

REPORT.

To the Queen's most excellent Majesty.

We, the Commissioners appointed by Your Majesty for the purpose of making inquiry into the existence of corrupt practices at the last parliamentary election for the City of Oxford, humbly report to Your Majesty as follows :—

Since the earliest period of parliamentary representation, the City of Oxford has returned two members to the House of Commons.

It is probable that in ancient times the constituency comprised the whole community, but in the years more immediately preceding the Reform Act of 1832 it was composed of the freemen only. The number of electors was not very largely increased in consequence of that Act, for while the number of freemen polled at the general election of 1830 was 1,779, the total number of voters on the register in 1832 was only 2,312.

At the first election after the Reform Act the state of the poll was as follows :—

Langston, James Haughton, L.	-	-	-	1,260
Stonor, Thomas, L.	-	-	-	953
Hughes, William Hughes, L.	-	-	-	919
Wetherell, Sir Charles, C.	-	-	-	523

Mr. Stonor was unseated on petition, and in March 1833 Mr. William Hughes Hughes was elected in his place, the state of the poll being :—

Hughes, W. H. L.	-	-	-	802
Townley, Charles, L.	-	-	-	702
Maclean, Donald, C.	-	-	-	400

and the result of the next four general elections is shown in the following table :—

1835.				
Hughes, W. H., C.	-	-	-	1,397
Maclean, Donald, C.	-	-	-	1,223
Stonor, Thomas, L.	-	-	-	1,021

476

1837.

Maclean, Donald, C.	-	-	-	1,348
Erle, William, Q.C., L.	-	-	-	1,203
Hughes, W. H., C.	-	-	-	900

1841.

Langston, James, L.	-	-	-	1,349
Maclean, Donald, C.	-	-	-	1,233
Malcolm, Neil, C.	-	-	-	1,031

1847.

Langston, James H., L.	}	Were returned
Wood, William Page, L.	}	without a contest.

In March, 1851, on Mr. Wood being appointed Solicitor-General, he was re-elected without opposition.

At the general election in July 1852—

Langston, James H., L.	}	Were returned
Wood, Sir W. Page, L.	}	without a contest.

In December 1852, on Sir W. P. Wood being appointed a Vice-Chancellor, the Right Honourable Edward Cardwell was returned unopposed.

At the general election in March 1857 the poll was as follows:—

Langston, James H., L.	-	-	-	1,671
Neate, Charles, L.	-	-	-	1,057
Cardwell, Rt. Hon. E., L.C.	-	-	-	1,016
Gaselee, Sergeant Stephen, L.	-	-	-	245

Mr. Neate was unseated on petition, his agents having employed 198 persons as poll clerks and messengers, 152 of whom voted for him, and subsequently received from his agents payment in sums varying from 1*l.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* The committee found that these sums were paid under the pretence of remuneration for services during the election, and that although it was not proved that the payment of money for employment was the primary motive in deciding their votes, yet in many of the cases no adequate services were in reality performed.

Mr. Neate having been unseated, Mr. Cardwell was elected in his place, after a contest with Mr. W. M.

Thackeray, who stood in the more advanced Liberal interest. The result of the poll was:—

Cardwell, Rt. Hon. E., L. C. - - 1,085
 Thackeray, Wm. M., L. - - 1,018

Their expenses were returned at 785*l.* 11*s.* 11*d.* and 831*l.* 17*s.* 9*d.* respectively. We have classed them as follows:—

	Cardwell.	Thackeray.
	£ s. d.	£. s. d.
Agency - - -	Not separate	60 19 2
Committee rooms -	51 10 6	80 5 5
Canvassers, clerks, and messengers - -	315 18 2	347 12 2
Printing & advertising	223 14 0	151 15 4
Conveyances - -	92 6 6	103 11 10
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Returning officer -	686 9 2	744 3 11
Auditor - - -	61 7 3	61 7 3
Fees for return - -	24 2 6	26 6 7
	13 13 0	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	785 11 11	831 17 9

From this time down to 1868 there was no contested election, the Liberals remaining in possession of the representation; but during the early part of this period the Conservatives appear to have regarded Mr. Cardwell as in a certain measure representing their opinions.

At the general election in April, 1859

Langston, James H., L. } were returned without
 Cardwell, Rt. Hon. E. L. } opposition.

In November 1863, on the death of Mr. Langston, Mr. Neate was returned unopposed.

In April 1864, on Mr. Cardwell being appointed Colonial Secretary, he was re-elected without opposition.

At the general election in July, 1865:—

Cardwell, Rt. Hon. E., L. } Were returned
 Neate, Charles, L. } without a contest.

After the passing of the Representation of the People Act, 1867, the boundaries of the borough were enlarged by including some outlying districts, and the number of voters on the register at the general election in November, 1868, was 5,033. The result of the poll was as follows:—

Cardwell, Rt. Hon. E., L. - - 2,765
 Harcourt, William Vernon, Q.C., L. - 2,636
 Deane, Dr. James Parker, Q.C., C. - 1,225

We have classed the returned expenses as follows :—

	Cardwell and Harcourt.			Deane.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Agency - - - -	577	10	0	367	10	0
Committee rooms - -	220	18	4	150	1	0
Canvassers, clerks, and messengers - - - -	443	5	9	261	4	11
Printing and advertising -	642	1	9	359	11	0
Conveyances - - - -	33	11	7	4	13	0
Miscellaneous - - - -	—			25	15	4
	<hr/>			<hr/>		
	1,917	7	5	1,168	15	3
Returning officer - -	192	18	6	97	10	3
Ringers - - - -	42	0	0	—		
Personal expenses - -	158	10	3	75	0	0
	<hr/>			<hr/>		
	2,310	16	2	1,341	5	6

There is no reason to suppose that these figures are incorrect. We did not institute any minute inquiry into the conduct of this election, as we found that corrupt practices did not then prevail. There were, however, applications for employment greatly in excess of the necessary requirements of the election, and it will be seen that there was an increase in the expenditure as compared with that of 1857, which may be partly accounted for by the length of the contest.

Between 1868 and 1874 there were two unopposed bye elections, one of Mr. Cardwell after his appointment as Secretary of State, and the other of Sir William Harcourt after his appointment as Solicitor General.

It became obvious to us in the course of our inquiry into the practices prevailing at the last election in 1880 that it would be our duty to make some inquiry into the elections of 1874, and we have therefore dealt with them in order of date in our report :—

1874, *February.*

At the general election in 1874 Mr. Alexander William Hall, who was then for the first time the Conservative candidate, nearly succeeded in gaining a seat, the numbers polled being :—

Harcourt, Sir W. V., Sol.-Gen., L.	-	2,332
Cardwell, Right Hon. E., L.	-	2,281
Hall, A. W., C.	-	2,198

The number of voters at this time on the register was 5,680.

1874, *March*.

On Mr. Cardwell being called to the Upper House, Mr. Hall was elected after a contest with Mr. John Delaware Lewis by a majority of 462, the numbers polled being :—

Hall, A. W., C. -	2,554
Lewis, J. D., L. -	2,092

At the first of these two elections the returned expenses of the Liberal candidates may be classed as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Agency - - - -	525	0	0
Committee rooms - - - -	148	11	4
Canvassers, clerks, and messengers -	935	18	4
Printing and advertising - - - -	433	19	3
Conveyances - - - -			
Miscellaneous - - - -	64	11	9
	<hr/>		
	2,108	0	8
Returning officer - - - -	432	10	0
Ringers - - - -	29	8	0
Personal expenses - - - -	62	11	5
	<hr/>		
	2,632	10	1

At the second as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Agency - - - -	210	0	0
Committee rooms - - - -	240	16	9
Canvassers, clerks, and messengers -	896	5	3
Printing and advertising - - - -	451	6	6
Conveyances - - - -			
Miscellaneous - - - -	65	16	2
	<hr/>		
	1,864	4	8
Returning officer - - - -	163	5	4
Personal expenses - - - -	120	9	1
	<hr/>		
	2,147	19	1

As far as we have been able to ascertain, these accounts show the expenditure actually incurred. At the first election the candidates themselves provided all the necessary funds. At the second, Mr. Lewis contributed 1,000*l.*; the rest was raised by subscription.

Mr. Percival Lewis Walsh, who carries on business as a solicitor in Oxford in partnership with Mr. Gordon

Dayman, acted for the first time at these elections of 1874 as Conservative agent. The total expenses as returned by him amounted to 1,966*l.* 8*s.* at the general election, and 2,699*l.* 7*s.* 3*d.* at the bye election, or deducting in each case the charge of the returning officer and the personal expenses of the candidate, 1,748*l.* 1*s.* and 2,536*l.* 1*s.* 11*d.* respectively. The amount actually spent at those two elections (after making similar deductions) was 5,690*l.* 17*s.* 8*d.* It must be observed further that while Mr. Walsh is returned as having received a fee of 315*l.* and three other legal agents, Mr. Francis Cripps, Mr. Walter Peppercorn, and Mr. Charles Bishop, fees of 105*l.* each for their professional services, Mr. Walsh actually received only 150*l.* and the other gentlemen only 31*l.* 10*s.* each. Receipts for the larger amounts were signed by these gentlemen at Mr. Walsh's suggestion. The total amount unaccounted for, about 1,750*l.*, represents the expenditure in the payment of persons not mentioned in the return, who were employed either as committee men or as messengers, principally at the second election.

Upon the whole, although these elections compare favourably, as will be seen hereafter, with those of 1880, they show a further increase of expenditure above that of 1868.

It will be observed that in 1868 the Conservative candidate, Dr. Deane, was defeated by a very large majority, while on the other hand in 1874 there was a close contest at the general election, and Mr. Hall actually gained the seat at the subsequent bye election. It was stated to us that the Conservatives were materially benefited by the introduction of the ballot, and that there was a considerable growth of Conservative opinion in the City during the interval.

We think that both these causes operated in some degree to bring about Mr. Hall's victory; but there were other reasons for it. He was extremely popular among all classes in the City, not excepting his political opponents, while Mr. Lewis was a stranger to the constituency. Moreover, Mr. Hall is in business as a brewer in the town, and as such is a large employer of labour; and it appears that it has long been the custom at his brewery to dispense weekly sums by way of charity, amounting altogether to about 200*l.* a year, with additional gifts at Christmas. The increased expenditure in 1874, particularly at the second election, most of which was incurred in employment, no doubt also contributed to Mr. Hall's success, though it is difficult to estimate precisely the influence which it had upon the result.

1880.

At the general election in April, 1880, the number of voters on the register being then 6,166, there were three

candidates, viz., Sir W. V. Harcourt, Q.C., Mr. Joseph William Chitty, Q.C., and Mr. Hall; and the result of the poll was—

Harcourt, Sir W. V., Q.C., L.	-	-	2,771
Chitty, J. W., Q.C., L.	-	-	2,669
Hall, A. W., C.	-	-	2,659

The returned expenses of the Liberal candidates may be classed as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Agency	-	-	420 0 0
Committee rooms	-	-	321 13 7
Canvassers, clerks, and messengers	1,129	8	8
Printing and advertising	-	-	603 10 10
Conveyances	-	-	191 17 6
Miscellaneous	-	-	45 0 7
			<hr/>
			2,711 11 2
Returning officer	-	-	221 13 2
Bell ringers	-	-	25 4 0
			<hr/>
			2,958 8 4

There was also an expenditure of 36*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.*, incurred for colours, of 8*l.* 3*s.* for refreshment, on the 1st of April, the polling day, and of 22*l.* 5*s.* for a "Liberal guard," none of which were returned.

Mr. Hall's expenses were returned at 2,558*l.* 4*s.* 4*d.* or (deducting as before), 2,447*l.* 7*s.* 9*d.*; the amount actually expended is shown in the following table:—

	£	s.	d.
Committee rooms	-	-	516 13 2
Canvassers, clerks, and messengers	1,736	2	10
Printing and advertising	-	-	493 5 9
Conveyances	-	-	408 11 0
Miscellaneous	-	-	147 19 3
Flags and colours	-	-	144 13 2
Out-voters' expenses	-	-	25 10 6
Unaccounted for, chiefly employment			356 19 11
			<hr/>
			3,829 15 7
Returning Officer	-	-	119 11 7
			<hr/>
			3,949 7 2

There are also outstanding claims estimated at 833*l.* 8*s.* 3*d.*, which may be classified as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Agency - - - -	210	0	0
Committee rooms - - - -	16	19	6
Canvassers, district managers, and personating agents - - - -	458	8	0
Printing - - - -	134	1	3
Conveyances - - - -	4	1	3
Flags and colours - - - -	9	18	3
	<hr/>		
	833	8	3

We postpone our remarks on this election, as it was so speedily followed by that of May.

1880, *May*.

Upon Sir W. Harcourt being appointed Secretary of State, a fresh contest took place between him and Mr. Hall, which resulted in the victory of the latter by 54 votes, the numbers polled on the 8th of May being

Hall, A. W., C. - - - -	2,735
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir W. V., L. - - - -	2,681

Mr. Hall's expenses were returned at 3,610*l.* 12*s.* 8*d.*, or, deducting the returning officer's charges, at 3,424*l.* 13*s.* The real expenditure incurred on his behalf is shown in the following table :—

	£	s.	d.
Agency - - - -	132	12	0
Committee rooms - - - -	399	16	11
Canvassers, clerks, and messengers - - - -	2,190	15	0
Printing and advertising - - - -	797	6	8
Conveyances - - - -	508	14	6
Miscellaneous - - - -	157	1	1
Flags and colours - - - -	326	4	3
Out-voters' expenses - - - -	25	1	0
Unaccounted for, chiefly employment - - - -	527	14	7
Previous services of sundry persons - - - -	410	0	0
	<hr/>		
	5,475	6	0
Returning officer - - - -	185	19	0
	<hr/>		
	5,661	5	0

There are also outstanding claims estimated at 1,896*l.* 10*s.* 4*d.*, which may be classified as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Agency - - - -	362	10	0
Committee Rooms - - - -	133	12	9
Canvassers, district managers, and personation agents - - - -	713	10	3

	£	s.	d.
Printers - - - -	60	6	0
Conveyances - - - -	30	0	3
Miscellaneous - - - -	26	15	0
Flags and colours - - - -	552	19	9
Out-voters' expenses - - - -	16	16	4
	<hr/>		
	1,896	10	4

Sir W. Harcourt's expenses were returned at 3,275l. 5s., or, making deductions as before, at 3,089l. 6s. We class them as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Agency - - - -	420	0	0
Committee rooms - - - -	308	10	4
Canvassers, clerks, messengers, and constables - - - -	1,011	5	4
Printing and advertising - - - -	721	3	2
Conveyances - - - -	268	1	6
Miscellaneous - - - -	28	6	4
Assistance from Birmingham - - - -	331	19	4
	<hr/>		
	3,089	6	0
Returning Officer - - - -	185	19	0
	<hr/>		
	3,275	5	0

This represents the amount actually paid away ; but there are outstanding claims amounting to 607l. 11s. 6d., viz., for—

	£	s.	d.
Colours - - - -	559	14	6
Breakfasts - - - -	45	2	0
Conveyances - - - -	2	15	0
	<hr/>		
	607	11	6

A petition having been presented against his return, Mr. Hall was unseated by Mr. Justice Lush and Mr. Justice Maistry, who reported that there was reason to believe that corrupt practices had extensively prevailed during the election. Your Majesty was thereupon pleased to appoint us to inquire into the existence of such practices.

The population of the parliamentary borough is now, according to the estimate of Mr. Alderman Galpin, the late mayor, between 40,000 and 45,000, and the number of voters on the register for 1880 was 6,166, including 884 freemen.

Politics have for a considerable period largely influenced the municipal elections for the different wards, and although the expenditure at these elections has been far below that incurred at the parliamentary elections, it is

certain that money has frequently been expended in the municipal contests in ways which, as one of the councillors admitted, would not bear the light. On the other hand, some of these elections have been carried on without any excessive or corrupt expenditure.

In the Town Council, which consists of 10 aldermen and 30 councillors, the Liberals have at the present time a decided majority, estimated on the whole at 32 to 8. In the Central ward and in the North ward (which includes the parliamentary polling districts of St. Giles and St. Thomas) the Conservatives have till recently had a majority; there are also Conservative councillors representing other wards, for instance, Mr. William Evetts, Mr. Hall's partner in the brewery, is one of the representatives for the West ward, which includes the parliamentary district of St. Ebbe.

The Parliamentary borough is divided into nine polling districts, which are as follows:—

	Voters.
1. St Aldate's, including:—	
St. Aldate proper	281
North and South Hincksey	187
St. Martin	73
2. Long Wall, including:—	
Holywell	120
St. John	15
St. Mary the Virgin	50
St. Peter in the East	106
3. St. Clement	610
4. St. Mary Magdalen	327
5. Ship Street, including:—	
All Saints	87
Binsey	10
St. Michael	148
St. Peter le Bailey	178
Out of Town Freemen	82
6. St. Giles	1,140
7. Cowley, including:—	
Cowley proper	598
Headington	9
Iffley	5
8. St. Ebbe	906
9. St. Thomas	1,234
	6,166

Of these districts it will be observed that three, namely, St. Giles's, St. Thomas's, and St. Ebbe's, contain together 3,280 voters, or more than half the entire constituency. In St. Ebbe's and St. Thomas's, as well as in St. Clement's, a large proportion of the population is of the poorer class, and had suffered much during the winter owing to the unusual scarcity of work.

Of recent years local Conservative and Liberal Associations have sprung up in the several districts, and have been found very useful for electioneering purposes ; and there is also on each side a general Association uniting the different branches. These district associations seem indeed to have been formed expressly for the purposes above mentioned ; for although in Oxford, as elsewhere, the majority of the constituency may have strong political opinions, there exists a large number of apathetic voters, sufficient to carry an election one way or the other, who are less likely to remain inactive at election times if they have once been induced to join one of these Associations.

There is also a residuum of voters who are open to the influence of money, which has usually been given in the form of payment for the sort of employment reported in the case of Mr. Neate, which we find was prevalent at the last election to a greater extent than had ever been known before. We believe, however, that in many cases the object of the employment has been rather to induce the persons employed to record their votes on the side with which their employers believed them to sympathise, than to induce them to transfer their allegiance from one side to the other. The expectation of this employment appears to have become so general that in the opinion of experienced agents the side which failed to resort to it would infallibly lose the election.

As soon as it became known that Sir William Harcourt had been appointed Secretary of State, and that there must be a fresh election, the leaders of the Conservative party in Oxford held a meeting on Saturday, the 24th of April, at which it was decided not to contest the seat, mainly on the ground of want of funds. Mr. William Evetts, however, having had an interview with Mr. Hall on the 25th, went up to London on Monday, the 26th of April, and saw Sir William Hart Dyke and Colonel the Honourable Wellington Patrick Talbot at the Central Conservative offices, with a view to obtain assistance. He told them that no funds were then available in Oxford, and that 3,500*l.* would be required in order to contest the seat.

As to the particular sum named, it should be remarked that, in the first instance, the Conservative agents at Oxford desired to have the disposal of 4,000*l.* for the purposes of the election ; but it was ultimately considered that 3,500*l.* would be sufficient. Mr. Dayman, Mr. Walsh's partner, intended that 500*l.*, part of this sum, should be devoted, not to purposes of the election, but towards the satisfaction of claims, which, as he conceived, certain persons in Oxford had against the Conservative party for services rendered and expenses incurred in parliamentary and municipal contests of previous years. He did not, however, then inform Mr. Evetts of this, nor had any of the gentlemen whom Mr. Evetts saw in London any idea that part of the money asked for was intended to be used

in this way; and Mr. Evetts, at that time, himself believed that the whole of the £3,500 was required for the legitimate purposes of the election.

Sir W. H. Dyke and Colonel Talbot after some hesitation agreed to advance 3,000*l.* for the purposes of the election, out of a fund at their disposal, formed by contributions from the leaders and friends of the Conservative party for the purpose of assisting candidates. It is customary to recruit this fund in prospect of a general election; and at this time there was a balance remaining which had been kept in hand in order to assist in defraying the expenses of election petitions.

We were informed that 3,000*l.* was an unusually large sum to be granted from this fund for one election; but looking to the expenses returned on either side at the previous contest, and to the estimate then formed by the Liberal candidates, we think that 3,000*l.* was not necessarily to be regarded as in excess of the legitimate requirements, and we acquit those who made the grant of any corrupt intent in making it.

Mr. Evetts having telegraphed to Oxford that 3,000*l.* would be found in London, a meeting was held the same evening, at which the necessity of raising an additional sum of 500*l.* was discussed. The general feeling was that this could not be done; but Mr. Dayman who was present at the meeting having informed Mr. Montagu Burrows, Chichele Professor of Modern History, of the state of affairs, that gentleman wrote to the late Mr. Thomas Dallin, then Public Orator in the University, a letter, which by some means or other got into the hands of the opposite party, and furnished us with a valuable clue to the information which we sought. The letter was as follows:—

(Private.)

9, Norham Gardens, Oxford,

April 27, 8 a.m.

Dear Dallin,—I found a note from Dayman when I got home last night saying the fight must collapse unless we can provide 500*l.* over the Carlton 3,000*l.* By same post I got a letter from Hathaway saying he will come up and fight the election for us, and urging us to go on (from private information he has received of our good chances). Noel also promises to work Jericho this time. I look on these two helpers as worth 100 additional votes. We are sure to win. The thing must be settled by 11 a.m., so I see nothing for it but to come forward and guarantee 50*l.* myself on condition H. Morrell, Parsons, and West bring 500*l.* more by 11 to-day, but I must have help and should like to raise my guarantee to 100*l.*; can you aid me with 10*l.* towards this sum? It is a crisis and we must really sacrifice something for our party. Let me know, please, by 10 a.m. at All Souls, or by 11 a.m. at D. and Walsh's office. I shall not be here.

Yours ever,

M. BURROWS.

On the morning of the 27th another meeting was held, at which it was agreed to raise the additional 500*l.*, Professor Burrows guaranteeing 100*l.*, the Rev. Washburne West, of Lincoln College, 100*l.*, Mr. John Parsons, of the Old Bank, 100*l.*, Mr. George Herbert Morrell, of Headington, 100*l.*, and if necessary another 100*l.*; and the contest was determined upon.

Before entering upon the organization and management of the election, it will be convenient to state how the 3,000*l.* was sent to Oxford, and how it was disposed of when it got there.

Colonel Talbot drew a crossed cheque for 3,000*l.* on Messrs. Drummond, payable to the order of Mr. Evetts, and sent it to him at Oxford. Mr. Evetts endorsed the cheque, and forwarded it in an envelope to Mr. Dayman, from whom it passed into the possession of Mr. Joseph Draper, managing clerk to Messrs. Dayman and Walsh.

There was at this time in Oxford one Charles Pegler, who passed there by the name of Matthews, described to us as a retired draper of strong political views, who was anxious to make himself useful to the Conservative party. This person's attendance we were not able to secure, as he escaped to the continent, so far as we could learn, about the time of the commencement of our enquiry. Mr. Evetts, when in London, had asked for the assistance of some experienced election agents, but neither Sir W. H. Dyke nor Colonel Talbot sent any one in compliance with this request. It seems, however, that Pegler was known to Mr. Charles Martin, then Secretary of the Junior Carlton Club, who disappeared about the same time as Pegler; and we have no doubt that it was through Mr. Martin that Pegler was sent to Oxford. At all events, he was known by both Mr. Dayman and Mr. Walsh to be an agent of the party, and either one or the other of these gentlemen instructed Mr. Draper to hand Pegler the cheque, in order that it might be changed and turned into cash in London, so as to avoid the necessity of the money being paid in one sum to the election account which was opened in Mr. Walsh's name at the Old Bank in Oxford.

Pegler accordingly returned to London with the cheque, and induced Colonel Talbot to give him in exchange for it an uncrossed cheque payable to bearer, which he cashed at Messrs. Drummond's; and he then returned to Oxford with 3,000*l.* in gold, contained in thirty bags.

Colonel Talbot states that he was induced to change the cheque by the representation of Pegler that if it were known in Oxford that Mr. Hall was not finding his own money, it would be nearly sure to lose him his election. Assuming this to have been so, we think, notwithstanding, that the request to be provided at such a moment with cash in the place of an ordinary crossed cheque was one calculated to excite suspicion; and that, although he believed the money was required for legitimate purposes,

Colonel Talbot ought not to have advanced it all at once, nor should he have put it in Pegler's power to take it to Oxford in the form of gold.

Mr. Hall himself was no party to the arrangement by which the cheque originally given was exchanged for the other; and we are satisfied that he had no desire to conceal the fact that he was receiving assistance from the funds of the party in London, or to prevent the first cheque being paid in to his election account.

The thirty bags of gold were taken by Pegler to Mr. Dayman on Thursday the 29th, or Friday the 30th of April. Three bags containing 100*l.* each, were retained by Pegler with, as we believe, Mr. Dayman's knowledge and consent, and the remaining 2,700*l.* was placed in a box and taken by Pegler and a clerk of Mr. Dayman's to the Old Bank, where it remained till taken possession of by Mr. Walsh.

Of the 2,700*l.*, Mr. Walsh placed 2,250*l.* to the credit of the election account in the Bank, in separate sums of 350*l.*, 250*l.*, 150*l.*, and 1,500*l.*—the first three sums corresponding in amount with sums which he had received from Mr. Hall, and spent in corrupt practices in the April election, and which did not appear either in his banking account of the first election or in the accounts he transmitted to the returning officer. The object of so dividing the money was that, in the event of any subsequent inquiry, the first three items might be supposed to represent the sums received from Mr. Hall, and the 1,500*l.* to be the total amount obtained from Colonel Talbot. This design was, however, frustrated by the publication of the letter already set out.

Mr. Walsh disposed of the remaining 450*l.* as follows:—A further sum of 181*l.* was handed to Pegler to be dispensed for illegal purposes; 79*l.* to Mr. Draper to pay outstanding accounts for the April election; while 190*l.* was retained in Mr. Walsh's hands, and ultimately used to pay the bill at the Roebuck Hotel, where the Conservative central committee room was situated.

Of the 500*l.* which was to be raised in Oxford, Mr. West and Professor Burrows have since paid 100*l.* each; 72*l.* 10*s.* has been paid from other private sources, and the residue is due from Mr. Parsons and Mr. Morrell. These sums were not, however, paid to the credit of the election account (which was in Mr. Walsh's name), but were placed to the credit of a separate account at the Old Bank, called Mr. Dayman's No. 2 account, to distinguish it from his private account at the same bank. Mr. Dayman was at once allowed by the bank, on the faith of the promised subscriptions, to draw 300*l.* on this account, and he was also furnished by Pegler with 110*l.* out of the 481*l.*, which the latter had obtained as already mentioned. This sum of 410*l.* was disposed of by Mr. Dayman in the following manner:—

To Mr. John Calcutt, a town councillor, who stated that he had expended nearly 1,000 <i>l.</i> at previous parliamentary and municipal elections	£ 100
To Mr. Thomas Wells, also a town councillor, who stated that he had expended about 500 <i>l.</i> on previous elections	150
To Mr. William Goodson, an innkeeper, who stated that he had incurred heavy losses through supporting the Conservatives at previous elections	50
To Mr. John Juggins, a tailor and hatter, who stated that he had spent 1,000 <i>l.</i> in electioneering in Oxford	50
To Mr. John Hobdell, an auctioneer, who stated that he had spent about 120 <i>l.</i> in unsuccessfully contesting the West Ward	60
	<hr/> 410

With regard to the 371*l.* remaining in Pegler's hands, we find that he was instructed by Mr. Walsh that he might use Mr. Wells, Mr. Calcutt, and Mr. Nathaniel Cross Payne, an innkeeper, as convenient channels for the distribution of money. He accordingly paid 100*l.* to Mr. Wells, 100*l.* to Mr. Payne, 100*l.* to Mr. Calcutt (from whom the greater part of this sum passed into Mr. Payne's possession), and 5*l.* to Mr. George West, an innkeeper. These three sums of 100*l.* were expended by Messrs. Wells, Payne, and Calcutt in colourable employment; the 5*l.* was spent in direct bribery and treating; the remaining 66*l.* we have not been able to trace.

Conservative Organization.

The parliamentary borough was for the purposes of the Conservative canvass divided into districts, coinciding, for the most part, with the polling districts. In some of these the number of committee rooms was excessive, and in nearly all of them the number of persons employed (under the various names of bill-posters, committee-men, canvassers, clerks, constables, detectives, fetchers-up, guards, orderlies, messengers, night watchmen, and writers) was so largely in excess of the legitimate requirements as to leave no doubt that the object of the employment was to influence votes. There were, however, some exceptions, notably the Long Wall district and the parishes of All Saints and St. Michael, which are situated in well-to-do parts of the town. Additional hands were employed on the polling day—ostensibly to bring up the voters or to protect them from intimidation; and in addition to the necessary check clerks and personation agents, legal agents from other towns were retained to assist in the polling booths, whose presence was considered

desirable by Mr. Walsh, because the presiding officers were, in his opinion, mostly political partizans. We do not think that this opinion was founded on fact, or that any necessity has been shown for employing legal assistants in addition to the ordinary personation agents. Most of them are still unpaid, and some make no claim to payment.

The number of conveyances employed by the Conservatives on the polling day was about 196, which, in our opinion, was excessive, and we think the charge for each, *l.* 15s., was too high.

There was an inordinate amount of printing and bill-posting, and a profuse display of flags and colours, which was common to both sides. Men were employed in making flags, in putting them up, and in watching them to see that they were not torn down. Others were employed in printing bills, and in pasting them on the walls. This was done even beyond the limits of the parliamentary borough. Indeed it was in the distribution of printed matter and colours and in watching their bills and flags that the agents found their chief pretext for the employment of so many persons.

The voters who, being non-resident freemen or temporarily absent from Oxford, had to come from a distance to vote, were not only paid their travelling expenses, but in most cases received further sums as compensation for their loss of time.

With regard to the Conservative expenditure in particular districts, we found very great difficulty in arriving at even an approximate account of the mode in which the money had been expended, for the list which had, in most cases, been prepared by the district agents showing the names of the persons employed and the amounts paid were handed to Mr. Walsh, and destroyed by him or by his directions either immediately after the election or just before the hearing of the petition. In the case of probably all the clerks, and of some few of the messengers, vouchers were given, but most of them were destroyed in order to save those who voted from prosecution; so that while the returned expenses go to show that 95 clerks and 254 messengers were employed, there were filed only 41 vouchers for the clerks, and none at all for the messengers. But even these numbers are totally unreliable, and some of the vouchers filed are fictitious. The names also of the persons employed, and the amounts paid to them, are incorrectly stated in the returns. Mr. Walsh estimates that on the polling day 1,200 persons were employed on the Conservative side, and we are of opinion that his estimate is rather under than over the truth.

Besides these grave irregularities, we also found that in many districts money was disbursed which did not come through the hands of Mr. Walsh in any shape or way,

but was provided by various persons out of their own resources.

We have considered it unnecessary to report minutely on the details of the expenditure in each of the nine polling districts; but for the purpose of illustrating the system generally carried out on the Conservative side, we refer to the following districts where the expenditure was most extravagant:—

In St. Clement's district, containing 610 voters, about 100 persons were employed, who received 18*l.* 18*s.* out of a total expenditure of 237*l.* 0*s.* 9*d.*

In the district of St. Mary Magdalen, containing 327 voters, of whom about 120 were Conservatives, Benjamin Bennett, who had charge, employed not less than 150 persons, and the total expenditure was 231*l.* 5*s.*, nearly all of which was paid for such employment. There were also some cases of direct bribery. Benjamin Bennett stated that, although he received no special instructions, it was understood that he was to give employment when asked, and that he acted accordingly. In the April election he had refused applicants, but in the May election he refused none. It should be added that, besides the large sum actually paid, there are now outstanding claims, some of them disputed, to the amount of about 160*l.*

In the Cowley district, containing 612 voters, Mr. Robert Thomas, a private tutor, who was the managing secretary and responsible for the district, employed a very large number of messengers and orderlies, who were engaged throughout the 10 days of the contest; and Mr. Thomas Boddington, who was working under him, received instructions just before the polling day, to employ as many more as he could. The precise numbers cannot be given, as Mr. Thomas was unable to furnish a complete list; but he showed a list of nearly 90 messengers, clerks, bill-posters, and orderlies, and we have no doubt there were in reality at least 150. The total expenditure was 235*l.* of which 197*l.* was spent in colourable employment, although only about 100*l.* of this sum was so accounted for; and there are still outstanding claims amounting to 90*l.*

In St. Ebbe's district, containing 906 voters, Mr. Joseph Henry Gynes was the secretary in charge; but the most active and influential supporter of Mr. Hall was his partner, Mr. William Evetts. The number of persons employed was not less than 160; and there were several cases of direct bribery. The total expenditure appears to have been 521*l.* 3*s.* 1*d.*, and of this sum a considerable portion, amounting to about 198*l.* 13*s.* 1*d.*, was admitted by Mr. Evetts to have come direct from the receipts at the brewery, without passing through the hands of the election agent, Mr. Walsh. No part of the expenditure in this district was included in the accounts transmitted to the returning officer.

The district of St. Thomas, containing 1,234 voters, was for the purposes of the election divided into two; one portion being under the management of Mr. Wells, and the other under that of Mr. Frederick Gregson, a solicitor.

Mr. Wells, whose portion contained about 600 voters, employed nearly 100 persons, and the total expenditure came to about 227*l.* There is no doubt that the employment was excessive, and that it was chiefly done in consequence of Pegler having told Mr. Wells that, in addition to the 100*l.* already given to him, further supplies would be forthcoming. In addition to the persons employed by Mr. Wells himself, there were over 60 persons employed at sub-committee rooms, at an additional expenditure of 147*l.*

In the other portion of this district, including about 635 voters, which was under the management of Mr. Frederick Gregson, there were employed about 120 persons at a cost of about 210*l.* On the 25th of May a list was sent by him to Mr. Walsh, in which the names of many of the messengers were purposely suppressed or incorrectly stated, in order, as he said, to prevent those who had been employed and had voted from getting into trouble. Mr. Gregson also signed a receipt for 132*l.* 10*s.* for his services in order that it might be filed with the accounts, although he did not receive the money until just before the petition was heard, when it was paid out of money belonging to Messrs. Dayman and Walsh. He received altogether through Mr. Walsh and expended in the district about 236*l.*

Taking the whole of St. Thomas's district together, the expenditure amounted to about 578*l.*, and the number of persons employed exceeded 250.

Mr. N. C. Payne took an active part in the distribution of money in this neighbourhood. As the previous election had, in his opinion, been lost through not employing a sufficient number of persons he began, as soon as the contest was resolved on, to engage everybody who was in want of a job, and in this way he employed about 120 persons, all of whom were supposed to be Conservatives. He expended a considerable sum in treating, and also instructed certain innkeepers to supply beer to the frequenters of their houses at his expense. He spent altogether about 230*l.*, and he considers that he is liable for 64*l.* 16*s.* more. Of the 230*l.* he has received 210*l.* including 50*l.* from Mr. Dayman, as well as the sum which came to him from Pegler.

It will be seen that the total amount paid away on the Conservative side exceeded the original estimate of 3,500*l.* by 2,161*l.* 5*s.* To meet this excess in part, sums amounting in all to about 690*l.* were supplied by Mr. Hall himself, by Mr. Evetts from the brewery, by Mr. Dayman from his private banking account, and by certain of the district agents from their own resources.

This still left a large deficiency, in order to supply which Mr. Walsh, about the beginning of July, induced his bankers at Oxford to advance 1,500*l.* To replace this he went to London, where he was introduced by Mr. Hall to Lord Henry Thynne, who with Mr. Rowland Winn collected a sum of nearly 1,000*l.* for the purpose of meeting the expenses of opposing the petition which had then been filed against Mr. Hall's return. Mr. Martin, the secretary of the Junior Carlton Club, was instructed by Lord Henry Thynne to pay this money to Mr. Hall's agent for opposing the petition. It was, however, paid to Mr. Walsh, who had nothing to do with the petition, but who received it under the impression that it was to be used in meeting the expenses of the election. Mr. Hall took the same view; but we are assured by Lord Henry Thynne that his intention was that the money should be devoted to the petition and the petition only, for which purpose it had been subscribed.

Mr. Walsh at the same time succeeded in obtaining through Mr. Martin an advance of 500*l.* from the funds of the Junior Carlton Club, for which he gave the joint promissory note of Mr. Dayman and himself. This money also Mr. Walsh considered he was authorised to use in meeting election expenses; but Sir George Prescott, a member of the committee, who signed the necessary cheque, was told by Mr. Martin that it was required for the petition. On inspecting the minute-book of the Club, we found that the first entry relating to the matter is as follows:—

“27th July.

“The Secretary reported that, with the consent of the leaders of the party, a loan of 500*l.* had been made to the agent of the Oxford election.”

But on the 3rd August and in every subsequent week the entry is carried on as

“Loan to Oxford Petition Fund.”

We have come to the conclusion that the first entry represented that which Mr. Martin knew to be the intended application of the 500*l.*, but that it was purposely carried on by him in a different form, in order to lead the authorities of the Club to suppose that the money was being used for the purposes of the petition.

Liberal Organisation.

Sir William Harcourt appointed as his joint election agents Mr. Thomas Mallam and Mr. Joseph Jones Bickerton, solicitors, but the former took no active part in the conduct of the election. A banking account was opened in the name of Sir W. Harcourt, on which the agents had authority to draw. The total amount paid to this account was 3,275*l.*, which we find to have been all furnished by the candidate himself.

For the purposes of their canvass the Liberals divided the City into districts, which coincided with the polling districts already mentioned.

The total number of persons employed on the Liberal side at the election (excluding the drivers of conveyances) was about 500, of whom about 220 were voters, and the others nearly all members of the different Liberal Associations. These were employed under designations as various as those used on the other side.

In the districts of St. Giles and St. Thomas, forming the North ward, which were at both elections under the superintendence of Mr. Robert Buckell, the secretary of the Oxford Reform Club (of whose proceedings Mr. Bickerton was aware), 264 persons, including 86 voters, were employed, and the total expenditure was 490*l.* 12*s.* 8*d.*

In St. Ebbe's district, which was under the charge of Mr. George Webb, 58 persons were employed.

In St. Aldate's district, where Mr. George Barrett, the secretary of the local Liberal Association, was in charge, 36 persons were employed.

We think the employment in each of the above-named districts, particularly in the two under Mr. Buckell's charge, was far in excess of the requirements, and amounted to a corrupt practice on the part of the employers. Indeed Mr. Bickerton and Mr. Buckell have both candidly admitted that many more persons were employed than were necessary, and Mr. Buckell has stated that, in his opinion, whichever side abstained from the practice would infallibly lose the election.

The item "Assistance from Birmingham" requires some explanation. The services of Mr. Francis Schnadhorst, the secretary of the Birmingham Liberal Association, were retained at a cost of 105*l.* on behalf of Sir William Harcourt, at an early period, to assist in the detection of corrupt practices and in the management of the contest generally. Mr. George Nuttall, an electioneering agent from Birmingham, was employed under Mr. Schnadhorst with a staff of amateur detectives. He received 52*l.* 10*s.* in respect of his own services, and 175*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.* for the pay and travelling and hotel expenses of his subordinates. We do not find that either Mr. Schnadhorst or Mr. Nuttall discovered anything of importance, or introduced any striking novelty into the arrangements of the election. They advised, however, that breakfasts might without illegality be provided on the polling day, in accordance with a practice observed in Birmingham.

This was accordingly done upon a very extensive scale, no less than 787 breakfasts having been provided at prices varying from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 3*s.* per head, amounting in all to 73*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.*, of which 23*l.* 7*s.* 8*d.* is charged in the accounts under the head of "Committee Rooms." The remaining 45*l.* 2*s.* was not returned.

In advising that breakfasts should be provided, Mr. Schnadhorst and Mr. Nuttall appear to have acted under the *bona fide* belief that, if they were provided only for persons actually employed in bringing up voters on the day of the poll, the breakfasts would not be within the 23rd section of the Corrupt Practices Prevention Act; but we think that they did in fact induce many persons to take an active interest in the election and to vote, who would not otherwise have done so. The practice is extremely liable to abuse, and it was abused on this occasion.

The item "Canvassers, clerks, messengers, and constables" includes 53*l.* paid for 104 persons, Liberal voters of Abingdon, who, in pursuance of arrangements made by Mr. Bickerton, visited Oxford on the polling day, decorated with the Liberal colours, nominally for the purpose of maintaining order, but whose services do not seem to have been required in that capacity.

The flags and colours on the Liberal side were supplied in great profusion by Mr. Buckell, Mr. George Young, and Mr. George William Cooper, on their own responsibility. These gentlemen stated that they looked for repayment, not to Sir William Harcourt or his agents, but to the Liberal Association. A sum of 79*l.* 18*s.* was, however, paid on the 21st of May, by Mr. George Henry Annetts, Mr. Bickerton's clerk, to Mr. Young by a cheque drawn on the election account for the purpose of enabling Mr. Young to pay for some of these colours. No receipt was taken by Mr. Annetts from Mr. Young for the money so paid to him, and the money was repaid by Mr. Young to Mr. Bickerton on the 3rd of November. Mr. Bickerton stated that this cheque was drawn on the election account by mistake, and should have been drawn on his private banking account, because as agent he declined to have anything to do with colours.

We regard as highly objectionable the practice of providing for such illegal expenses by subscriptions raised through the instrumentality of an irresponsible body of this nature.

April Election, 1880.

At the April election the organization on both sides was similar to that at the election in May. The same gentlemen acted as agents, and were assisted for the most part by the same district managers. The expenditure on the Conservative side was considerably less, although the contest was of longer duration than in the May election, while the expenditure on the Liberal side was nearly the same, putting aside the cost of the assistance from Birmingham and the money spent in colours in May.

The same system of employment prevailed on both sides, though not to the same extent as at the May election, and it was chiefly conspicuous in the same districts. We find that it was resorted to by both sides as a means of influencing votes.

The total number of persons employed on the Conservative side in the April election was about 800. We cannot say how many of these were voters.

The total number employed on the Liberal side was 365, of whom 212 were voters.

Printed matter and colours were distributed on both sides, as at the May election, with the same objects, though not with the same profusion as in May. The colours on the Liberal side were provided in a great measure from the stores of the Liberal Association.

Breakfasts were given on both sides on the polling day, but to a very much smaller number of persons than in May.

The money expended on the Conservative side was supplied as follows:—2,35*l.* 1*s.* by Mr. Hall himself, or by Mr. Evetts from the brewery; 1,000*l.* by Colonel Talbot and Sir William Hart Dyke out of the fund already mentioned; and the remaining 596*l.* by local agents.

The money expended on the Liberal side was furnished by the candidates in equal shares from their own private funds.

There was some show of rioting at the April election, which led to the assistance of additional constables being obtained by the Police Committee from Birmingham and other towns by way of precaution on the polling day in May.

Conclusions.

We find that the extent to which the system of employment was being carried at the elections in 1874 and 1880 was not known at the time to any of the candidates, nor were any of them cognizant of any corrupt practice being committed. They all appear to have placed implicit confidence in their agents, and to have left the management of the contests entirely in their hands.

We think, however, that Mr. Hall ought, in common prudence, to have informed himself in 1874 of the manner in which the money expended on his behalf in the contests of that year had been disposed of. If he had examined the published returns, he would have become aware how large a sum Mr. Walsh had failed to account for, and it would have been his duty to decline to entrust the conduct of any future election to that gentleman.

The names of all persons whom we find to have been guilty of corrupt practices at the last four elections for the City of Oxford will be found in the schedules annexed to the Report.

But it is necessary to observe that Schedules II. and IV. do not by any means purport to contain the names of all who, under colour of payment for employment, received money for their votes.

So far as the employer is concerned, it is comparatively easy to detect bribery under colour of payment for ser-

vices; but when the inquiry is directed to the motives and knowledge of a voter who has been employed, it is difficult to decide whether he has accepted the employment with a corrupt intent. The character of the employment and the number of the persons employed may be such as necessarily to bring home a corrupt intent to the employer; but it by no means follows that the persons employed have cognizance either of the unnecessary character of the work which they are asked to do, or the number of persons engaged in doing it along with them. We, therefore, did not pursue this inquiry further than was necessary for verifying the accounts laid before us by the several district agents, for testing the particulars filed in support of the petition, and forming an approximate estimate of the number of persons employed.

The constituency of the City of Oxford is not in our opinion generally corrupt. There is very little direct buying and selling of votes; and corruption in Oxford mostly takes the form of colourable employment. Some money, but not much, has been expended in paying voters for their loss of time, and in treating. The number of electors open to these corrupt influences has been estimated by those who know the constituency best at about 1,600. It must be remembered, however, that owing to the fact that very few members of the University reside at Oxford during more than half the year, there is a very large class of persons whose ordinary employment is not continuous. These men were, after a winter of great distress, subjected to the temptation arising from the expenditure of unusually large sums of money; for, putting aside the returning officer's charges, about 7,500*l.* was spent in the April election, and upwards of 11,000*l.* in the May election, in a constituency numbering 6,166 electors.

The demoralized condition of so large a portion of the constituency is in our opinion in a great measure due to Mr. Walsh, Mr. Calcutt, and Mr. Wells.

Mr. Walsh, who has had the management on the Conservative side in the last four parliamentary elections, admits that he has never fought a pure election in Oxford, and that with reference to the accounts required to be transmitted to the returning officer, he has never furnished an account in any degree approaching accuracy. Mr. Walsh's method of proceeding seems to have been to determine, first, what amount of expenditure it was prudent to account for, secondly, how that amount should be accounted for, and thirdly, what vouchers should be manufactured for that purpose. His objects were, in the first place, to conceal the amount expended in colourable employment and other corrupt practices, and all other illegal payments, and, secondly, not to file any vouchers which would furnish the other side with the means of prosecuting those electors who, having been employed for

reward in the election, had nevertheless voted. He, therefore, returned in his accounts only a very small part of the money expended in the payment of clerks, messengers, and other persons, and none of that spent in flags and colours, or in bringing to the poll voters who were away from Oxford, or in paying them for their loss of time in coming to vote; and, if by these means he had reduced the apparent expenditure below the sum he had determined to account for, he brought it up again to that amount by fictitious vouchers for payments which he had never made.

Thus, as has been already stated, he filed with his accounts for the General Election of 1874, three receipts for 150*l.* each from Mr. Charles Bishop (now Registrar of the County Court), Mr. Francis Cripps, and Mr. Walter Peppercorn, in alleged payment for their services as legal agents, when in fact those gentlemen had only received 3*l.* 10*s.* each. So, again, with the accounts for the Election of May, 1880, Mr. Walsh filed two receipts, one of 132*l.* 10*s.* from Mr. Frederick Gregson, and one of 210*l.* from Mr. John Ramsbotham, an electioneering agent, from Southport, in Lancashire, when, in fact, neither of those gentlemen had received anything. Mr. Walsh himself also filed receipts as for sums paid him for his own services in the General Election of 1874, and in the May Election of 1880, for 315*l.* each, and for 210*l.* in the General Election of 1880, when, in fact, he had received in the General Election of 1874 only 150*l.*, and in the others nothing at all. We cannot but express our surprise that members of an honourable profession should have been capable of lending themselves to such practices.

The nature of the expenditure was sometimes concealed by taking receipts for sums alleged to have been paid for the use of a committee-room, when the money was actually paid for flags and colours, or spent in colourable employment.

In order to conceal the fact that persons had voted who had been employed for reward, receipts were filed which had been signed by the voter in a fictitious name, or the payments made to a voter and a non-voter were lumped together, and a receipt for the whole amount taken from the non-voter. In the last election even this artifice fell into disuse, and the law was openly disregarded, because there was a difficulty in getting every voter who came to be paid to bring a non-voter with him to sign the receipt; and no receipts at all were filed for the 254 messengers, whose names were allowed to appear on the Accounts.

Mr. Walsh's mode of making out his accounts will be best seen by comparing the subjoined summary transmitted by him to the returning officer with the actual expenditure.

Mr. Walsh's summary is as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Returning officer - - - -	185	19	0
Printing, advertising and stationery -	681	1	8
Bill posting - - - - -	93	15	0
Committee rooms - - - - -	391	5	0
Vehicles within the City - - - - -	466	0	6
Clerks - - - - -	551	12	6
Messengers - - - - -	471	16	6
Street lists - - - - -	67	15	0
Agents - - - - -	657	10	0
General payment for cab hire and ex- penses - - - - -	22	7	6
Telegrams, postage, & receipt stamps	21	10	0
	<hr/>		
	3,610	12	8
	<hr/>		

This summary, when classified in the mode we have adopted, gives the following result :—

	£	s.	d.
Committee rooms - - - - -	391	5	0
Canvassers, clerks, and messengers -	1,023	9	0
Printing and advertising - - - - -	774	16	8
Conveyances - - - - -	466	0	6
Miscellaneous : - - - - -	43	17	6
Fictitious items (street lists & agency)	725	5	0
	<hr/>		
	3,424	13	8
Returning officer - - - - -	185	19	0
	<hr/>		
	3,610	12	8
	<hr/>		

Mr. Wells has taken an active interest in elections in Oxford for a considerable time. In 1874 he contested the North Ward at a cost of 100*l.*, and he has spent an indefinite sum in support of other candidates at municipal elections. This outlay was not confined to election times, but has, he says, been a continual drain upon his resources during the intervals. Persons out of employment have been in the habit of applying to him for relief, which he never refused if he had anything to give. He thus acquired great influence and popularity, and it became important to secure his assistance at Parliamentary elections.

In the parliamentary elections of 1874 he expended £200; of which only £20 was repaid to him. This money was spent in the colourable employment of voters as clerks and messengers, some of whom were paid not only during

At the same election Mr. Buckell hired 14 houses, the occupiers of which were nearly all voters, for bill-posting stations, upon the terms of an agreement which he had prepared in the following form :

"Understanding that your posting bills are pulled down or meddled with in the neighbourhood, I agree, at your request, to grant you until the city election is over, the use of a window in the ground floor of my house upon which to place your bills, on receiving, as rent for the permission, 20s. per week ; and I give you and your friends leave and license to enter my premises to effect your object at all reasonable times."

At the election in May Mr. Buckell hired only two rooms as bill-posting stations ; but as Secretary to the Liberal Association he authorised the expenditure of considerable sums of money in flags and in employment, and he was fully aware of the large number of breakfasts which were provided, and he ordered breakfasts himself for 240 persons, the cost of which was not included in the filed returns.

At several of his committee rooms no work appears to have been done, and at others the work done was next to nothing, and the payments in respect of such rooms were corruptly made. He also paid some of the messengers employed by him at the rate of 7s. 6d. per day instead of the usual rate of 5s.

An opinion has been expressed before us that the freemen constitute the most corrupt element in the constituency, but we find there is no foundation in fact for this opinion.

It was asserted that the magistrates of the city have been actuated by political bias in the administration of justice ; that a fund which exists in the city, known as the Freemen's Fund, has been administered with a like partiality ; that the parliamentary register has been kept with a bias in favour of the Liberal party, and that the presiding officers in the polling booths did not behave fairly ; but we find that there is no evidence in support of any of these assertions.

It was suggested that as the ballot papers and packets relating to the election in May 1880 were not sent to London immediately after the declaration of the poll on the night of Saturday, the 8th of May, but detained in Oxford until the following Monday, the opportunity was taken of improperly examining the papers and comparing them with the counterfoils, in order to ascertain how particular electors had voted. But after full enquiry we have come to the conclusion that there is no ground for the suggestion. At the same time we think it is to be regretted that the envelopes in which the counterfoils were enclosed were not all sealed as directed by Rule 29 of the First Schedule to the Ballot Act, 1872, and that the boxes were not forwarded to London by the first post after the counting was completed and the poll declared.

Upon consideration of all the evidence before us, we find—

- (1) That corrupt practices were not committed at the election in 1868 ;
- (2) That corrupt practices were committed at the election in February 1874, by way of the payment of money to voters as herein mentioned ;
- (3) That corrupt practices extensively prevailed at the election in March 1874, by way of payment of money to voters as herein mentioned ;
- (4) That corrupt practices extensively prevailed at the election in April 1880, by way of payment of money to voters as herein mentioned ;
- (5) That corrupt practices extensively prevailed at the election in May 1880, by way of payment of money to voters as herein mentioned ;
- (6) That the several persons named in the schedules annexed to this our Report were guilty of corrupt practices as therein respectively mentioned.

The following persons named in the schedules are members of the Town Council of Oxford, viz. :—

Robert Buckell.
John Calcutt.
George William Cooper.
William Evetts.
Thomas Wells.

The following persons named in the schedules are magistrates of the city of Oxford, viz. :—

John Calcutt.
John Juggins.

Mr. Joseph Jones Bickerton has since the election in May been appointed Town Clerk of Oxford.

All of which we humbly submit to Your Majesty's consideration, together with the evidence given before us, which is appended to this our Report.

LEWIS WM. CAVE.
HUGH COWIE.
EDWARD RIDLEY.

The Temple, April 5th, 1881.

SCHEDULE I.

Persons Guilty of Corrupt Practices in respect of the Votes of others at the Election in May, 1880.

(Those to whose names an asterisk is prefixed were guilty of treating only.)

Annetts, George Henry, Clerk to Mr. Bickerton.
Anstey, William Jones, Cowley Road, Farrier.
Bacon, Frederick, James Street, St. Clement's.

Ballard, Benjamin, Abingdon, Ironfounder.
 Barney, Tom, Church Street, New Hincsey, Shopman.
 Barrett, George, Canal Street, Jericho.
 *Beath, Thomas, Innkeeper, "Royal Oak," St. Clement's.
 Bedford, Thomas William, Little Clarendon Street.
 Beesley, Geoffrey, Medley Lock, Boat-builder.
 Bellamy, Montague, Wellington Square, Bookbinder.
 Bennett, Benjamin, Walton Crescent, Dyer.
 Best, William, Rewley Road, Hairdresser.
 Bickerton, Joseph Jones, Solicitor.
 Boddington, Thomas, Magdalen Road, Grocer.
 Bossom, Alfred, 29, Cardigan Street, Carpenter.
 Boulter, William, Innkeeper, "Fir Tree" Tavern.
 Bowell, Charles, Cranham Street.
 Brooks, Edwin, Tailor and Draper, St. Giles' Street, West.
 Buckell, Robert, Secretary to the Liberal Hall Company;
 and the Oxford Reform Club.
 Bull, William, Tailor, George Street.
 Busby, William, Steward of the Oxford Reform Club.
 Calcutt, John, Summertown.
 Carr, Edward, Painter, Dale Street.
 Churns, John Samuel, Assistant Librarian at Magdalen
 College.
 Compton, James, St. Aldate's, Accountant.
 Cooper, George William, 55, High Street, St. Thomas,
 Grocer.
 Cox, Henry, Auctioneer.
 Dayman, Gordon, Solicitor.
 Dodd, Charles, Bear Lane.
 Draper, Joseph, Clerk to Messrs. Dayman and Walsh
 Dumbleton, John, Worcester Terrace, Grocer.
 Edmonds, Henry, Cranham Terrace, Shopman.
 English, William, Bridge Street, Osnay.
 Evans, William, Bootmaker, Jericho.
 Evetta, William, Brewer.
 Gardener, Edward, High Street, Innkeeper.
 Goddard, George, Bookbinder.
 Green, Thomas Bowden, Secretary.
 Gregson, Frederick, Bampton, Solicitor.
 Gynes, Joseph Henry, Thomas Street, Printer.
 Hall, Henry, Lieut.-Col. of Volunteers.
 Hall, Daniel George, Observatory Street, Brewer.
 Hastings, Charles, George Street, Saddler.
 Hicks, Joseph, 15, Albert Street, Tailor.
 Howard, Henry.
 Ives, Henry, Sheriff's Officer.
 *Kemp, Frank, "Harcourt Arms," Cranham Terrace,
 Innkeeper.
 King, W. Padbury, Heyford.
 Linnell, Charles, Commercial Traveller.
 Lynes, James John, "White Hart," Corn Market,
 Publican.
 Mabbatt, Charles, 45a, Great Clarendon Street.

Martin, Charles, late Secretary, Junior Carlton Club.
Matthews, William, 49, High Street, St. Clement's, Shoemaker.
Moore, Charles, Blackfriars Road.
Newport, sen., Henry, Great Clarendon Street, Agent and Collector of Rents.
***Nobbs, Walter, Jericho, Mason and Innkeeper.**
Owen, William, Solicitor's Clerk.
Payne, Nathaniel Cross, 28 and 29, Little Clarendon Street.
Peedel, Stephen, 5, Canal Street, Innkeeper.
Pegler, Charles, alias Matthews.
Plowman, William.
Ramsbotham, John, Southport, Lancashire.
Savage, Albert, St. Clement's, Upholsterer.
Savage, William, Butler, University College.
***Saxton, Stephen, "Red Lion," Summertown, Shoeing and Jobbing Smith.**
Shelton, Thomas, Museum Street, Cabinet Maker.
Sims, Joseph, 11, Cardigan Street, Beerhouse Keeper.
***Simms, Thomas, Summertown, Faggot Maker.**
Smith, Albert, "Queen" Cowley Road, Innkeeper.
Spokes, Thomas, Cab Proprietor.
Tanner, Thomas, "Welsh Pony," Innkeeper.
***Taylor, David, Summertown, "Rose and Crown," George Street.**
Thomas, Robert, Stanley Road, Private Tutor.
Turner, Henry, Lay Clerk, St. John's College.
Walsh, Percival Lewis, Solicitor.
Ward, Arthur Ernest, 9, Bevington Road, Solicitor.
Ward, Henry, 7, Littlegate Street, Butcher.
Webb, George, Carpenter and Joiner.
Wells, Thomas, Manciple, Brasenose College.
Weller, John, Cross Street, Shopkeeper.
West, George, "Horse and Groom," St. Ebbe's.
Wheeler, Thomas, Norfolk Street, St. Ebbe's, Coal Merchant.
Woodward, William, 225, Cowley Road, Grocer.
Young, George, Retired Builder and Contractor.

SCHEDULE II.

Persons guilty of Corrupt Practices in respect of their own Votes at the Election in May 1880.

Allen, James, Wheelwright, 9, Russell Street, Mill Street.
Allen, Richard, Carpenter, Fisher Row, St. Thomas's.
Beesley, James, Waterman, 11, Upper Fisher Row.
Beesley, Samuel, Upper Fisher Row.
Bowell, John, Furniture Mover.
Brooks, Frederick, Railway Porter, Hythe Bridge Street.
Bruce, Walter, 19, Albert Street, Jericho.
Buckland, Thomas, Castle Street.

Cooper, John, Railway Servant, West Court, Little Clarendon Street.
 Costar, John, Shoemaker (late of Church Street).
 Covey, Samuel, Eyre's Yard, High Street, St. Thomas's.
 Davis, Henry, Headington Quarry, Tailor.
 Deacon, James, Friar Street, St. Ebbe's, Carpenter.
 Debanks, William, "Lamb and Flag" Yard.
 Dell, John, 16, Paradise Street.
 Dunsby, Robert, 11, Wyatt's Road, St. Aldate's, Shoemaker.
 Fathers, David, 4, Union Street, Jericho, Carver and Cleaner.
 Gardiner, William, 39, Cardigan Street, Shoemaker.
 Gray, William Henry, Oxford Gas Works, Purifier.
 Hamlet, John, 3, Canal Street, Nurse.
 Harris, Henry, 43, Church Street.
 Haynes, Arthur (late of Church Street, St. Ebbe's).
 Hedges, Frank, 13, St. Ebbe's Street.
 Hedges, George, 1, New Road, Decorator.
 Higginson, John, 1, Canal Street, Jericho.
 Hiles, Thomas, 27, Bridge Street, Osney, Telegraph Line man.
 Hill, John, Church Street, St. Ebbe's, Labourer.
 Howkins, William, Hythe Bridge Street, Coal Merchant.
 Johnson, Alfred, Charles Street, Carpenter.
 Johnson, Samuel, Iron Fitter.
 Jones, John, 38, Nelson Street, Plasterer.
 Kempson, Henry, Cowley Road, Butcher and Greengrocer.
 Long, William, Nelson Street, Gasfitter.
 Mallett, senior, John, Hincksey, General Dealer.
 Mills, George, Plumber and Glazier.
 Mitchell, William, Cardigan Street, Plasterer.
 Packford, William, Bullingdon Road, Tailor.
 Passant, Albert, 32, Wellington Street.
 Powell, Thomas Edwin, "Dog Tray," Innkeeper.
 Purser, George, 4, Rowley Road, Gloucester Green, Gilder and Publican.
 Rawlings, Henry, Radcliffe Road, St. Giles.
 Savin, John, Woodstock Road, Foreman.
 Scott, Robert, London, Engine Driver, London and North-western Railway.
 Sheasby, John, Mill Street, St. Thomas's.
 Smith, George, 17, Cardigan Street, Furniture Porter.
 Smith, John, Hincksey, Stonesawyer.
 Stone, Thomas, Wheelwright.
 Surrage, Henry, Van Dieman's Lane, Ashman.
 Surrage, James, 61, Friar Street, Ash Collector.
 Timms, Samuel, 20, Bridport Street, Tailor.
 Tally, William, 5, Albert Street.
 Waile, George, 53, Bridge Street, Osney, Cabman.
 Walker, Frederick, Woodstock Road, Shoemaker.
 Whip, Charles, 16, Victor Street.
 Whitehead, Josiah, 33, Castle Street.

SCHEDULE III.

*Persons guilty of Corrupt Practices in respect of the Votes
of others at the Election in April, 1880.*

Annetts, George Henry, Clerk to Mr. Bickerton.
 Anstey, William Jones, Cowley Road, Farrier.
 Bacon, Frederick, James Street, St. Clement's.
 Bennett, Benjamin, Walton Crescent, Dyer.
 Bickerton, Joseph Jones, Solicitor.
 Buckell, Robert, Secretary to the Liberal Hall Company;
 and the Oxford Reform Club.
 Carr, Edward, Dale Street, Painter.
 Churms, John Samuel, Assistant Librarian at Magdalen
 College.
 Cooper, George William, 55, High Street, St. Thomas,
 Grocer.
 Draper, Joseph, Clerk to Messrs. Dayman and Walsh.
 Evetts, William, Brewer.
 Gregson, Frederick, Solicitor, Bampton.
 Gynes, Joseph Henry, Thames Street, Printer.
 Juggins, John, 13, High Street, Tailor and Hatter.
 Mabbatt, Charles, 45a, Great Clarendon Street.
 Matthews, William, 49, High Street, St. Clement's,
 Shoemaker.
 Newport, senior, Henry, Great Clarendon Street, Agent
 and Collector of Rents.
 Owen, William, Solicitor's Clerk.
 Payne, Nathaniel Cross, 28 and 29, Little Clarendon
 Street.
 Plowman, William.
 Thomas, Robert, Stanley Road, Private Tutor.
 Turner, Harry, Lay Clerk, St. John's College.
 Walsh, Percival Lewis, Solicitor.
 Ward, Arthur Ernest, 9, Bevington Road, Solicitor.
 Webb, George, Carpenter and Joiner.
 Wells, Thomas, Manciple, Brasenose College.

SCHEDULE IV.

*Persons guilty of Corrupt Practices in respect of their
own Votes at the Election in April, 1880.*

Bowell, John, Furniture Mover.
 Costar, John, Shoemaker (late of Church Street).
 Covey, Samuel, Ayre's Yard, High Street, St. Thomas's.
 Debanks, William, Lamb and Flag Yard.
 Dell, John, 16, Paradise Street.
 Harris, Henry, 43, Church Street.
 Hedges, Frank, 13, St. Ebbe's Street.
 Hedges, George, 1, New Road, Decorator.
 Hill, John, Church Street, St. Ebbe's, Labourer.

Kempson, Henry, Cowley Road, Butcher and Green-grocer.
 Powell, Thomas Edwin, "Dog Tray," Innkeeper.
 Purser, George, 4 Kewley road, Gloucester Green, Gilder and Publican.
 Stone, Thomas, Wheelwright.
 Tubby, Samuel, 57, High Street, St. Thomas.
 Whitehead, Josiah, 33, Castle Street.

SCHEDULE V.

*Persons Guilty of Corrupt Practices in respect of the
 Votes of others at the Election in March, 1874.*

Calcutt, John, Summertown.
 Goodson, William, Ship Hotel, Innkeeper.
 Juggins, John, Tailor and Hatter.
 Payne, Nathaniel Cross, 28, Little Clarendon Street.
 Walsh, Percival Lewis, Solicitor.
 Wells, Thomas, Manciple, Brasenose College.

SCHEDULE VI.

*Persons Guilty of Corrupt Practices in respect of the
 Votes of others at the Election in February, 1874.*

Calcutt, John, Summertown.
 Juggins, John, Tailor and Hatter.
 Walsh, Percival Lewis, Solicitor.
 Wells, Thomas, Manciple, Brasenose College.

