29 June 1812, (NLI MS. 60/277).

Some historians have suggested that Lord Wellesley, the influential elder brother and supporter of catholic rights, convinced Pole of the merits of emancipation after he left office.<sup>4</sup> The reality is much more complex than that. Pole's thinking had evolved independently in Ireland, and there is a crucial twenty-eight page document in the Richmond papers in the National Library of Ireland, dated 31 December 1811, which charts that development. Indeed it was a document which Pole himself referenced repeatedly in 1813, in an attempt to defend himself from charges of inconsistency. This document was a 'most secret and confidential' memorandum on Ireland which he sent to the home secretary, Richard Ryder, for his support.<sup>5</sup> In it, Pole insisted that 'the state of the public mind in Ireland renders it of the first importance that the prince regent should come to a final decision respecting the claims of the Roman Catholics'. For Pole this issue was of the utmost importance, and 'should be publicly communicated in a shape which will leave no doubt whatever that the declaration contains the settled opinion and determination of the prince regent'. However, 'at the time it was ignored.'<sup>6</sup> In his work on the fall and rise of the catholic nation, Thomas Bartlett quotes one of the most important lines in this memorandum, when he states that 'the catholics of Ireland, as the chief secretary William Wellesley-Pole, put it, held themselves to be "emphatically...the People of Ireland".'<sup>7</sup> Bartlett references this line on two occasions and takes his lead from a copy of the memorandum now stored at the National Archives in Kew.<sup>8</sup> Ryder had this draft prepared by his personal secretary for use by the Home Office sometime after 11 April 1813, notably only after Pole had forced him to pay it more heed.<sup>9</sup> However, Bartlett's

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<sup>4</sup> G. Le G. Norgate, *rev.* John K. Severn, 'William Wellesley-Pole, (1763–1845)', *ODNB*.

<sup>5</sup> Pole, 'Memorandum', 31 December 1811, (NLI MS. 63/590a).

<sup>6</sup> *History of Parliament 1790-1820*.

<sup>7</sup> Bartlett, *Fall and rise of the Irish nation*, p. 269 and p. 304.

<sup>8</sup> W.W. Pole, 'Memorandum on Ireland', 31 Dec. 1811 (NA HO 100/165/345-351).

<sup>9</sup> Richard Ryder to Peel, 11 April 1813, (NLI MS. 63/591).



reference is just a tiny part of a document which requires much greater exploration, alongside the bulk of the Richmond papers in the National Library of Ireland.

The context for this transformation was the madness of King George III and the creation of a regency under the prince of Wales in February 1811. The prince had been expected to replace the government with a pro-catholic administration under Lord Grenville or Lord Wellesley, instead he did nothing, claiming he did not want to upset his father.<sup>10</sup> The whigs felt betrayed, and the anger towards the new prince regent increased as time went on. In 1812 Spencer Perceval was assassinated in the lobby of the House of Commons and the prince regent asked Lord Liverpool to form a new government. Christopher Hibbert discusses 'the indignation of the whigs', who were:

annoyed by the prince's hostility to the political emancipation of Roman Catholics. Their indignation became particularly rancorous after the murder of Spencer Perceval in 1812 and the appointment of Lord Liverpool as prime minister in a reorganized tory administration after a prolonged political crisis in which the prince's hostility to his erstwhile friends became fully apparent.

So there was no change in Ireland because of the accession to power (to all intents and purposes) of the prince regent. But it did provoke Pole into a series of reflections on what was necessary in Ireland. The first thing he realised was that greater clarity was necessary. The Irish catholics had held out hopes that emancipation would follow the death of the king. This in itself was bad, because it encouraged hostile thoughts, but the confusion in

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher Hibbert, 'George IV, (1762–1830)', *ODNB*.

the early years of the regency, the mixed messages, only served to undermine the attempts to maintain law and order in Ireland.

Pole had certainly given the impression of being anti-catholic during his time in office. In February 1811, at the same time as the prince regent was taking over, he issued a proclamation 'prohibiting the catholic committee from electing a convention in Ireland, and followed this by blocking a meeting of the committee later in the month.'<sup>11</sup> This caused 'uproar at Westminster' as the opposition accused the government of repression in Ireland. 'Pole received "a gentle check" from his colleagues' for not having consulted ministers in London ahead of his actions.<sup>12</sup> Despite this criticism, he kept his job in Ireland. His public position on this occasion seems to support Patrick Geoghegan's assertion in the *Dictionary of Irish biography* that 'as secretary he opposed conciliation, and became a divisive influence on the catholic question.'<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the *Oxford dictionary of national biography* insists that 'his conservative instincts made him hostile to the measure [of relief] and its proponents, and he recommended their vigorous repression.'<sup>14</sup> The analysis in R.G. Thorne's history of parliament volume modifies this slightly. It is stated that Pole, 'as chief secretary, although he had advocated a relaxation of coercion in Ireland in 1810, he was "not conciliatory"'. This was certainly Richmond's initial belief in any case.<sup>15</sup> However these interpretations need adjustment and elaboration, as by the end of the year Pole was to be set on a different approach in Ireland.

Pole was a pragmatist and he realised during his time in Ireland that half-measures would not keep the country tranquil. The union must be made complete – with full rights

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<sup>11</sup> Patrick M. Geoghegan, 'William Wellesley-Pole, (1763-1845)', *DIB*.

<sup>12</sup> *History of parliament 1790-1820*.

<sup>13</sup> Patrick M. Geoghegan, 'William Wellesley-Pole, (1763-1845)', *DIB*.

<sup>14</sup> G. Le G. Norgate, rev. John K. Severn, 'William Wellesley-Pole, (1763-1845)', *ODNB*.

<sup>15</sup> *History of parliament 1790-1820*.



for the catholics – or there must be a return to the penal laws. But there could be no compromise. Having a union without going the whole way just raised expectations, and contributed to the instability on the island. He made this explicit in his speech on catholic rights in the House of Commons on 1 March 1813 when he admitted that he had opposed the union in 1801. But he now saw its merits and wanted to make it complete. What mattered was promoting ‘the tranquillity of the empire.’<sup>16</sup> Developing his thesis he argued the government must:

either advance or recede; stand still you cannot. You must either have a re-enactment of the penal laws and a rebellion in Ireland, or you must seriously take the claims of the Roman Catholics into consideration with a view to final and conciliatory adjustment.

Pole had come to realise that the harsh approach would not work, it would lead to a rebellion. So conciliation and reconciliation was required.

All of these ideas were first developed in his twenty-eight page memorandum in 1811. This memorandum grants significant insight into the Irish administration’s understanding of the pressing issues of governance during this period, notably in relation to Irish catholic calls for relief. In it he pointed out that ‘from 1801 to the present moment the Roman Catholics of Ireland have been taught to believe that the only bar to the admission of their claims was the scruple of the king’. Thus he argued, ‘they looked to the death of the king or the establishment of an unlimited regency, as the period of the restrictions of which they complain.’ In a thoughtful, but provocative analysis he noted

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<sup>16</sup> 1 March 1813, *Hansard 1*, vol. 24, col. 896.

that they believed ‘Mr. Pitt and a great part of his administration were favourable to them, [and this] led them to expect that if the king were out of the way there could be a sort of coalition in the House of Commons in their favour.’ Pole was critical of the catholic leadership’s refusal to accept a royal veto on appointments of bishops in return for catholic relief and said, ‘in a very short time not only the veto, but any interference whatever on the part of the crown or legislature in spiritual matters was completely scouted, and upon no point are the catholics now so unanimous as they are against the veto’. Even ‘the many sober members of parliament who thought something should have been conceded if the establishment could have been secured would not hear of any concessions’ Pole complained, ‘without an arrangement for that purpose.’ This had been the stalemate upon which parliamentary debate had lingered for some time, Pole lamented, resulting in a kind of Punch and Judy show in the Commons, ‘without any expectation on the part of the Roman Catholics that the debate would be anything more than a field day for the orators on the different sides of the house.’ As he put it, ‘a catholic speech from Mr. Grattan – a protestant speech from the treasury bench – an extrication by Mr. Ponsonby from the labyrinth he had been placed in by Dr. Milner and the usual general and violent assertions from some of the Irish members.’<sup>17</sup> Ultimately however, Pole argued that while ‘every discussion was in reality mischievous, something more dangerous appeared’ both in and out of parliament. Support for religious tolerance and the ‘repeal of all Tests [Acts]’ for not just Irish catholics, but their English counterparts, as well as protestant dissenters was called for ‘as a proof of the unceasing liberty of the English nation’. This Pole concluded,

emboldened the catholics to proceed with redoubled order – encouraged by the protestant members of parliament in opposition, by many protestant peers, and by

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<sup>17</sup> Pole, ‘Memorandum’, 31 December 1811, (NLI MS. 63/590a).



the partisans of the opposition members of parliament... also by a very large body of protestant country gentlemen throughout Ireland, who are generally speaking from alarm or supineness, favourable to their claims and flattered by assurances of support to all their claims from persons who give themselves out as being, and are believed almost universally in Ireland to be in the regent's confidence.<sup>18</sup>

Pole believed then that the 'catholics have advanced their pretensions of late with a boldness and in a menacing manner unknown to former times.' This led to his central point. The catholics had begun to act in 'defiance of the laws of the land...disobeying and ridiculing the proclamation of the lord lieutenant and council...and in open contempt of the executive government.' And through 'every trick and quirk their most ingenious lawyers could devise endeavoured to evade the law in every particular', while at the same time 'have they been most assiduous and eager to bring into hostility with the government their whole body at meetings...in every part of Ireland'. He suggested the catholics sought to make their protestant supporters 'parties to an insult to the representative of the crown in Ireland' and 'with this display of strength...they seem to have hoped that the government would have been afraid to grapple'.<sup>19</sup>

Pole saw the growing influence of the catholic committee as a threat to British authority in Ireland. This was Pole's driving concern and one which he crucially believed was in line with the administration's principles at Dublin Castle. The publication and distribution of Denys Scully's anonymous, '*The penal laws that aggrieve the catholics*' (as Pole called it in short hand), was another direct slur on the administration and British rule in general, seemingly giving his arguments more weight. He saw the book as a catholic

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<sup>18</sup> Pole, 'Memorandum', 31 December 1811, (NLI MS. 63/590a).

<sup>19</sup> Pole, 'Memorandum', 31 December 1811, (NLI MS. 63/590a).

blueprint for advancing their political might and contended that they sought ‘*possession* of four-fifths of the offices civil, military or political belonging to Ireland...four-fifths of the seats in the House of Commons, and four-fifths of the seats in the House of Lords and indeed of the Irish peerage, four fifths of all corporate offices and of all corporate privileges.’ At the base of all these considerations Pole asked ministers to consider, ‘how far it goes to the overthrow of the protestant establishment in Ireland – whether or not if the demands are granted, parliamentary reform in its most extended shape, repeal of the union, and separation from England are or are not likely to follow?’<sup>20</sup>

Pole’s conservative instincts thus seemed well in line with government principles at Westminster – fearful of reform, supportive of the established church, disinclined to catholic relief, and most importantly, ardent in upholding the Anglo-Irish connection. But there was more at work here. Pole was providing a warning about what might happen unless something was done to secure the support of the catholics, and end their feelings of alienation. In other words, the government had to consider how best to implement, and in turn complete, the union in order to avoid a growing momentum for repeal.

Pole first went public with his views on 22 June 1812 when he spoke in direct support of a motion brought by George Canning in favour of negating catholic political disabilities. What was extraordinary about this intervention was that he was still technically the serving chief secretary, although he did point out that ‘he now merely held [the office] at the convenience of the present government, in order to finish some business he had begun’.<sup>21</sup> In a dramatic speech, he called on the government for ‘the bearing of all catholic laws, which could be repealed’. Pole declared, ‘he always thought the time to

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<sup>20</sup> Pole, ‘Memorandum’, 31 December 1811, (NLI MS. 63/590a). [Emphasis in original].

<sup>21</sup> 22 June 1812, *Hansard 1*, vol. 23, col. 672.



consider this measure would come, and he was now for giving every possible degree of privilege and liberty, consistent with security of church and state.’ He was clear on one point in particular though, that ‘he had abstained from such discussion while he was an official man, whose duty it was to see the laws obeyed’, but now ‘consequently he had no duty which prevented the free declaration of these his opinions.’

There followed an important discussion between Pole and Richmond. This provides some compelling evidence that Pole’s time in Ireland was defined by a philosophy of submitting to the principles of the administration, particularly those of the lord lieutenant, and not his own. Released from these constraints, he was now able to speak freely. A week after his intervention in parliament he told Richmond, ‘nothing in all the transactions that have lately passed in the political world, has given me half the uneasiness that my differing in any degree from you has done. In truth it is the only circumstance that has given me any real pain.’ He stated that he had ‘throughout the whole business acted in the mode I thought most proper, and not having been actuated by anything but my own sense of my own duty, under most trying and complicated circumstances’. ‘I care’, Pole said, very little for the abuse...of those whose province it has been always to abuse me politically (at least since I have had the honour of serving under your grace)’. He admitted, ‘I have long made up my mind to what every political man whose fate it is to take a prominent part must submit to’ and that he ‘must only revert to my own conscience, and proceed on the mode I conceive to be best, regardless of other considerations.’<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Pole to Richmond, 29 June 1812, (NLI MS. 60/277).

At the same time, he wished to give Richmond some explanation that would clear up any misunderstandings. He repeated much of what he said in the House of Commons, and insisted that circumstances could allow 'a man at any time to alter his opinion as to the expediency of the time' which would see 'a subject...brought to happy conclusion.' Most importantly he declared, 'I contend for it that this is the only difference in my two opinions... and your grace observes I was thought in Ireland to be a violent anti-catholic, I never did give any opinion on the question farther than I have now stated'. 'It was only because it suited those who wanted to trample on the laws and to intimidate the gov[ernmen]t that I was thus held out'. And furthermore he was resolute in his belief that he had, 'endeavoured to enforce obedience and to assist your grace in maintaining order', but 'upon the general question I never gave any opinion'. He knew of Perceval's complete rejection of any kind of catholic relief and said, 'I was attached to him, and meant as a politician to stand or fall with him.'

Pole spoke at length about the fact that the political landscape had changed drastically since Perceval's death however, and that it was now time to consider concessions to the catholic body. 'It is wise to let things go on as they are and prepare to quell a rebellion at once, or to employ the collective wisdom of any cabinet we may have...to digest a proposition liberal to the catholics and safe to the state'. Pole was strong in his convictions and went as far as to assert that, 'if I had suffered the violent proceedings of the aggregate meeting, partly by the by levelled personally at me, to have biased my vote, or to have shut my mouth, I should have despised myself to the latest hour of my life.' He was 'now in the happy situation of having pleased no party; your grace does not approve of my conduct; the Talents certainly do not; the catholics unquestionably don't; the Irish opposition papers have already begun to abuse me...my protestant friends of



course abuse me'. Pole saw no possibility of victory in this battle but could only console himself in 'giving his honest opinion...which I have a right to exercise as I am not under any obligation of a political nature to any man alive!' He believed he 'may be out of office for a very long time' yet, as he said, 'I conclude as I began – I lament in all these matters nothing personally, but my differing from your grace.'<sup>23</sup>

A second intervention on the catholic question, a year later, was even more explosive. It was in this speech that the true importance of Pole's memorandum becomes obvious, when he supported a motion introduced in the House of Commons on 25 February 1813 by Henry Grattan. Grattan called for a committee to be formed of the whole house 'to take into serious consideration the state of the laws affecting his majesty's Roman Catholic subjects...with a view to such a final and conciliatory adjustment as may be conducive to the peace and strength of the United Kingdom'.<sup>24</sup> On 1 March, after the debate had been adjourned twice, Pole came out publicly in favour of Irish catholic claims.<sup>25</sup> His seeming inconsistency would cause shock and disgust on both sides of the Irish Sea. He was immediately forced to defend himself in the face of the immediate jeers and heckles from the government benches led by Peel, Ryder and William Fitzgerald (Irish chancellor of the exchequer). In doing so Pole pointed to his memorandum from two years earlier to justify his position. Insisting that 'there is a very great difference between the present period and the time when I was in office', he argued that 'the case is as different as light from darkness'. He went on to state,

When the right hon. gentlemen have done cheering, I will explain what I mean.

When I filled the offices alluded to, the cabinet were unanimously of opinion that it

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<sup>23</sup> Pole to Richmond, 29 June 1812, (NLI MS. 60/277).

<sup>24</sup> 25 February 1813, *Hansard I*, vol. 24, col. 763.

<sup>25</sup> 1 March 1813, *Hansard I*, vol. 24, cols. 890- 900.

was not a proper time to bring forward the catholic claims—and the government of Ireland acted under that opinion.

Pole denied any charge of inconsistency. He revealed that, ‘when I was in office, my opinion was that things could not continue as they were; this opinion I expressed to my right hon. friend on the treasury bench (Mr. Ryder), in a memorandum containing the grounds of it’.<sup>26</sup> Ryder was at first flabbergasted, unsure to what he referred. This was an indication of just how little attention he had paid to Pole’s memorandum in 1811. Eventually after a protracted search, ‘hindered by the confusion into which all my papers were thrown on my removal from Great Georges Street’, Ryder found ‘the document, to which I believe Pole referred in the last debate upon the Roman Catholic question’, and quickly sent it to Peel and Richmond in Dublin.<sup>27</sup> Again though, he was only able to infer that this was the right document ‘from no other fact of the internal evidence than the date. It was the last I received from him which went at any length into the state of Ireland in regard to that question and he referred to it as such.’<sup>28</sup> Clearly Pole’s treatise had not sparked any reassessment in the Home Office of British approaches to governance in Ireland at the time of its composition. It had certainly not left an impression on Ryder. Indeed, Pole was frustrated by this fact during his speech in 1813, ‘I did not presume to point out what should be done, but I most strongly pressed the necessity of not allowing this important question to remain in its present anomalous condition’ he said, while reiterating, ‘if my right hon. friend will take the trouble to examine his official papers, he will find the record, and perceive that I am not quite so inconsistent as the right hon. gentlemen at present seem to think.’<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> 1 March 1813, *Hansard 1*, col. 899.

<sup>27</sup> Ryder to Peel, 11 April 1813, (NLI MS. 63/591).

<sup>28</sup> Ryder to Peel, 11 April 1813, (NLI MS. 63/591).

<sup>29</sup> 1 March 1813, *Hansard 1*, vol. 24, cols. 899.



Ryder called upon Peel and Richmond to assess the memorandum, and consider if it 'inferred that his [Pole's] sense of the danger of further concession to the Roman C[atholics] different to that which he had so frequently expressed' and if it was to 'afford strong "*prima facie*" evidence' of Pole's present position.<sup>30</sup> Peel had been particularly cutting in debate, mocking Pole's reference to him as 'my other half', an allusion to the fact that Peel held the office of chief secretary, while William Fitzgerald was chancellor of the exchequer for Ireland, dividing the two offices Pole had held in Ireland.<sup>31</sup> 'The speech which the right hon. gentleman has just delivered, is the most extraordinary one which I ever heard', Peel declared. 'I defy the right honourable gentleman to reconcile the opinions, which he has just expressed, upon the catholic claims,' he said 'with those which, from his own avowal, at a former period, he was supposed to entertain.' Peel compared his and Fitzgerald's respective positions, admitting that they did indeed differ in opinion on the question of catholic relief, but, to Pole he sneered, 'in personal unity we cannot represent him, but in discordance of sentiment we are competent to the task.'<sup>32</sup> Ryder too joined the attack saying that Pole 'appeared to call upon me to bear witness, that the opinions, then delivered by him, were consistent with those, which he was known to have entertained while he was in office.' Of course he would do no such thing and said, 'I must assure my right hon. friend, that I am not aware of any communication, at any time, from him, which would have led me to form any other conclusion'.<sup>33</sup>

In his contribution Peel discussed the many attacks Pole had weathered in parliament due to his perceived anti-catholic views, criticising Pole's argument, that 'the

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<sup>30</sup> Ryder to Peel, 11 April 1813, (NLI MS. 63/591).

<sup>31</sup> 1 March 1813, *Hansard 1*, vol. 24, col. 898.

<sup>32</sup> 1 March 1813, *Hansard 1*, vol. 24, cols. 900-901.

<sup>33</sup> 1 March 1813, *Hansard 1*, vol. 24, col. 942.

cabinet was united, and that he was in a subordinate capacity; not acting upon his own judgment, but executing the commands of others'. 'If this be so, and if the right hon. gentleman did differ from those with whom he was acting, what forbearance has he shown in this house!', Peel fumed. And he went much further,

He was taunted with arrogating to himself the whole of the government of Ireland; the official acts of that government were imputed, by some of his adversaries, to his impetuosity and indiscretion, yet he submitted with cheerfulness to every imputation of bigotry and intolerance, and not a word escaped him, from which it could be inferred that there was not the most cordial concurrence of sentiment, on every branch of the catholic question, between himself and the other members of the government.

He concluded his tirade with the stinging observation that, 'I may admire the right hon. gentlemen for their example of forbearance and discretion, but I cannot help thinking that it would have been better for him,' Peel believed, 'if he did differ with those whose instructions he was called upon to execute, to have resigned his office, rather than have sacrificed his opinions.'<sup>34</sup>

Pole had certainly claimed that he was only following orders. 'I did not indeed press my sentiments arrogantly, but I stated them frankly. Things are now, however, much changed from what they were then', he told the commons in 1813.<sup>35</sup> Again he repeated that Ryder would find the paper if he looked, that he was 'surprised that he had forgotten it', and that it had been for Ryder to do with as he pleased. 'I pressed the cabinet to take

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<sup>34</sup> 1 March 1813, *Hansard I*, vol. 24, col. 901.

<sup>35</sup> 1 March 1813, *Hansard I*, vol. 24, col. 900.



the subject into their most serious consideration, and to form upon it, an arrangement, which should be final', Pole said. 'I did not presume to dictate what that arrangement should be, but I expressed a decided opinion that an arrangement must be made'.<sup>36</sup> Critically, his memorandum had been accompanied in December 1811 with a letter to Ryder, in which he was adamant that he acted in concert with Richmond. 'I have shown his grace my memorandum and he has desired me to tell you he heartily approves of it and that it contains his sentiments.' 'I have drawn it', Pole told Ryder, 'from a deep sense of public duty.'<sup>37</sup> It was this sentiment that caused particular consternation at Dublin Castle and put Peel and Richmond on the warpath. Pole had claimed in 1811 that Scully's publication of *Penal laws* was enough to 'put any man in possession of the real demands of the Roman Catholics of Ireland at present' and importantly, 'of the temper which those demands are made'.<sup>38</sup> On this point Richmond 'expressed his opinion of it to be exactly coincident with mine.'<sup>39</sup> It was however that present demeanour of the catholics, one which Pole felt was dangerous, that he argued removed any possibility of relief at that moment.

Peel forwarded the memorandum to Richmond stating, 'I am not at all surprised that you should have seen and approved of this document', nor did he doubt that Richmond could ever believe it to contradict Pole's seemingly anti-catholic opinions. 'There is evidence enough in this I think, to prove that Mr. Pole's views of the catholic question have materially changed'. Peel even remembered having seeing the memorandum previously, and now upon a second reading was convinced that Pole was 'adverse to the catholic claims and that his decision upon them was unalterably fixed.' He conceded that

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<sup>36</sup> 1 March 1813, *Hansard 1*, vol. 24, col. 949.

<sup>37</sup> Pole to Ryder, 31 December 1811, (NLI MS. 63/590).

<sup>38</sup> Pole, 'Memorandum', 31 December 1811, (NLI MS. 63/590a).

<sup>39</sup> Pole to Ryder, 31 December 1811, (NLI MS. 63/590).

Pole had insisted that a 'final decision should be taken' regarding the catholics, but that 'no one can doubt that the whole tenor of the argument is in favour of a decision adverse to any concession.' Peel was desperate for Pole 'to move for the production of this document' in parliament, so confident was he in his assessment of its contents.<sup>40</sup>

It was at this point that Richmond and Peel dissected Pole's memorandum adding their own additions which do not appear on the Home Office copy.<sup>41</sup> These notes brought the opinions of the lord lieutenant, former chief secretary and current chief secretary all together in one place, and are extremely important for that reason. Richmond believed first and foremost that Pole was of the opinion that 'the question ought to be determined by the regent independent of his ministers.' Similarly, hoping to counteract Pole's claims that the political climate in 1813 was drastically different than when he was chief secretary, Richmond and Peel considered the question of the royal veto. Peel noted, 'I am not sure that the catholics are less unanimous on this point, when Mr. Pole made his last speech on the catholic question', with Richmond adding that they were in fact, 'equally unanimous but more violent.' Richmond seemed to agree with Pole on the point that protestant land holders and MPs in Ireland were alarmed at the evolving nature of catholic agitation, highlighting his reference to '*alarm or supineness*'. However, he was desperate to understand 'Pole's reasons for favouring their claims', wondering if these considerations played a part. Peel was more direct and attempted to derail Pole's 1813 assertion that in 1811 the catholic committee (and the convention that was to be formed out of this) and catholic board were two separate entities; and that with the suppression of the committee and convention protestants could now support catholic calls for relief without fear. Peel stated however, that Pole clearly believed 'that the danger to be apprehended from the two

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<sup>40</sup> Peel to Richmond, 13 April 1813, (NLI MS. 63/592).

<sup>41</sup> W.W. Pole, 'Memorandum on Ireland', (NA HO 100/165/345-351).



assemblies was in substance the same'. However, Richmond's follow up was more forgiving and stressed that 'it certainly appears...that Mr. Pole *then* thought the board worse than the convention, in which I agreed with him and still retain my opinion.' 'I only regret', Richmond said, 'that the law cannot reach them.' Yet, both men did agree that when Pole made his speech in March 1813, 'the temper and tenor' of the catholics was no 'more unassuming or conciliatory' than 1811, with Richmond arguing 'the reverse particularly when Pole made his speech.' Similarly, the catholic subscription to Scully's *Penal laws* was even more prominent in 1813 than 1811. 'At the period Pole *writes* they avowed the first part', Richmond said, 'they avowed the 2<sup>[nd]</sup> when he *spoke*...they avow both books more strenuously now than ever.'<sup>42</sup>

What is clear from these additions is that Richmond did agree, for the most part, with Pole's analysis of the catholic question in 1811. This was evidence that both were clearly aware of each other's opinions on the role of the administration in this instance. Peel's final observation were most telling on this point as he was eager to point out that,

Any person who reads this...can I think form no other conclusion...that the advice which the writer of the memorandum meant to give to his royal highness was this: that he should publically move as the king had done. That it was his fixed determination to resist the application of the Roman Catholics for admission to political power in the state.

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<sup>42</sup> Pole, 'Memorandum', 31 December 1811, (NLI MS. 63/590a). [Emphasis in original].

To this Richmond simply added, 'clearly.'<sup>43</sup> This was Richmond's own opinion and one which he believed Pole had articulated. Yes, in 1813 discrepancies had appeared, but at that moment in December 1811 Pole was acting with the full support of the viceroy and was ultimately subservient to him. Most importantly, this fact lends weight to Pole's own arguments that he was working under the auspices of higher authorities and helps consolidate the argument that the lord lieutenant at Dublin Castle was the driving force behind the implementation of government policy in Ireland.

Similarly, it is also worthwhile to consider what is *not* said in Richmond's 1813 notes on Pole's memorandum. At no point did he feel obligated to completely detach himself from Pole's previous opinions. It would have been much easier as lord lieutenant to cast Pole off and cite betrayal of principles. However, Richmond was aware that he had supported Pole in his communications with London in 1811; he had seen the memorandum before; and had agreed with its findings. That Pole now made claims of his memorandum in 1813 that did not seem to be apparent initially was of course important, but Richmond knew that he had been privy to those considerations nonetheless. He thus, frantically prepared a dossier of Pole's former letters on the subject of the administration's role in Ireland on the issue of catholic relief, taking extracts from seven different letters written between 6 February and 26 April 1812 which would prove Pole's anti-catholic sentiments.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, Richmond knew he was the final authority at Dublin Castle and this played a part in his engagement with the government's damage control policy after Pole's seeming about turn.

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<sup>43</sup> Pole, 'Memorandum', 31 December 1811, (NLI MS. 63/590a).

<sup>44</sup> 'Extracts from Mr. Pole's letters dated in February, March and April 1812', (NLI MS. 63/593).



This was particularly obvious when Richmond had discussed the whole predicament with Pole's brother, and Richmond's former chief secretary, Arthur Wellesley, now Lord Wellington, in September 1812. Richmond told Wellington that due to his various victories in the Peninsula, 'I only pity you when you come home for you will not like the fuss they will make of you.' The jovial tone of their conversation stopped here though, and Richmond spoke directly about Pole's conduct. He alluded once again to Scully's second volume of *Penal laws* and was particularly disgusted with the claim 'that I deliberately hanged a man I knew to be innocent because he was a respectable catholic farmer.' Furthermore, he was convinced that at catholic meetings throughout the country 'it is not concealed that emancipation is not the object but it is to get clear not merely of the union but of the connection with England.' When all of this was considered, he asked, 'what could cause the change of sentiment in your brother?' He reiterated, 'Pole says that things are changed in consequence of the death of Perceval and the opinion of the crown being different to what it has been.'<sup>45</sup> He was not however sold on Pole's reasoning, as 'from all I can learn the prince is as much against the catholics as his father was and after all their abuse of him I do not wonder at it'. Yet, he did think that if Pole was right, 'these would be very good reasons for the protestants to keep a better look out.' He put it in language Wellington could understand: 'I suspect if the French outflank you or take one of your positions you would be very apt to be more cautious than ever and bring up your reserve but not throw down your arms.' Richmond surmised that even if all Pole suggested was true he would 'conceive it my duty to judge on important matters of this sort for myself and not change my opinion because that of the crown was changed.' He was critical of Pole but saw no inconsistency in his approach when pointing to Lord Manners, the lord chancellor, who 'came to Ireland...strongly inclined to give a great deal to the

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<sup>45</sup> Richmond to Wellington, 17 September 1812, (NLI MS. 74/1820).

catholics. He now says nothing should be granted to them and wishes they should not have so much. I know no man who has a worse opinion of them, or who thinks they are so little to be trusted.' It was his concluding remarks that were most telling however. While he was convinced that the government in Britain was 'losing the confidence of the protestant people every day', he felt he was being muzzled in expressing his own views. 'I might perhaps retain it by stating my opinion against anything being granted...but they have wished me hitherto be silent on it.' Richmond however, had no problem in confiding in Wellington. He was steadfast in his refusal to countenance any kind of relief to Irish catholics and would not 'give them one single step', he said, 'not even if they became as quiet as possible'.<sup>46</sup>

Both political and familial concerns in England influenced Pole's filtration with opposition politics throughout this period.<sup>47</sup> He argued again and again that with Perceval's death, the political conditions were altered, and that he had been following the prime minister's lead when it came to Ireland.<sup>48</sup> However, his time in Ireland had clearly dislodged some supposed long held convictions on the relationship between catholics and the state in the United Kingdom. This thesis would argue that it was the need to submit to the policies of the administration that played a pivotal role in guiding Pole's actions during his time in the country.

It was to the policy of government espoused by the administration in Ireland that shaped Pole's habits in office. It could well be suggested that the revamped government attack on Pole, particularly from Peel, that came in 1813 was because he called into question the principles of the Irish administration and British government as a whole. He

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<sup>46</sup> Richmond to Wellington, 29 June 1812, (NLI MS. 74/1801).

<sup>47</sup> *History of parliament 1790-1820*.

<sup>48</sup> Patrick M. Geoghegan, 'William Wellesley-Pole, (1763-1845)', *DIB*.



insisted at that point that Richmond as lord lieutenant, and Ryder as home secretary, were aware of his feelings and had done nothing to counteract them. This simply could not stand. In fact just like Richmond, although on the opposite side of the question, Pole had remained quiet as to hide to his true feelings due to the station he occupied and the wishes of his superiors. The transformation of Pole from a hard-headed opponent of relief to a supporter of emancipation was not some emotional transformation, such as happened with Wickham in 1803. He remained hard-headed. During his time in Ireland he had come to realise that the union had changed things for ever, and that the old methods would not work. He supported emancipation in 1812 and 1813 for the very same pragmatic reasons that had previously seen him oppose them. It was not about the catholics; it was about the empire. The union must be made complete, or it would fail.

## Chapter Eleven

### **‘The tortures of a lord lieutenant’: Richmond, Peel, and the evolution of Irish politics, 1812-1815**

‘I will venture to say Ireland has been easier managed since I have been here than whilst  
the duke of Bedford was. He gave hopes, I have given none.’<sup>1</sup>

(The duke of Richmond, 1812)

As has been argued throughout this thesis, the Irish administration in the period 1801-1813 was focused on the lord lieutenant as the medium through which government policy was implemented. During the tenure in office of Hardwicke, Bedford, and Richmond it is possible to discern their hand in shaping that policy. The arrival of Robert Peel in Ireland as chief secretary, however, marked a new phase in Irish administration. He would serve until 1818, under three lords lieutenant, and would become the dominant voice at Dublin Castle. Partly this was because of personality: he was strong, and Richmond’s successors were notably weak. Partly this was because the role had changed since the passing of the union. However, any implication that it was Peel who directed matters whilst working under Richmond, with this outcome acting as a motivating factor, should be dispelled entirely. With the departure of Richmond in the summer of 1813, Peel completed his Irish apprenticeship. From that point on he was dominant. Jenkins supports this argument stating that ‘when Richmond was succeeded by the easy-going Whitworth and he in time by the ineffectual Talbot’, Peel had the opportunity to set the tone in making

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<sup>1</sup> Richmond to Lord Sidmouth, 29 June 1812, (NLI MS. 74/1801).



the chief secretary's office manifestly important in the shaping of Irish policy.<sup>2</sup> However under Richmond, policy remained crucially in the hands of the lord lieutenant.

This chapter will explore a new threat the Irish administration faced: an aggressive, self-confident catholic nation, led by the dominant barrister, Daniel O'Connell. O'Connell was such a source of frustration that Richmond soon refused to read any of his speeches, and was determined to put him in his place. This chapter also explores Richmond's attempts to withdraw from his role in Ireland, and the hardening of his position with respect to the catholics. At the start of his administration, and as has been explored earlier, he claimed that he supported mild measures in place of hard ones. By the end this had all changed, and he was suggesting that a rebellion in Ireland, provoked by the government, might be a solution to all their problems. Something had gone wrong. It might have been O'Connell, it might have been caused by his overdrinking, it might just have been that he was in Ireland for too long. But by the end, the Richmond viceroyalty was a sorry mess of paranoia, delusion, and misdirected vitriol.

### ***Peel in Ireland***

Peel gave a superb insight into his relationship with Richmond in September 1813 when he contacted him shortly after his departure from Ireland. It what was clearly meant to be only a polite note, in which he enquired if Richmond had had a 'favourable passage' during his sea crossing from Ireland, his letter nonetheless, gives an insight into how he saw his relationship with his former chief. Closing his letter with an assurance that Richmond's 'private friendship and esteem' was something which 'I hope I shall retain for

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<sup>2</sup> Jenkins, 'The chief secretary', p. 45.

life', he then included a postscript which was longer than the actual letter itself.<sup>3</sup> He ran through the problems he was having in dealing with claims for church patronage. 'I have been long enough in Ireland to know how much dependence is to be placed upon the old story a positive promise from the duke', Peel remarked. 'I shall not keep you in the tortures of a lord lieutenant by constantly referring to you to know whether you made such promises,' he told Richmond, 'but inform the parties as civilly as I can that I do not believe them.' He only caught himself by exclaiming, 'but why should I bore you with deaneries and Arthur French? I am sure you must be heartily tired of them.'<sup>4</sup> Yet, clearly this was simply a relapse into a discussion of the affairs of state with a man with whom he had an affinity and with whom he had worked through similar problems in the past. Furthermore, by Peel's own admission, he was long enough in Ireland at this point in September 1813 to make decisions on his own and to take on the government of Ireland to a greater degree. That Peel saw Richmond as not only the senior partner in their relationship, but more importantly, as the focal point of the Irish administration's principles for government, is crucial in better understanding the political as well as administrative nuances of this entire period. And indeed this fact was apparent from the moment of his appointment.

Before he ever left his previous position at the Home Office, Peel was resolute in informing Richmond that, 'the opportunity which Lord Sidmouth has afforded me, of sending the several communications which have been made by your grace to the home department on recent events connected with the political state of Ireland,' meant that he could 'confirm the confidence which I peculiarly felt that I should have the satisfaction of completely according in the principles upon which the government of Ireland has been

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<sup>3</sup> Peel to Richmond, 4 September 1813, (NLI MS. 71/1413).

<sup>4</sup> Peel to Richmond, 4 September 1813, (NLI MS. 71/1413).



conducted during the administration of it by your grace.’<sup>5</sup> Markedly, upon receiving this letter three days later, Richmond summarised its contents, which suggested that the fact that his new chief secretary ‘agrees completely in my government on... Irish politics’, was particularly important to him. A close confidant of Richmond’s, Lord Bathurst, who had recently been appointed secretary of state for war and the colonies by Liverpool in June 1812,<sup>6</sup> had however informed Peel that Richmond had plans to soon ‘resign the government of Ireland into other hands’.<sup>7</sup> Aware of this, Peel made sure he told Richmond that he ‘must anxiously trust that the principles upon which it has been conducted may continue in operation after the appointment of your grace’s successor.’ Again, Peel spoke of guiding principles that were, to his view, clearly embodied by Richmond as lord lieutenant and head of the Irish administration. Similarly, in speaking of a successor to Richmond, Peel reiterated this viewpoint, implying that whoever was to be the next lord lieutenant would ultimately shape the policy of government in Ireland.

Richmond was however annoyed that he had not been consulted about the appointment of Peel as his chief secretary. While McDowell states that ‘it is not surprising that from the union the chief secretary ceased to be the lord lieutenant’s personal nominee’ he none the less found it significant that ‘as early as 1812 the duke of Richmond felt called on to remonstrate mildly when a chief secretary [Peel] was nominated before he could raise any objection’.<sup>8</sup> That said, Richmond was glad to have Peel as chief secretary. ‘All things considered I should prefer Mr. Peel to any man in the House of Commons for secretary’, he told Bathurst.<sup>9</sup> From his own sources he knew that the prime minister, Liverpool, had ‘certainly proposed it to both the regent and Mr. Peel before I had time to state any

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<sup>5</sup> Peel to Richmond, 7 August 1812, (NLI MS. 74/1882).

<sup>6</sup> Neville Thompson, ‘Henry Bathurst, (1762–1834)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>7</sup> Peel to Richmond, 1 August 1812, (NLI MS. 74/1881).

<sup>8</sup> McDowell, *The Irish administration*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>9</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 5 August 1812, (NLI MS. 72/1593).

objection to it.’ However, he was also annoyed that various people were being suggested to the prince regent as his successor without any consultation. He mused that ‘the world have sent Lord Moira and Lord Wellesley to Ireland’, two decidedly pro-catholic politicians as his supposed successors as viceroy. This made him return to the appointment of Peel. Referencing Moira and Wellesley, he noted ‘depend on it they would not have approved of a chief secretary (which is the lord lieutenant’s appointment) being fixed on without their concurrence being asked.’ He would ‘not say a word to Lord Liverpool about it, lest it might have the appearance of discontent, and God knows this is a time when we ought to draw well together’. But his decided opinion, compelled him to tell Bathurst that ‘I think a hint from you at some favourable opportunity may prevent his inadvertently doing the same thing with my successor’.<sup>10</sup>

During his time in Ireland Hardwicke had been haunted by the problem of having a commander of the forces, rather than a commander-in-chief. As has been discussed in section one, his primary concern centred on the fact that this arrangement seemed to downgrade the lord lieutenant. In January 1812, Richmond faced a similar problem, when a junior officer was appointed as commander of the forces. Seeing this as a snub, considering that he too was military man, Richmond considered resigning. He admitted that ‘it did strike me as doubtful whether I ought to remain as lord lieutenant with a junior officer in command of the army’.<sup>11</sup> While this was ultimately a military matter, Richmond accepted ‘how difficult it would have been to found a senior to me fit for the situation’ and insisted ‘I have no wish to be at the head of the army, but I must not do what my brother soldiers would think wrong.’<sup>12</sup> Although he was clearly aware that this arrangement would impede upon his authority as lord lieutenant. Richmond eventually accepted the

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<sup>10</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 5 August 1812, (NLI MS. 72/1593).

<sup>11</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 12 January 1812, (NLI MS. 72/1595).

<sup>12</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 3 January 1812, HMC, *Bathurst MS.*, p. 159.



government's selection of Sir John Hope; an officer of lesser rank but a man he believed 'so fit a person for the command as any', as he could 'have no doubt that we shall go on very well together.' He apologised to the home secretary if doubting 'the propriety of my remaining here...has given you and your colleagues any annoyance.'<sup>13</sup> However, this admission only came after he felt his standing in Ireland, as well as his opinion on such matters, had been acknowledged by the British government.

It should also be noted that the voicing of these concerns came on the back of the government's proposals for a new chancellor of the exchequer for Ireland. There were two candidates, Leslie Foster (son of John Foster) and William Fitzgerald (son of James Fitzgerald, prime serjeant before the union). Richmond noted that 'Lord Liverpool is inclined I find to Leslie Foster as chancellor of the exchequer. W[illia]m Fitzgerald will be angry if it is so, and L[eslie] Foster will be more troublesome than ever in his applications for his friends.'<sup>14</sup> Richmond was not going against government in this moment though, stating, 'as he is equal to the situation I shall not object if Lord Liverpool continues to wish it.'

As it turned out, the government decided on William Fitzgerald as chancellor, not least because Richmond was positively disposed to his selection. As Peel reported, while 'Mr. Leslie Foster's qualifications for the office gave him a fairer claim to any other individual', Liverpool had 'learnt that your grace was of the opinion that W[illiam] Fitzgerald would be of more service to the Irish government than any other individual whose name had been mentioned for the appointment' and thus would 'propose the office

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<sup>13</sup> Richmond to Ryder, 13 January 1812, (NLI MS. 74/1787).

<sup>14</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 5 August 1812, (NLI MS. 72/1593).

to W[illiam] Fitzgerald'.<sup>15</sup> Richmond not only expected to be consulted on this kind of appointment, but in this instant managed arrangements so that his office remained the fulcrum around which the Irish government pivoted.

Following his retirement from Ireland, Richmond drafted a very important memorandum in November 1813 which set out his views on the authority of the lord lieutenant in Ireland. 'Lord Liverpool's wish that I give my opinion on some Irish subjects has led to these observations', Richmond told Peel in the aftermath of his viceroyalty.<sup>16</sup> These subjects related to the amalgamation of the Irish and British treasuries, alongside considerations for the peerage. On the treasury, the memorandum implied that Richmond generally concurred with such a measure being adopted, stating that it 'is in my opinion quite right'. However he was more concerned with the actual workings of this new arrangement, observing that a united treasury should have 'the English chancellor at the head, the ch[ief] secretary to be second'. He quickly got to the crux of the matter, and acknowledged, 'by which means the Irish part of it could be under the control of the l[or]d lieutenant.' Furthermore, he was entirely set against the idea that Ireland should have 'two resident lords of the treasury'. His arguments centred on the fact that this 'could prevent the current plan of the Irish treasury bringing themselves into parliament' and more importantly, 'would open the door to those appointments so as to prevent the patronage assisting the government.'<sup>17</sup>

Two observations should be made here. First, Richmond was clear that if government was installing a person in such a role, they had better be guaranteed that person's support in parliament. 'When you insist on a man bringin himself into parliament

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<sup>15</sup> Peel to Richmond, 10 August 1812, (NLI MS. 74/1880).

<sup>16</sup> Richmond to Peel, 10 November 1813, (NLI MS. 60/304). [Emphasis in original].

<sup>17</sup> Richmond to Peel, 10 November 1813, (NLI MS. 60/304).



you lessen the number who can claim and you force obedience to a certain degree'. The reason being that 'few would wish of giving up their £1000 a year for want of voting as they should', thus using all available patronage open to government to ensure parliamentary support. This was in fact exactly in line with Liverpool's (then Hawkesbury) own policies as home secretary in 1807 noted earlier in this section. What's more, the establishment in Dublin of possibly quasi-independent treasury officials would certainly impact on the authority of the lord lieutenant and the danger of this was certainly not lost on Richmond. He even confided in Peel that 'on this head I was wrong in not turning out O'Dell [*sic.* William Odell] but Mr. Perceval did not wish to risk then annoying the prince regent'.<sup>18</sup> Richmond was referencing his distaste at having Odell remain as a commissioner of the Irish treasury, even though he supported catholic claims in parliament between June 1810 and February 1812; amongst other things, voting against government, much to Richmond's utter revulsion.<sup>19</sup> 'Though I proposed to him', Richmond said, speaking of Perceval, 'to turn out that gentleman I could not think of pressing him when not only he but the country were hard run.'<sup>20</sup>

Leading directly from these concerns the second point to be considered is that Richmond was precise in where the authority over the Irish part of an amalgamated treasury should be vested. By placing the chief secretary at the head of this department, the lord lieutenant would therefore retain ultimate control therein. Evidently, Richmond saw a direct line of authority which flowed from the lord lieutenant through the office of chief secretary. It was only by that legitimacy ultimately granted by the lord lieutenant as superior that the chief secretary could function, for example, in this role at the head of the Irish portion of an amalgamated treasury of the United Kingdom.

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<sup>18</sup> Richmond to Peel, 10 November 1813, (NLI MS. 60/304).

<sup>19</sup> *History of parliament 1790-1820*.

<sup>20</sup> Richmond to Peel, 10 November 1813, (NLI MS. 60/304).

Peel was adamant that he ‘thought the authority of the lord lieutenant ought to be paramount over everything in Ireland.’<sup>21</sup> Furthermore he saw ‘nothing more objectionable than the creation of divided and independent authorities in a country situated and governed as Ireland is.’ Such a statement smacked of the same concerns harboured by Lord Redesdale in his conversations with William Wickham in 1806, and as Peel insisted, ‘while there may be some gain’, he was clear that ‘it would not in my mind make up for the evils which must arise from any diminution of the powers of the government of the country.’<sup>22</sup> This was clearly the perception at Dublin Castle and one that not only Richmond, but his post-union predecessors had worked hard to nurture. In his memorandum to Peel in 1813, he went so far as to state, ‘as I shall never be [or]d lieutenant again I speak uninterestedly but I seriously think the lord lieutenant should have *all* Irish appointments’ although he believed, ‘even with that he will hardly have enough patronage to carry on the government.’<sup>23</sup> Richmond felt he needed to ‘add one or two words’ on this point, a reference to the fact that this issue was one that had clearly resonated with him while in office and remained worthy of comment even after his departure. He detailed at least seven appointments of baronets and peers which ‘were made totally independent of me’. ‘One from an old promise as it was said of Mr. Pitt’s (Lord Kingston)’, particularly rankled. Over these men, he felt government had no control; ‘Lord Kingston was *never* in Ireland during the five and a half years that I was there’, while Lord Mountjoy, of whose elevation Richmond had to admit ‘that many deserved it before him’, would ‘not conceive of any obligation to them [the government]’. ‘A proof I was right’, Richmond said, came when Mountjoy bluntly declared his recent advancement ‘was “none to the government. I got it through private interference.”’ Ultimately,

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<sup>21</sup> Peel to Richmond, 16 July 1813, (NLI MS. 71/1414).

<sup>22</sup> Peel to Richmond, 16 July 1813, (NLI MS. 71/1414).

<sup>23</sup> Richmond to Peel, 10 November 1813, (NLI MS. 60/304). [Emphasis in original].



Richmond's opinion was that 'this is highly detrimental to the government of Ireland and consequently to that of England', which summed up the dual concern of administration in the country – good governance on the part of Dublin Castle in Ireland, while at the same time ensuring the continued influence of the British government therein. As such he stated, 'no man in my opinion should have any mark of favour in Ireland unless a resident and recommended by the lord lieutenant.'<sup>24</sup>

By the time of Richmond's viceroyalty, the question as to whether a lord lieutenant was needed for Ireland was no longer being asked. The political developments since the union ensured that the viceroy was the central political figure implementing the measure in Ireland. This may have changed after Richmond's departure, but in the examination of the period of study of this thesis, it is a determining factor in assessing the development of the Anglo-Irish relationship. Questions about authority, much like those of Hardwicke's day, still remained however. It should be stated though, that not everyone agreed that the politics of implementation adopted by certain viceroys, was the right course of action. Challenges to the power of the viceroy still existed.

### ***A study in libel: O'Connell's attacks on the administration, 1812-1813***

'To err, gentlemen, is human: and his grace is admitted by the attorney general, to be but a man', Daniel O'Connell told the jury in a case of libel that had been brought against his client, John Magee, editor of the *Dublin Evening Post*, on 27 July 1813.<sup>25</sup> Allegations levelled at Magee amounted to an alleged libel on the duke of Richmond

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<sup>24</sup> Richmond to Peel, 10 November 1813, (NLI MS. 60/304).

<sup>25</sup> John O'Connell (ed.), *The select speeches of Daniel O'Connell, M.P.*, (Dublin, 1871), i, p. 261.

which had appeared in his paper previously.<sup>26</sup> The article made mention of ‘the errors of his grace’s conduct’ and suggested that ‘truly after the greatest consideration’, onlookers ‘must find themselves at a loss to discover any striking feature in his grace’s administration, that makes it superior to the worst of its predecessors.’<sup>27</sup> Patrick Geoghegan’s analysis of O’Connell’s words perfectly captures the tenor of ‘one of the most famous speeches of his career’ during ‘probably the only time that O’Connell acted as a politician in the courtroom rather than as a lawyer.’<sup>28</sup> However, it is maybe for this reason that there was a flaw in O’Connell’s arguments. As Geoghegan suggests only after a tirade against misrule in Ireland and a tough defence of the policies of the catholic board, ‘did O’Connell address the alleged libel on the duke of Richmond’, insisting that there was no *personal* libel against him.<sup>29</sup> The publication was to be considered a critique on the *administration*, which O’Connell argued could not be considered libel ‘unless you are prepared to say, that to withhold praise from any administration deserves punishment.’<sup>30</sup> What’s more, the *Dublin Evening Post* had ridiculed a number of previous administrations, cataloguing their errors, which O’Connell used as a jumping off point to fire his own salvos at their supposed inadequacies.<sup>31</sup> O’Connell’s ‘cynical and opportunistic’ performance ensured Magee’s conviction, even if his counsel had believed in advance that ‘his client was doomed’.<sup>32</sup> What is critically relevant here however, is the assertion that the attack on the administration must be conceived as an attack on Richmond himself. This ran contrary to O’Connell’s arguments. However, the lord lieutenant was to contemporaries the embodiment of each respective administration. A libel against one

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<sup>26</sup> Geoghegan, *King Dan*, p. 126.

<sup>27</sup> O’Connell (ed.), *O’Connell select speeches*, i, p. 261.

<sup>28</sup> Geoghegan, *King Dan*, p. 125.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>30</sup> O’Connell (ed.), *O’Connell select speeches*, i, p. 261.

<sup>31</sup> Geoghegan, *King Dan*, p. 128.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 125.



could not be construed as anything other than an attack on the other. And O'Connell knew it.

A number of precedents in this regard had been set, one on 24 May 1804 when William Cobbett was brought to trial in London for alleged libels against numerous members of the Irish administration, under the title of the 'Affairs of Ireland', published in *Cobbett's weekly political register* of 5 November and 10 December 1803.<sup>33</sup> The most striking of these was an insinuation that Hardwicke was far from fit to inhabit the station of the lord lieutenant, and that he was 'a very eminent feeder of sheep in Cambridgeshire'<sup>34</sup> only to be 'celebrated for understanding the modern method of fattening a sheep as well as any man in Cambridgeshire!' Spencer Perceval, acting as attorney general, implored the jury, 'you must shut your eyes, you must shut your understandings, if you do not see that these amiable qualities are attributed to Lord Hardwicke, with a slanderous, with an ill-natured meaning.'<sup>35</sup> The presiding judge, chief justice Ellenborough, tended to agree stating, 'does it not clearly mean to *infer*, that Lord Hardwicke is ill placed in his *high station*, and that he is only *fit* for the common walks of life.'<sup>36</sup> Reviewing the case some years later, the philosopher, jurist and legal reformer, Jeremy Bentham, was critical of Ellenborough's opinion that 'such proceedings, and such publications' had 'a tendency not only "to bring the government into disesteem," but "to alienate the affections of the people"'.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, Cobbett was convicted when 'the jury after a pause of about ten minutes delivered their verdict'.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Cobbett's political register*, vol. 5 [January to June 1804], (London, 1804), pp. 801-802.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 825.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 829. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>36</sup> John Bowring (ed.), *The works of Jeremy Bentham*, 11 vols., (Edinburgh, 1838-1843), v, p. 108. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 106. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>38</sup> *Cobbett's political register*, vol. 5 [January to June 1804], (London, 1804), p. 859.

A further precedent was at less of a remove for the Richmond administration. In July 1812, Pole was forced to defend in parliament the actions of the attorney general of Ireland, William Saurin, who had issued a summons to publisher Hugh Fitzpatrick, 'to show cause in the attorney general's own chambers, why a criminal information should not be filed against him for libel.'<sup>39</sup> The opposition, led by R.B. Sheridan, were outraged, believing that Saurin sought to glean from Fitzpatrick information that he might use in his defence and so be able to counter it in any future proceedings. Sheridan demanded that a copy of the notice be placed before the house and proposed a motion to that effect. The debate raged back and forth, with Pole arguing that 'if a libel was published, accusing the government of foul and base corruption, and charging the judges with murder', how could a case not be brought against Fitzpatrick. Pole focused his accusations on a specific point concerning the sentencing and execution of a man named Barry in Kilkenny in 1810, of which Fitzpatrick wrote, "some shocking facts are connected with this subject, which the duke of Richmond's administration may yet be invited to explain to parliament." As Pole noted, Barry 'had been executed protesting his innocence.'<sup>40</sup> Yet, it was Pole's subsequent observations made in his conversations with Richmond, which are most telling. Very much pleased with his performance in parliament, he believed the newspaper reports were 'sufficiently detailed to show the people of Ireland how the case stands.' He was particularly buoyed as he said, by the fact that, 'I called the charges contained in the libel a direct charge of murder against the lord lieut[enant] and judges'.<sup>41</sup> In this moment Pole was clearly aware of the value of portraying the libel as an attack on Richmond himself, as much as the administration or legal system. This is where the impetus to prosecute lay and it was important for him to attempt to represent the indivisible nature of the person of the lord lieutenant and the policies of the Irish government. Furthermore, this thesis would

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<sup>39</sup> 21 July 1812, *Hansard 1*, vol. 23, col. 1111.

<sup>40</sup> 21 July 1812, *Hansard 1*, vol. 23, col. 1115.

<sup>41</sup> Pole to Richmond, 24 July 1812, (NLI MS. 60/287).



argue that at the Magee trial of July 1813, O'Connell knew this too. Such precedents would not have been unknown to him. In fact he made direct reference to the Cobbett case in 1804, disparagingly observing, 'Lord Ellenborough carried the doctrine of crime in libel' and 'that it was a crime to call another lord "a sheep-feeder from Cambridgeshire," although that lord was right glad to have a few sheep in that county.'<sup>42</sup> As already noted, believing his client had no hope of acquittal, O'Connell embarked on a rampage of government-bashing during his defence of Magee.

The basic legal debate over whether or not such publications should have been considered libellous is not overly relevant here. What is most important is that such attacks against the administration, whether personally directed against the lord lieutenant himself or not, were perceived by contemporaries as attacks on the man and office, as much as the administration as a whole. Those perceptions were critically important. Certainly, in the Fitzpatrick and Magee trials of 1812 and 1813 respectively, it helped that Richmond's viceroyalty was in essence pro-protestant, and thus defence teams could maintain that criticisms aimed at the administration did relate to policy as opposed to persons.

Indeed the summer months of 1812 and 1813 in Dublin seemed to be a good time for libellous attacks on British officials, not least princes of the blood royal. O'Connell was particularly in the habit of levelling scorn on the prince regent, a man he 'had little time for and was determined to cause him embarrassment.'<sup>43</sup> However, O'Connell's attacks were often subtle (although sometimes less so) attacks on a whole panoply of issues, critical of British administration in Ireland and the men who oversaw it. Alluding

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<sup>42</sup> O'Connell (ed.), *O'Connell select speeches*, p. 259.

<sup>43</sup> Geoghegan, *King Dan*, p. 122.

to what he perceived as reneged-on promises to the catholics in Ireland, he held particular contempt for any of those officials who might be considered ‘the keeper of his majesty’s Irish conscience’, stating that such persons ‘must be supposed to have a kind of reversionary solicitude for that of his royal highness, the heir apparent.’<sup>44</sup> On 18 June 1812, O’Connell delivered a scathing attack on the prince at a major meeting of the catholics at the Fishamble Street Theatre in Dublin, accusing him of ‘four distinct breaches of faith, over a long period, to the Irish Catholics.’<sup>45</sup> ‘I am sorry they were not formerly made generally public; for if they had, no man could have been so profligate as to advise the prince to anything tending a violation of them’, O’Connell announced. He believed then that ‘much of the anxiety and distrust which now distract the mind of the nation, might have been spared and avoided.’<sup>46</sup> These broken promises had damaged the relationship between the Irish people and the royal family O’Connell exclaimed, and the prince regent was the prime culprit. ‘Good God! what a prodigal waste has since been committed – not of wealth, for that comparatively is no more than trash – but of the cheerful and best defence of the monarch, the Irish people’s love.’<sup>47</sup>

The following year the administration at Dublin Castle was furious when O’Connell made a further attack against the prince of Wales in a speech on Tuesday, 15 June 1813, to a huge aggregate meeting calculated at over four thousand strong. O’Connell’s speech was published in *Dublin Evening Post* and ‘the papers stated that “great numbers of protestants (English, Scotch and American) were present.”’<sup>48</sup> The *Post* itself stated, ‘we speak without the slightest particle of exaggeration when we affirm, that in all respects the aggregate meeting...exceeded any other that we have ever yet witnessed

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<sup>44</sup> John O’Connell (ed.), *The life and speeches of Daniel O’Connell M.P.*, 2 vols., (Dublin, 1846), i, p. 174.

<sup>45</sup> Geoghegan, *King Dan*, p. 117.

<sup>46</sup> O’Connell (ed.), *O’Connell life and speeches*, i, pp. 173-174.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, i, p. 174.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, i, p. 377.



in Ireland.’<sup>49</sup> O’Connell’s contributions to the meeting were a master class in the oratorical tools of repetition and historical analysis. He traced the influence of the penal laws in Ireland and Britain from the capitulation of Limerick to the forces of William III in October 1691 right up to the present day, exposing consistent animosity towards catholics offset against the rise and endorsement of Orangeism by various monarchs and ministries.<sup>50</sup> However, it was his extraordinary call for an address to be made to the princess of Wales; the ‘unfortunate and much persecuted...unhappy, and if erring, grievously punished wife of the regent’, that caused most upset.<sup>51</sup> The princess had been estranged from her husband since 1806, with numerous allegations of adultery levelled against her, which people like O’Connell insisted were ‘false as hell’.<sup>52</sup> Despite O’Connell’s declarations that this was not an attack on the prince himself, ‘I do not stop to accuse any person; but this I must say, that even her envenomed and unprincipled enemies have not dared to attribute to her any blame for the separation from her husband’; his implications were clear.<sup>53</sup> He likened the princess’ problems with that of the Irish catholics, drawing out claims of an Orange conspiracy while equating the actions of the prince regent with his predecessor Henry VIII. In fact Henry’s inclination for executions was, in O’Connell’s mind, better than the besmirching of a lady’s honour, a crime for which the present prince was now guilty. ‘This taste of Henry was more correct, but not more laudable...the Irish were disgusted by the first experiment; they cannot refrain from horror at the second’.<sup>54</sup> O’Connell poetically expressed the kinship of the Irish catholics with the princess,

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, i, p. 398.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, i, pp. 383-394.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, i, p. 398.

<sup>52</sup> Geoghegan, *King Dan*, pp. 124-125.

<sup>53</sup> O’Connell (ed.), *O’Connell life and speeches*, i, p. 400.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, i pp. 402-403.

Our harp has long been unused to tones of gladness, and our hills but faintly answer the unusual accent. *Your* heart, however, can appreciate the silence inflicted by SUFFERING; and *ours*, alas! feel, but too acutely, that the commiseration is sincere which flows from SYMPATHY.<sup>55</sup>

‘I leave it to your hearts – your Irish hearts – to regulate your conduct’, he told crowd, which unanimously accepted the resolution to make the address.<sup>56</sup>

Richmond believed that ‘O’Connell is so much a blackguard that I scarcely even read his speeches’. This meant that neither he nor the attorney general had heard anything of his ‘scandalous attack on his r[oyal] highness’ until Peel, who was in London, informed them. The attorney general however was ‘apprehensive we cannot lay hold of O’Connell but that the editor of the *Evening Post* may be prosecuted’.<sup>57</sup> The prince himself was ‘very sore about O’Connell’s speech’ and he told Peel directly,

I hope that you will imprison either O’Connell or the editor of the paper for a year or two and not allow the attack to be made with impunity. The chancellor tells me that it is libel from beginning to end and that there can’t be a doubt of convicting the authors of it.

Even after Peel informed the prince that John Magee, the editor of the *Evening Post*, was already in prison for a month for a previous libel, the prince ‘observed “that that would not satisfy him”’.<sup>58</sup> However, he was all but forced to swallow his fury when Richmond again

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, i, pp. 403-404. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, i, p. 399.

<sup>57</sup> Richmond to Peel, 27 June 1813, (NLI MS. 71/1399).

<sup>58</sup> Peel to Richmond, 1 July 1813, (NLI MS. 71/1411).



reported that the attorney general ‘does not think he can attack O’Connell.’<sup>59</sup> Peel later quietly told Richmond, ‘the observation in your letter that O’Connell was so great a blackguard that you did not give yourself the trouble of reading his speeches, had reconciled the prince to the attack upon himself’. So much for lengthy prison sentences, as Peel declared that suddenly the prince, ‘was disposed to think with you that the abuse was almost beneath his notice.’<sup>60</sup>

### *The Richmond legacy*

The perception that the Richmond lord lieutenancy held significant influence in Ireland, was clear during Richmond’s tenure and even after his departure when Peel continued in office under Lord Whitworth. Notably in June 1813, newspapers in Dublin attacked Richmond for his approval of certain church appointments.<sup>61</sup> The following month, Peel was forced to defend his superior in the House of Commons from a very personal attack by Sir Henry Montgomery. It came on the back of a motion proposed by Sir Charles William Wynn (MP for Montgomeryshire)<sup>62</sup> to oppose the establishment of Orange Lodges in Ireland which he said ‘existed in direct contradiction to the law of the land.’<sup>63</sup> Montgomery was more focused in his rebukes. ‘We should not hear of “midnight orgies,” of songs and toasts tending to inflame one part of his majesty’s subjects against the other’, he told the Commons. The ‘lord lieutenant had an arduous duty to perform’ to be sure, but Montgomery ‘trusted that he would show an example of sobriety to the country’. Peel was outraged at the implication and rose immediately in response. ‘With considerable warmth’ he declared that Montgomery ‘would have done better to practice

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<sup>59</sup> Richmond to Peel, 4 July 1813, (NLI MS. 71/1398).

<sup>60</sup> Peel to Richmond, 10 July 1813, (NLI MS. 71/1412).

<sup>61</sup> Richmond to Peel, 10 June 1813, (NLI MS. 71/1408).

<sup>62</sup> *History of parliament 1790-1820*.

<sup>63</sup> 29 June 1813, *Hansard 1*, vol. 26, col. 974.

what he recommended, and have kept to his subject, instead of going out of his way to cast a most unfounded insinuation on the character of the noble man at the head of the Irish government.’<sup>64</sup> Certainly, Peel had issue with Montgomery’s claim that Richmond espoused an anti-catholic agenda. ‘No governor had ever shown a more firm determination to conciliate all parties, and to set his face against all improper combinations’, he told the gathered MPs, while insisting ‘he could mention several instances of his resistance against the spread of an illiberal party feeling’. One such incident, Peel said, resulted in Richmond disbanding a yeomanry corps in 1812, ‘because they had manifested some dissatisfaction at their commanding officer signing a catholic petition.’ However, it was abundantly clear that Peel was more interested in opposing every trace of derision levelled against Richmond personally or the office of lord lieutenant, and he stated that such was the actual ‘conduct of the nobleman who was accused of giving inflammatory toasts at his midnight orgies.’ This was evidenced again when he concluded by apologising to the House of Commons, ‘for having condescended to notice what had fallen from the hon. baronet...as to what he had said respecting orgies and revels, he should leave it unanswered, as unworthy of reply.’<sup>65</sup>

Allegations of this kind of outburst had dogged Richmond in the past. In May 1809, his then chief secretary Robert Dundas told Richmond that ‘the opposition here [London] were circulating a story that at a public dinner your grace drank the duke of York’s health and damnation to his successor.’ He was happy that Richmond might ‘privately entertain the sentiment’ and was not ‘at all inclined to believe the story with all the circumstances which are related here’. However, he did ask Richmond to send him details of the event ‘as may enable me to state the case as it actually occurred, and to

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<sup>64</sup> 29 June 1813, *Hansard 1*, vol. 26, col. 982.

<sup>65</sup> 29 June 1813, *Hansard 1*, vol. 26, col. 982.



contradict all that is untrue.’<sup>66</sup> Richmond then was necessarily perturbed by the attack in the Commons in June 1813 and could only console himself with the observation that ‘it certainly was very ungentleman like’ and that Montgomery ‘must know that what he said was untrue.’ He thanked Peel for defending him saying, ‘you took exactly the notice of it which I should have wished you to do and I really am much obliged to you for so doing.’<sup>67</sup> Peel though was at pains to reassure and remain the good subordinate. He told Richmond that he ‘had never heard anything more universally spoken of with contempt and indignation’; the prince regent himself exclaiming to Peel, “‘you had reason to be in a rage last night for I never saw a more shameful attack than that which was made upon the duke of Richmond.’” Peel was adamant that ‘Montgomery has not contributed much to his own popularity by the altercations he made the other night’ and he told Richmond ‘it is but fair to the party, L[or]d Wellesley and Canning, to which he belongs, (or did belong, for I hope they have discarded him), to say that I have heard that they are furious with him.’<sup>68</sup>

There were some strong displays of support however. ‘I shall be extremely sorry to lose the duke of Richmond as you seem to think will be the case’, Lord Clancarty told Littlehales in July 1812.<sup>69</sup> ‘He is a good fellow and his offhand manner is I am sure advantageous.’ By August, with Richmond’s departure seemingly assured, Clancarty wondered, ‘I cannot guess who you will have as lord lieutenant, pray heaven it will not be one of the mountebanks.’ But he suggested, ‘whoever it may be we shall have scarcely have so good a fellow as the present.’<sup>70</sup> While further evidence of Richmond’s popularity in certain quarters came in April 1814 when Marcus J. Hill, the lord mayor of Londonderry was ‘requested by a very numerous assemblage of the most respectable citizens of

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<sup>66</sup> Dundas to Richmond, 12 May 1809, (NLI MS. 59/169).

<sup>67</sup> Richmond to Peel, 4 July 1813, (NLI MS. 71/1398).

<sup>68</sup> Peel to Richmond, 1 July 1813, (NLI MS. 71/1411).

<sup>69</sup> Clancarty to Littlehales, 19 July 18[12], (EBL private collection, Box I – File 2C).

<sup>70</sup> Clancarty to Littlehales, 6 August 1812, (EBL private collection, Box I – File 2C).

Londonderry...to express to your grace [Richmond]... on this occasion every testimony of their respect, their esteem and anxious wishes for your health and happiness.’<sup>71</sup> The reason for this as Hill went on, was to represent to Richmond ‘by letter’,

how warmly the principles of your grace’s administration have been impressed on their minds, and how grateful they feel for your mild, but firm government, which was so auspicious to their country, and so particularly acceptable to every loyal man in Ireland.<sup>72</sup>

These marks of respect was aimed at Richmond personally, not the chief secretary nor the Irish administration as a whole and certainly not the government in Britain.

### ***Richmond’s Departure***

In June 1812, Richmond reviewed his time in Ireland with Lord Sidmouth (formerly Henry Addington), comparing it to the viceroyalty of his predecessor, the duke of Bedford. He felt he had made a good job of things and that Ireland was ‘easier managed’, while he had been there. Yet, he summed up his successful policies by telling Sidmouth that where Bedford, ‘gave hopes, I have given none.’<sup>73</sup> In many respects this was the perfect epitaph to Richmond’s tenure in office. He was tired of Ireland and the progress of the catholics had grated on his temper. Before he left the country he would call for an excessive crackdown on catholic meetings, even suggesting that former relief acts needed to be repealed. His violent language in his private correspondence with men like

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<sup>71</sup> Marcus J. Hill to Richmond, 19 April 1814, (NLI MS. 72/1598).

<sup>72</sup> Hill to Richmond, 19 April 1814, (NLI MS. 72/1598).

<sup>73</sup> Richmond to Sidmouth, 29 June 1812, (NLI MS. 74/1801).



Bathurst suggested that he had been in the country too long (as he admitted himself) and that the lord lieutenancy was getting the better of him. The extremes with which he spoke of fermenting rebellion so as to finally crush all resistance to the Anglo-Irish connection, suggested that maybe he had not quite shrugged off his own personal demons. Yet, he demanded that government pay closer attention to the threat he saw manifesting itself against the union. As lord lieutenant he believed, as did his predecessors, that this was his prerogative. Ultimately though, hope *had* been kindled in Ireland and the long road to emancipation was being firmly trod by 1813. Richmond was not the man to stand in the way.

While this thesis has made a determined effort to see beyond catholic issues as the driving force behind union policy making on behalf of the Irish administration, it would be disingenuous to suggest that Richmond's time in office was not influenced by religious tensions in Ireland. So too then was his departure. By May 1812 Richmond was adamant in his assessment that should any offers be held out to the catholics for further relief, then he could not stay in Ireland as lord lieutenant. Previously, on 3 April 1812, he had told Perceval that while he would 'be glad to be relieved from the situation I now hold' and that this would 'be particularly desirable in many points', he would not put his own 'convenience in competition with what you think for the good of the country' and that he believed 'a change at this moment' could spark disturbances in Ireland.<sup>74</sup> However, with the prime minister's assassination just over a month later on 11 May 1812, Richmond's position became less assured in his own mind. As in England, so in Ireland, Perceval's death shook the foundations of government.<sup>75</sup> Richmond informed Ryder, the home secretary, that he would go out of office with his colleagues – whose defeat in a vote in the

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<sup>74</sup> Richmond to Perceval, 3 April 1812, (NLI MS. 74/1770).

<sup>75</sup> P.J. Jupp, 'Spencer Perceval, (1762–1812)', *ODNB*.

House of Commons suggested the government could not continue – and requested that he ‘beg of his royal highness to accept of my resignation also, as soon as a successor can be appointed to the high office which I have now had the honour to hold for above five years.’<sup>76</sup> The issue was a tense one, as the prince regent scrambled to form an administration in London.<sup>77</sup> Yet, it was that same proposed amalgamation, and Richmond’s perception of its component parts that led him to state, ‘I could not act under an administration formed as the next one must be’.<sup>78</sup> Once more, a political shift in Britain would directly affect the Irish administration.

Richmond’s resignation was not assured however. He had been high in the regent’s favour being granted the Order of the Garter in February 1812; one of the prince’s first acts upon the removal of the parliamentary restrictions on his regency. The prince let it be known that he was rewarding Richmond’s ‘conduct in all the late proceedings’ (being the suppression of the catholic convention in Ireland in particular) and Pole saw it as ‘a glorious termination of our labours’ and hoped that ‘it may do some good in Ireland.’<sup>79</sup> Richmond agreed and thought it ‘may produce some good in the country’, even if ‘the riotous papers’ suggested that some underhanded dealings with the prince ensured Richmond’s elevation. ‘They either know or effect to know very little of me where they state I had made a bargain.’ Either way Richmond felt sure that the opposition press, and their catholic readership, were worried about this royal endorsement of his policies, ‘it is clear they think it will do them harm’.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Richmond to Ryder, 27 May 1812, (NLI MS. 74/1782).

<sup>77</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, pp. 140-141; Norman Gash, ‘Robert Banks Jenkinson, (1770–1828)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>78</sup> Richmond to Ryder, 27 May 1812, (NLI MS. 74/1782).

<sup>79</sup> Pole to Richmond, 19 February 1812, (NLI MS. 67/998).

<sup>80</sup> Richmond to Pole, 24 [February] 1812, (NLI MS. 67/1001). It should be noted that this later is dated 24 September 1812 but this is clearly a mistake as the internal evidence suggests. Alongside Richmond’s discussion of his ribbon, he also makes reference to receiving a letter from Wellesley that supported his proposed resignation in early to mid January 1812, on the appointment of a junior officer to Ireland as



On 8 June 1812, the prince ‘found it impossible to construct an alternative coalition and in the end confirmed Liverpool as prime minister’.<sup>81</sup> However, when Liverpool made it clear that his ministry would operate on a neutral basis towards the catholics,<sup>82</sup> Richmond’s days as viceroy were numbered. Throughout the summer of 1812 he conversed at length with his brother-in-law, Lord Bathurst. In May Richmond was particularly wary of any overtures being made to bring the pro-catholic Lord Wellesley and George Canning into government. Insisting that if they ‘were to come in and should happen to wish me to stay that I could not do it’, he said, ‘if the slightest alteration was to be made in the religious laws.’<sup>83</sup> On 1 June he reiterated his commitment to the government, ‘if you attempt to stay through the sessions, I will stand by you’, although this was only ‘provided nothing is done for the catholics, but if anything is, I must go. I cannot be a party to a step towards ruin to the country, which I conceive that to be.’<sup>84</sup> Four days later he repeated his terms, ‘I should certainly support an administration of our friends under Canning’, but he said, ‘my remaining in Ireland would depend on whether anything is intended to be done this session for the catholics. If that is intended, I had better be relieved immediately, as my resignation would otherwise follow the motion in the House, which might be embarrassing.’<sup>85</sup> ‘I am ready to stay during *the session*, as of course there will be no change in the religious laws’, Richmond presumed on 7 June 1812.<sup>86</sup>

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commander of the forces. Similarly, if dated September, the letter would run completely out of sequence in the archival volume, although this is only a secondary observation.

<sup>81</sup> Norman Gash, ‘Robert Banks Jenkinson, (1770–1828)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>82</sup> Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 141.

<sup>83</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 24 May 1812, (NLI MS. 72/1578).

<sup>84</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 1 June 1812, HMC, *Bathurst MS.*, p. 176.

<sup>85</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 5 June 1812, HMC, *Bathurst MS.*, p. 177.

<sup>86</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 7 June 1812, HMC, *Bathurst MS.*, p. 178. [Emphasis in original].

Richmond's reaction to the change of government in London was telling. As lord lieutenant he had staked his position on the fact that Irish catholic concerns would not motivate the ministry in Britain to alter their political demeanour. Liverpool's suggestion that there may be some hope for catholics in the not too distant future, represented a sea change in attitudes for Richmond and the kind of implementation policy he was pursuing. 'I hear much said about the difference made to the catholic question by the loss of poor Mr. Perceval' he told Bathurst, and he was sure that 'had I been two years instead of five here I could not stay another session.'<sup>87</sup> The catholics too saw the opportunity and Peel was forced to admit that they believed 'the way will be opened for *future negotiation* in the ensuing year.'<sup>88</sup> It is prudent to state that Richmond by 1812 was a viceroy whom events in Britain and indeed in Ireland, were beginning to overtake. He spoke of the 'stronger reasons for trying to stop any change in the constitution, which may and in my opinion will lead towards Ireland quitting England and consequently being joined to France.' However, his arguments seemed to carry little weight. Critical of the more radical catholic community in Ireland, gradually being emboldened and given voice through Daniel of Connell, he said, 'if things go on as they have done, the catholic emancipation will sooner or later take place, which Mr. O'Connell [*sic.*] tells you is of no further consequence than that it leads to a repeal of the union.' Yet, the protestants too took a share of his animosity for allowing 'themselves to be bullied and none try to stop the current.' 'Every Irish place man will vote for the catholics', Richmond complained, and 'they will vote to please their catholic constituents, though they themselves may not be favourable to the measure.'<sup>89</sup> This was then the summation of Richmond's concerns. He genuinely believed the union was under threat, that 'O'Connell wished the [catholic] committee joy of the probability of carrying the emancipation not because it was of any consequence in itself but because it

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<sup>87</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 14 June 1812, HMC, *Bathurst MS.*, p. 180.

<sup>88</sup> Peel to Richmond, 21 May 1812, (NLI MS. 69/1169). [Emphasis in original]

<sup>89</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 14 June 1812, HMC, *Bathurst MS.*, pp. 180-181.



would lead to a total separation from England.’ And what’s more it seemed to him that no one in Britain was prepared to take up the fight.<sup>90</sup> ‘You tell me the cabinet are still *protestant*, and I believe you’, he told Bathurst, but he said, ‘if these gentlemen mean to go as far as Messrs. Grattan etc. they have betrayed the protestants, for by their conduct and speeches they have led them to suppose their interest was safe in their hands. As he said, ‘if they mean to go half way, they will be laughed at and held cheap by the catholics and lose the confidence of the protestants. In the mean time I own I feel very awkwardly situated.’<sup>91</sup> Parliament, the cabinet indeed ‘the people of England’ needed to open their eyes to the threat inherent in the catholic calls for relief, a threat that Richmond believed looked to undo the union itself. With that calamity seeming ever more likely he made an outrageous claim. ‘I certainly would much rather see a rebellion at once in consequence of parliament refusing to do anything.’ Richmond believed, ‘it would soon be put to an end to and some of the most disaffected would fall. If it was soon over, perhaps it would be best to leave the laws as they stand.’ However, he went even further stating that ‘if it took more time and was found that it had taken deeper root, the bill of 1793 ought to be repealed.’<sup>92</sup> After five years in Ireland, Richmond was calling for a return of the penal laws.

In the years following the union, disgruntled anti-union writers and commentators spun a web of misdirection and untruths depicting the measure solely as the result of a dedicated government campaign. It began with the fermenting of the 1798 Rebellion, led to the brutal suppression of that revolt and ended with a union that put their country under the yoke forevermore, supposedly solving all the problems of British governance in Ireland.

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<sup>90</sup> Interestingly though, as Kanter notes, Richmond’s arguments found willing adherents by the 1820s, after he had left office. Kanter, *The making of British unionism*, p. 146.

<sup>91</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 28 June 1812, HMC, *Bathurst MS.*, p. 182. [Emphasis in original].

<sup>92</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 9 July 1812, HMC, *Bathurst MS.*, p. 186.

This history of events was a fabrication. However, twelve years later the man charged with implementing that measure, the duke of Richmond, lord lieutenant of Ireland, was countenancing just such a course of action.

In September 1812, Richmond succumbed to pressure from the prince regent and Lord Sidmouth, to remain in his position until the following summer. 'I conceive that you all agree there is no impropriety in my remaining', although he said, 'you will perceive though I am willing to give way, I do not quite like the staying'.<sup>93</sup> On relief for the catholics his view was unchanged and he said, 'all I want is to be at liberty to give my own individual opinion and not even that to the full extent, but only far enough to let the protestants see I am not friendly to the catholic claims and by so doing securing their confidence.'<sup>94</sup> The government, still unsure of its solidity required that Richmond stay in office for the immediate future.<sup>95</sup> However, 1813 witnessed in many ways a lame duck vicerealty. Richmond's tenure as lord lieutenant had run its course. As has been discussed, the arrival of Robert Peel as chief secretary in Ireland, gradually relinquished from Richmond the reins of government in Ireland. In August 1813, Sidmouth, now home secretary, wrote to Richmond to inform him that the prince regent was grateful for his service. 'The prince regent has observed with the utmost satisfaction, that, under circumstances the most trying,' Sidmouth recounted, 'your grace has displayed, throughout the whole course of your administration all those eminent qualities, which at once command respect and conciliate esteem.'<sup>96</sup> Richmond's successor, Lord Whitworth, would take up where Richmond left off Sidmouth assured him, and the prince hoped 'that your grace's distinguished example may be constantly followed by your successor'. It was

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<sup>93</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 20 September 1812, HMC, *Bathurst MS.*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>94</sup> Richmond to Bathurst, 28 September 1812, HMC, *Bathurst MS.*, p. 215.

<sup>95</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 29.

<sup>96</sup> Sidmouth to Richmond, 12 August 1813, (NLI MS. 60/314).



London's decided opinion, Sidmouth declared, 'that the system of government to which you grace has steadily adhered, is that which is best calculated to promote the happiness, and prosperity of Ireland, and the general interests of the United Kingdom.'<sup>97</sup> But Whitworth, and indeed his replacement in 1817, Lord Talbot, were weak viceroys thus allowing, even necessitating, Peel's direction of Irish affairs from Dublin Castle. As Hoppen suggests it was precisely because of the undefined roles of lord lieutenant and chief secretary at the time of the union that allowed this evolution to transpire.<sup>98</sup>

Appropriately, Peel was the first to inform Richmond of who his successor was going to be. However, the signs were ominous and Richmond was not impressed with the choice.<sup>99</sup> 'Lord Whitworth will be selected as your grace's successor', as Peel explained, but he was to 'receive the rank of an English viscount, as he at present stands very low on the list of Irish barons.'<sup>100</sup> Sidmouth was somewhat more encouraged, insisting that Whitworth's 'good sense, temper, firmness and habits of business', made him perfect for the job.<sup>101</sup> Although he too could not hide the fact that Whitworth needed to be quickly bumped up the peerage, even if he was coming to the post as a professional diplomat.<sup>102</sup> Both men told Richmond to keep things quiet, with Sidmouth suggesting that Ireland was soon to be 'deprived of the advantage of being under your immediate government.'<sup>103</sup> There was a determined effort on the part of the cabinet not to unsettle the administrative apparatus in Dublin, and Liverpool inferred that he wished for Richmond to correspond with Whitworth, even before the latter's appointment was made known 'to the cabinet

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<sup>97</sup> Sidmouth to Richmond, 12 August 1813, (NLI MS. 60/314).

<sup>98</sup> Hoppen, 'An Incorporating Union?', p. 338.

<sup>99</sup> Brynn, *Crown and castle*, p. 32.

<sup>100</sup> Peel to Richmond, 15 May 1813, (NLI MS. 69/1164).

<sup>101</sup> Sidmouth to Richmond, 15 May 1813, (NLI MS. 68/1103).

<sup>102</sup> Hoppen, 'A question none could answer', pp. 138-139.

<sup>103</sup> Sidmouth to Richmond, 15 May 1813, (NLI MS. 68/1103).

generally'.<sup>104</sup> Richmond agreed 'that the appointment should not be talked of at present', evidence that the cabinet were not entirely confident in their choice. Sidmouth reiterated Liverpool's hope, stating that 'it may be a matter of mundane connivance that communications should take place, even before the arrangement is known except to those from whom it would not properly be concealed.'<sup>105</sup>

However, Whitworth beat him to it. While he told Richmond, 'I am confident I shall receive from your grace every assistance [for] the good of the public service', he nonetheless spent more time enquiring about Richmond's carriage horses, ('as I have sold mine'); while 'on the subject of wine alas, I shall wish to be informed.' One point of business he did address was whether Richmond would be willing to leave his private secretary, Major Ready, to serve in the new administration.<sup>106</sup> However, with Richmond's departure coming ever closer, he quickly turned Whitworth's attention to what he felt the most pressing matter of governance: the meetings of the catholic board. Richmond was loath to let them meet, as he said, 'in fact they are now a parliament' and he assured Whitworth that he had 'no objection to disperse them any day and to prevent as far as possible them meeting under any other name.'<sup>107</sup> He asked Whitworth to confer with the ministers in London on how they wished to proceed, but notably suggested, that if 'any step of this sort should be taken it would be advisable that I should do it rather than you should begin your reign with what will be called an attack on the loyal oppressed Irish Roman Catholics.' Richmond's fight against the catholics had escalated to make his dislike of their actions, and efforts to put a stop to them, a personal vendetta. Before his

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<sup>104</sup> Peel to Richmond, 22 May 1813, (NLI MS. 69/1171).

<sup>105</sup> Sidmouth to Richmond, 25 May 1813, (NLI MS. 68/1101)

<sup>106</sup> Whitworth to Richmond, 24 May 1813, (NLI MS. 68/1111). There was much further talk of Richmond's cellars and horses (Whitworth to Richmond, 11 June 1812, NLI MS. 68/1112), as well as what to do with a private yacht, the *William and Mary*, (Whitworth to Richmond, 14 June 1812, NLI MS. 68/1114).

<sup>107</sup> Richmond to Whitworth, 26 July 1813, (NLI MS. 68/1091).



departure then, he called for strong handed measures against the catholics, sure in the knowledge that he would not have to deal with any kind of political fallout. In a way, this was however, not far from Hardwicke's ideas on the role the lord lieutenant needed to play in Ireland. Certainly, Richmond saw the cabinet's (limited) flirtation with what might be a politically expedient grant of catholic relief, as a betrayal of principle. As lord lieutenant however, it was his job to ensure the peace and security of Ireland as he saw it. His willingness to stamp out the catholic board before he left was testament to this.

Whitworth though was more restrained, and his response to Richmond's overtures confirms the unwillingness of the government to engage in hard line, legally questionable, tactics against the king's catholic subjects. 'I am quite of your opinion in regard to the catholic board' and he suggested that the question was not if, but 'when it will be necessary to put it down.' As he went on 'one road, and one only, may possibly result from their...folly.'<sup>108</sup> The lip service stopped here though. Whitworth wanted to wait 'to expose the views of those who for some time have had too much influence with the catholic community' 'By exposing them' he said, the government could 'in some degree cause a revulsion of opinion against them.' He was adamant, 'if it should be thought necessary to adopt vigorous methods now, which I should I confess be wrong for' then he said, 'let it devolve on me.' He did not want the 'popularity which you have so justly acquired' to be sacrificed on his account he told Richmond. And what's more, 'I shall have the example of your moderation as well as your firmness before my eyes'.<sup>109</sup> Having nevertheless met with the Irish attorney and solicitor generals, Richmond was forced to concede to Whitworth's plans, as there was disagreement in whether the catholic board was acting in contradiction of the Convention Act. 'I cannot therefore disperse them if I

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<sup>108</sup> Whitworth to Richmond, 1 August 1813, (NLI MS. 68/1113).

<sup>109</sup> Whitworth to Richmond, 1 August 1813, (NLI MS. 68/1113).

wished it ever so much', he told Whitworth. 'There is no doubt they have done our cause much service but the time must come when the parliament must be put an end to.' 'The only difficulty you will have', Richmond assured his replacement, 'is to fix on the last moment.'<sup>110</sup>

Whitworth remained in Ireland until 1817, when he handed over to his successor and namesake Lord Talbot. By this time Peel, the more experienced chief secretary, was able to direct the affairs of state as he saw fit. Whitworth waited until 1814 to dissolve the catholic board, at a time when it had grown unpopular, while 'in the same year he saw through the renewal of the Insurrection Act, followed by the Peace Preservation Act' – another of Peel's projects.<sup>111</sup> Richmond was kept in the loop regarding Irish affairs both by Peel and his former private secretary Ready, until at least late 1813.<sup>112</sup> He had kept the lord lieutenancy as the primary political office in Ireland, while at the same time laying the groundwork for Peel's (and the chief secretaryship's) rise to prominence.

## *Epilogue*

On Sunday morning, 20 December 1807, Charlotte Lennox, duchess of Richmond affectionately sent her love, and that of her four year old daughter Louisa, to her husband the lord lieutenant of Ireland.<sup>113</sup> Her note was an addition to a letter written by a man who she would host exactly eight years later, almost to the day, at 'the most famous ball in history' on 15 December 1815 - the night before the battle of Quatre Bras.<sup>114</sup> The soiree

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<sup>110</sup> Richmond to Whitworth, 6 August 1813, (NLI MS. 68/1092).

<sup>111</sup> Roland Thorne, 'Charles Whitworth, (1752–1825)', *ODNB*.

<sup>112</sup> Peel's correspondence with Richmond has already been addressed, but for Ready see various letters throughout September to December 1813, (NLI. MS. 66/849-856).

<sup>113</sup> Arthur Wellesley to Richmond, 20 December 1807, (NLI MS. 58/20).

<sup>114</sup> Elizabeth Longford, *Wellington: Years of the sword*, (London, 1969), p. 416.



was immortalised by Lord Byron when the bard wrote of the eve of the battle in the *Pilgrimage of Childe Harold*,

There was a sound of revelry by night  
And Belgium's Capital had gathered then  
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright  
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men.<sup>115</sup>

Two days later the final showdown between the duke of Wellington, the duchess' guest of honour, and his French nemesis Napoleon Bonaparte would be played out at Waterloo. Wellington, by this time field marshal and commander-in-chief of the armies of the seventh coalition, would try to dismiss the duchess's husband from the battlefield telling the duke of Richmond (unofficially attached to Wellington's suite) that he had no business being there.

Wellington's letter in 1807 (back when he was plain Arthur Wellesley), to which the duchess had added her personal message, had spoken of the Act of Union and how it had become the primary catalyst for Irish disaffection. By 1815, he and Richmond on the field at Waterloo had other things to worry about. The Irish-born Wellington went on to become one of the most famous generals in British history, later being elected prime minister in 1828. Richmond was appointed governor-general of British North America in 1818. In just over a year he was dead. Bitten by a recently purchased pet fox, he contracted hydrophobia and died in agony in a barn.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, (London, 1812-1818).

<sup>116</sup> T.F. Henderson, rev. Roger T. Stearn, 'Charles Lennox, (1764-1819)', *ODNB*.

## *Conclusion*

‘I claim my right to register my protest’, Mary MacSwiney told the assembled members of Dáil Éireann on 7 January 1922, ‘because I look upon this act tonight worse than I look upon the act of Castlereagh.’<sup>1</sup> The Act of Union cast such a long shadow across Irish history that even during the Anglo-Irish Treaty debates it took centre stage. But the way it was utilised by politicians on both sides of the debate reveals that the history of the measure has become lost in nationalist and unionist propaganda and over a century of mythmaking. From the opposite side of the floor Michael Collins asked, ‘what happened at the time of the union? Grattan's Parliament was thrown away without reference to the people and against their wishes’ and insisted that what was on offer this time was something that saved the Irish parliament, not abolished it.<sup>2</sup>

In the same Treaty debates, Éamon de Valera declared that the ‘Treaty will renew the contest that is going to begin the same history that the union began, and Lloyd George is going to have the same fruit for his labours as Pitt had.’<sup>3</sup> He warned the assembled delegates that the Dáil was on the verge of becoming no better ‘than the ignominious house that voted away the colonial parliament that was in Ireland in 1800’ and asked them if they ‘wished to follow the example of the house and vote away the independence of our people.’ Countess Markievicz conjured up images of ‘the noble dead’ and demanded, ‘can any of you remember, as I can, the first time you read Robert Emmet's speech from the dock?’ Of the recent history of the Anglo-Irish relationship she claimed, ‘we gained more in those few years of fighting than we gained by parliamentary agitation since the days of

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<sup>1</sup> Dáil Éireann debate, 7 January 1922, vol. T, No. 15, cols. 346-347.

<sup>2</sup> Dáil Éireann debate, 19 December 1921, vol. T, No. 6, col. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Dáil Éireann debate, 19 December 1921, vol. T, No. 6, cols. 24-25.



O'Connell', but dismissed O'Connell's assertion 'that Ireland's freedom was not worth a drop of blood.'<sup>4</sup> 'The Treaty, de Valera decried, 'leaves us a country going through a period of internal strife just as the Act of Union did.'<sup>5</sup>

Throughout the intensive two weeks of debate, so many of these men and women invoked the names of Castlereagh; of Pitt and O'Connell; of Grattan and Emmet, to suit their own respective agendas. Yet, the history of the union could not justifiably be claimed by any of them; because it was not understood. So many of these same nineteenth century figures had also wrestled with the history of the union themselves.

If de Valera was right about anything it was that the union did create a period of strife for the first fifteen years after its enactment. As this thesis has shown though that struggle, was defined in many ways by the politics of implementation that were presented as the mode through which the union could be completed. This was a defining and crucially important aspect of the opening years of the union relationship between Ireland and Great Britain. The union was intended to be the definitive act that would shape that relationship for all time, but it fell short of what its architects envisioned, mainly because they hadn't put much thought into what would come next.

The period between 1801 and 1815 was one that saw an unprecedented shift in how the Anglo-Irish relationship would operate. In 1801 many of the structures which would define how the union would work later were put into practice. However, these structures did not conform to some pre-union blueprint but rather evolved through the actions of key figures in Dublin and London. The earl of Hardwicke played a central role in shaping

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<sup>4</sup> Dáil Éireann debate, 3 January 1922, vol. T, No.10, cols. 185-186.

<sup>5</sup> Dáil Éireann debate, 19 December 1921, vol. T, No. 6, col. 26.

post-union government in Ireland, attempting at all times to work to some ethereal principle of union. He tried to complete the union by residing in the middle ground, a place that looked to old political precedents coupled with addressing practical contemporary issues, as being the process by which implementation could happen. His various battles to maintain his authority ensured that the Ireland of the United Kingdom would retain elements of political and administrative apparatus that the union could conceivably have done away with. This was no more apparent than in the office of lord lieutenant and chief secretary themselves. At the same time Hardwicke's tenure allowed for a bedding-in of sorts that ensured the lord lieutenancy and ultimately the Irish administration retained a degree of political independence. The unwillingness of the British government to look too closely at Irish affairs also contributed to this legacy. A legacy it might well be argued that lasted until the twentieth century.

However, Hardwicke lost some of his fights, thus ensuring the military in Ireland and its relationship with Britain was materially altered. A process by which Irish militia soldiers (and eventually their British counterparts too) could be transferred out of their own country in the event of invasion was instigated during the opening months of the lord lieutenancy. However, Charles Abbot's efforts (and his failure) to bring about an era of major administrative reform precipitated by the union, signalled that the act itself did not ensure change would take place.

The fact that the emancipation of the Irish catholics was not coupled with the union did mean that the measure was at a disadvantage in trying to win the majority of the Irish people over. The issue would subsequently dominate cross channel politics until at least 1829. However, to see the catholic question as the exclusive concern of the Anglo-Irish



dynamic in the early nineteenth century is problematic and it is important to place it in the context of the union itself and the manner in which efforts were made to complete that measure.

This was no more apparent than during the viceroyalty of the duke of Bedford, a man who came to Ireland genuinely hoping to implement the union in a way that could be acceptable to all interested parties in the United Kingdom. Bedford's personal engagement with Irish society suggested that things could be done differently, if the political will was there. His approach centred on the ways in which it was possible to court Irish catholics and protestants alike, ensuring the continued maintenance of law and order in a political arrangement that was fair to everyone. It was as radical as it was exceptional.

Richmond, Bedford's successor, however, had very different political as well as personal views of Ireland. For the most part he kept his opinions to himself and implemented a government policy that centred on the propagation of the empire abroad and the protestant interest at home. Richmond and the government he served believed the union was complete, and that all that was now needed was to ensure the continued good behaviour of the Irish catholics. While at first Richmond endorsed an approach to government that was not completely at odds with Bedford's conciliatory policies, by the time of his departure, he was an extremist hard line reactionary who believed the union was under threat. Richmond faced many of the remaining challenges of implementation of the union, and for the most part was equal to the task. Yet, his personal distrust of the catholics, especially their new leader Daniel O'Connell, coupled with his political beliefs meant he left Ireland a bitter, but committed unionist. In many ways, it was what he had been all along.

During Richmond's time in office, his final chief secretary Robert Peel learned the ways and means of political management in Ireland. With Richmond's departure Peel would begin a process that would ensure the dominance of the office of chief secretary in Irish politics for some time to come.

The political implementation of the union defined the Anglo-Irish relationship between the years 1801 and 1815. The successive administrations that held power in Ireland brought with them competing views on how best to do that. Certain things became fixed, while others remained loose. The union, at least for the time being had done what it had to, in that it maintained the British-Irish connection for the next century.

This thesis is called 'completing the union', but each of the viceroys being studied here had a different view of what that meant. For Hardwicke it was about working out all the practical details, and ensuring that the Irish administration was able to function efficiently in the new United Kingdom. For Bedford it was about securing the support of the catholics, and fulfilling the original promise of the union to be a unifying security mechanism. For Richmond the union was complete, and it was about making the new structures work. This meant facing down a new, aggressive catholic leadership that he felt threatened that same union. Within all this though the politics of implementation ensured that a new political structure emerged in Ireland in the period 1801 to 1815. The events explored in these four sections determined how the Irish administration fitted into the United Kingdom during the critical period after the union came into effect. Despite the efforts of everyone involved, later events would prove however, that the union remained incomplete.



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6D-Ireland-[Box]1-[Bundles]1 to 10  
6D-Ireland-2-1 to 11  
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E.B. Littlehales private collection (c. 1,800 items)	Box I – Box V
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