

House of Lords Record Office

The Origin of the Office of Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords

The office of Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords is one of considerable significance in the administrative structure of Parliament. Its history is of interest both on its own account and also because the chairman attained a position of influence and authority, particularly in the field of private legislation, at a much earlier date than his counterpart in the House of Commons, the Chairman of Ways and Means.¹ The post first received official sanction in 1800 when its basic duties were defined in resolutions of the House. Thereafter the Chairman of Committees was appointed on a sessional basis and, once appointed, automatically took the chair in all committees unless the House ordered otherwise.² However, although the events of 1800 were important, they should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the post had a previous semi-official existence dating to the earlier part of the eighteenth century. Some light was thrown on this earlier history by Edmund Gosse, then librarian of the House, who summarised the results of his researches in a letter to *The Times* in 1911. This letter was reprinted by F. H. Spencer as an appendix to his book *Municipal Origins* in which he discussed the role of the Chairman of Committees in the supervision of private legislation.³ Spencer evidently accepted Gosse's conclusions without question. Investigation has shown, however, that they are in need of serious revision in a great many respects. The purpose of this memorandum is to look again at the available evidence concerning the origin and development of the office.

On only one occasion before 1800 do the records of the House or the reports of parliamentary debates throw any direct light on the position of the Chairman of Committees. On 2 February 1778 the House had, on the motion of the Duke of Richmond, a leading opposition lord, agreed to resolve itself into a committee on the state of the nation in order to consider the papers laid by the government relating to the conduct of the American war. A conflict then arose on the question whether the Duke of Portland, Richmond's nominee, or Lord Scarsdale, the candidate of the government or 'Lords in administration', should take the chair.⁴ Richmond's action was designed to embarrass the government and he and his supporters were anxious to make as much capital out of the incident as they could. Nevertheless, the interesting feature of the debate in the present context is that, while the interpretation which the two sides placed on the facts of the situation differed, there was a significant degree of agreement about the facts themselves. Richmond justified his nomination of the Duke of Portland on the ground that 'it was always usual for the person who moved for the committee of the whole house to be complimented with the nomination of the chairman'. On the other hand, Lord Dudley stated 'that in the other House it was usual for the member who moved for the committee, to name the chairman, but in that House (the Lords) the usage had been uniformly otherwise; because the chairman in committees of the whole House, if present, is looked upon in the light of perpetual chairman'. Supporting Richmond, the Duke of Grafton said that 'there was no resolution of the House which entitled one Lord to be chairman more than another but that, in strict duty, each of their Lordships ought to discharge the office in his turn'. But no speaker contradicted Earl Gower who stated that 'the usage of the House was in favour of the noble Lord (Scarsdale), who always presided in committees of the whole house'. Similarly, the Earl of Denbigh expressed the view that 'as the business of the committee would be arduous, and the noble Lord (Scarsdale) had been for years used to do the duty, ... he was the fittest person to preside then'.

Of particular interest is the testimony of the Earl of Sandwich who said that 'it was a rule of that House (the Lords) for one person always to take the chair on such occasions. Lord Scarsdale had often presided with great dignity and credit to himself, and it would imply a tacit idea of his not having discharged his duty to the satisfaction of their Lordships, if he were now set aside'. Sandwich went on to say that 'he had, for a great many years, sat in that House; that he remembered when Lord Delawarr was the constant Chairman of Committees, and he never knew an instance of their Lordships appointing a new chairman when the old one was present'. The curious aspect of Sandwich's contribution to this debate is that, although he had succeeded to the peerage as long ago as 1729, he had not been able to take his seat until 1740, shortly after he attained his majority. Consequently he could have had no personal experience of Delawarr's tenure of the

chair, which, as will be seen, came to an end in 1734. However, this does not diminish the significance of the fact that Delawarr's activities as chairman made enough of an impression on the House for the memory of them to endure for more than forty years.

It is clear from the debate of 1778 that, while there was no resolution of the House to regulate his position, it had for long been accepted that there should be one lord who, if present, took the chair in all committees of the whole house. It follows that, in the absence of more specific information, an analysis of the lords who acted as chairmen of such committees before 1800 is likely to provide the most reliable means of discovering the period at which the convention of having a permanent chairman came to be accepted, and also the identity of those lords who held the position. In order to obtain this basic statistical evidence an analysis was made of the lords who reported from all committees in each session from 1701 to 1800. The committees were divided into two categories, committees of the whole house and select committees, in order to see whether any significantly different patterns emerged for the two types.⁵ The information was derived exclusively from the *Lords Journals* where the names of the lords reporting from committees are recorded. During the period under consideration neither the proceedings in committees of the whole house nor those in select committees are recorded in the *Journals*. The relevant details may be found in the manuscript minute books and the manuscript committee minute books.⁶ An examination of the procedure observed in committees of both types makes it clear that it is correct to identify the peer who reported from a committee with the lord who acted as its chairman.

A word should be said at this point about committee procedure in the eighteenth century. By 1700 the committee of the whole house was well established in the procedure of the House. During the eighteenth century as now, its principal use was for the consideration of public bills after second reading. However, on relatively infrequent occasions it was used for the consideration of important matters of public interest. Examples include the conduct of the war in Spain (1711), the state of public credit (1721), the conduct of the American war (1778) and the resolutions concerning the union with Ireland (1800). The committee was constituted by the House agreeing to the motion that it do resolve itself into committee. It sat in the chamber and all those peers who happened to be present formed its membership. Proceedings in committee of the whole house differed from those in the House itself in three main respects. The decisions taken by the committee were only provisional and had to be reported to and agreed to by the House before achieving finality.⁷ In the event of a division in the committee of the whole house the use of proxies was not permitted. Finally, the presiding officer in the committee was not the speaker on the woolsack but the chairman in the chair at the table of the House.

As to the procedure for appointing the chairman, there is no guidance apart from that provided by the incident in 1778 already described. There is no other case either in the *Journals* or in the manuscript minute books where the relevant proceedings are recorded. Nevertheless, there must, at least by implication, have been a decision with regard to the chairman on each occasion that the House went into committee. In 1778 this question was decided by the House immediately after the question to resolve itself into committee had been agreed to but before the House had actually gone into committee. In ordinary circumstances, however, the question was evidently regarded simply as one of form and was not thought worthy of record in the minutes or *Journals*.

There were, apart from committees of the whole house, committees of a distinct type which have been described for the purposes of this enquiry as 'select committees' for want of a more satisfactory term. Originally the appointment of committees to sit elsewhere than in the chamber had involved a conscious process of selection which would have entitled them to be described as select committees in the modern sense.⁸ By 1700, however, the principle of conscious selection had been abandoned. When a committee of the whole house was not employed, bills or matters were simply committed to 'a committee' whose membership was composed of those lords who happened to be present in the House on the day of its appointment. Usually these committees were not accorded any particular designation in the records of the House although on rare occasions, when it was found necessary to transfer the consideration of bills from a committee of the whole house to a committee off the floor of the chamber, they were distinguished by the name of 'select' or 'private' committees.⁹ However, select committees in the modern sense were, so far as the House of Lords was concerned, a development of the nineteenth century. The committees in question were used principally for the consideration of local and private bills of which the main categories were inclosure, road, navigation, estate and naturalisation bills. They were also used for the framing of addresses to the crown, although after 1714 the proceedings in this connection were of an increasingly formalised kind, the text of the addresses having been drafted by the government well in advance of any action in the House. Occasionally other matters were referred to these committees.

Such matters were usually of a procedural or domestic character although sometimes questions of a more general kind were considered by them as was the case with the committees on public records of 1704-6 and the dearness of provisions in 1765.¹⁰ Originally the chair in these committees was taken by the senior peer or the 'first of the committees'.¹¹ However, by 1700 it seems to have been generally accepted that the members had the power to choose their own chairman without regard to seniority.

The analysis of peers reporting from committees showed that while certain members of the House undertook more committee work than others between 1701 and 1714, no single lord clearly emerged from amongst his fellows as the usual chairman during this period. From 1714, however, a succession of lords can be established whose performance as chairman both of committees of the whole house and of select committees outstrips that of all others, a fact that must be due to more than statistical chance. The first lord to emerge in this connection is the third Earl of Clarendon.¹² Clarendon was the grandson of the Lord Chancellor and nephew of the Earl of Rochester, the leading tory politician. As Lord Cornbury, Clarendon had sat in the Commons 1685-7 and 1689-1701, and had been governor of New York and New Jersey from 1701 to 1708. On his father's death in 1709, he returned from America and took his seat in the House of Lords. Before long he was active in committee work. He first chaired a select committee on 2 March 1711 and a committee of the whole house on 16 April following. In session 1711-12 he led the field as chairman both of committees of the whole house and of select committees. In session 1713 and session 1714 (1) his performance was less remarkable but still significant. From session 1715-16 to session 1722-3 he was by a substantial margin the peer most frequently selected as chairman of committees of both types in every session. Clarendon last acted as chairman on 21 March 1723, after which he did not attend the House again before his death which occurred on 31 March 1724. In spite of Clarendon's striking record no reference has been found to indicate that he was thought to occupy any special position as Chairman of Committees.

The reason for the emergence of a permanent chairman at this point can only be a matter for speculation. On general grounds there were clear advantages in having a single individual who would, if present, normally act as chairman. Indeed it is perhaps surprising that it took so long for this convention to become established given the fact that the system of annual parliamentary sessions had been introduced as long ago as 1689. One explanation for the delay may have been that before Clarendon no suitable candidate had emerged. What was required was a lord who had no commitments which would prevent his attending the House regularly and who would be content to apply himself seriously to the relatively humdrum business of chairing committees. Once such a person had emerged, it was obvious that his role would make an important contribution to the smooth conduct of business in the House and there would have been a natural tendency on the part of the government to encourage such a development. Clarendon started taking an active part in the proceedings of the House shortly after the Tories replaced Godolphin's administration and it may be that he began to devote himself seriously to its business at the suggestion of his uncle, Rochester, who until his death in May 1711 was a leading member of the new ministry. It was to the same ministry that Clarendon owed his appointment as a privy counsellor in December 1711 and as envoy extraordinary to Hanover in June 1714. However, the support which he enjoyed was evidently more than partisan since his career as chairman survived the collapse of the tory government in 1714 and his position was consolidated under successive whig ministries thereafter. Why Clarendon was content to accept the drudgery involved in the chairmanship is another question. It may have been on account of his financial position. This was precarious in spite of general provision from the crown. Clarendon was given a pension of £31,000 from the secret service in 1710 which he enjoyed until 1713.¹³ In the latter year this was replaced by another of £32,000 on the Irish establishment which was confirmed to him in 1715.¹⁴ It is conceivable that this continued support was in some way connected with his services in the chair. Nevertheless Clarendon was said to have died 'in obscurity, and deeply in debt'.

Following Clarendon's withdrawal from the House in 1723 no single lord emerged as his successor for the remainder of the session, the chairmanship of committees of the whole house being shared between the sixth Earl of Westmorland and the sixth Lord Delawarr. However, the analysis showed that, during the course of the following session, Clarendon's role was assumed by the seventh Lord Delawarr. The son of the sixth Lord Delawarr, the seventh Lord had sat in the Commons as the Hon. John West from 1715 until he succeeded his father on 26 May 1723. A firm supporter of successive ministries, Delawarr served as a lord of the bedchamber 1725-7 and as treasurer of the household 1731-7, being appointed a privy counsellor in 1731. He took a leading part in the proceedings of the House and was appointed speaker in the absence of the Lord Chancellor in 1733 and 1754,¹⁵ a function usually reserved for the presiding judges

of the courts of law. Delawarr seems almost to have been predestined for the position of chairman. Taking his seat on 9 January 1724 he first chaired a select committee on 10 March 1724 and a committee of the whole house on 14 April following. With the exception of session 1727 (1), when his place as chairman of committees of the whole house was taken by the second Lord Waldegrave, he acted as chairman of committees of both types more frequently than any other lord until the end of session 1733. Thereafter, while he continued to take the chair from time to time he ceased to play the prominent part although he once again led the field as chairman in 1737. Delawarr's performance, measured in these terms, amply confirms Sandwich's recollection of his position in his speech of 1778 which has already been quoted.

During the course of session 1734 Delawarr's position as chairman was taken over by the eighth Earl of Warwick. Warwick had succeeded his cousin in the Earldoms of Warwick and Holland in 1721. He appears to have inherited nothing besides the titles and to have belonged to the category of poor lords who looked to the crown to support their dignities. He was granted a civil list pension of £3800 a year shortly after succeeding¹⁶ and was accorded a private allowance of £3500 a year from the secret service money at about the same time.¹⁷ He enjoyed both these annuities until his death. Whether there was any implied contract between the crown and Warwick that the latter would attend the House regularly in return for this financial support is unknown, but the later case of Viscount Saye and Sele suggests that this may have been the case.¹⁸ In any event Warwick was regular in his attendance from the time that he took his seat. However, it was not until session 1731 that he acted as a chairman, taking the chair in one committee of the whole house and in one select committee. He chaired one select committee in 1732 but no committee of either kind in 1733. He appears first to have been accepted as the regular chairman of committees of the whole house in April 1734.¹⁹ Warwick remained chairman until his death which occurred on 7 September 1759. During the last two sessions of his life, those of 1757-8 and 1758-9, he was absent for much of the time, presumably on account of sickness, and his place as chairman of committees of the whole house was taken by the fifth Lord Willoughby of Parham and third Earl of Marchmont respectively. Otherwise his record was remarkable. With the exception of session 1737, when he was replaced by Delawarr, he chaired committees of the whole house more frequently than any other lord in each session from 1734 to 1756-7. Over the same period he acted in respect of select committees more frequently than any other lord except in eight sessions.²⁰

There is no reference during Warwick's lifetime to the special position which he occupied but there seems little doubt that certain conventions came to be accepted during the twenty-five years that he acted as chairman if indeed they had not already been established before his appointment. At any rate it was recognised on his death that an office had been vacated which would have to be filled. This is evident from the correspondence relating to his successor, the fifth Lord Willoughby of Parham, which survives amongst the Hardwicke papers.²¹ In a letter to Lord Royston of 11 September 1759 Daniel Wray announced that 'Lord Warwick ... is dead' and asked 'Who will succeed to the business he did in the House of Lords?'²² On 22 September Thomas Birch informed the same correspondent that 'Lord Warwick's death makes a vacancy in the post of Chairman of the House of Lords ...'.²³ On the following day, Wray told Royston that Willoughby 'contrary to all expectation ... appeared seriously interested in the succession to the seat filled by that Lord (Warwick)', going on to say that 'What emoluments, and how arising, attend the acting in that capacity his lordship and we here are equally ignorant'.²⁴ Writing to Birch on 23 October Royston gave it as his view that 'Lord Hardwicke's good offices have prevailed and ... our friend (Willoughby) will inherit Lord Warwick's mantle'.²⁵ The matter had apparently been finally settled by 12 November when Willoughby wrote to Hardwicke to thank him for 'recommending me to the Duke of Newcastle as a proper person to succeed the late Earl of Warwick'.²⁶

The language used by the writers just quoted makes it plain that Warwick had occupied a clearly recognised position in the House of Lords and that Willoughby would, as chairman, have to take over the business which he had done. Unfortunately the correspondence does not specify the nature of this business. Royston and Hardwicke had apparently conflicting views about the arduousness of the duties attached to the post. The former referred to 'the easy business of the function' while the latter hoped that Willoughby would 'have no objection ... to the confinement which this service may confine him to'.²⁷

Willoughby of Parham was an interesting figure whose scholarly interests were recognised in his election to the office of President of the Society of Antiquaries which he held from 1754 until his death. He was, like Warwick, a poor lord who looked to the crown to support his dignity. He succeeded to the peerage as an infant in 1715 and from 1718 was in receipt of an annuity of £3200 payable by the paymaster of pensions.²⁸ He took his seat in the House in 1734 and it was

possibly from this date that he began to receive the secret service allowance of £3400 a year which he is known to have enjoyed from at least 1754.²⁹ In the session following that in which he took his seat, he chaired one committee of the whole house, but it was not until session 1739-40 that he began to play a significant role in committee work. By the time of Warwick's death in 1759 he had had nearly twenty years' continuous experience as a chairman and was a natural choice as his successor. In connection with his employment Willoughby asked for the secret service allowance of £3500 previously enjoyed by Warwick to be transferred to him.³⁰ In the event he did not secure this particular allowance which was divided between Warwick's widow and daughter.³¹ He did, however, obtain an additional £3500 a year from the paymaster of pensions.³² This brought his total income from the government to £31,100. Willoughby continued to occupy the position of chairman until his death which occurred on 21 January 1765, leading the field as chairman of committees of the whole house throughout the period and taking the chair in select committees more frequently than any other lord except in session 1761-2.³³

In the absence of any corroborative evidence, the analysis provided the only indication of the identity of the chairmen of committees during the decade following Willoughby's death. From this it is evident that his immediate successor was Lord Delamer who had succeeded his cousin, the Earl of Warrington, as fourth baron in 1758. Like his two predecessors as chairman, Delamer was a poor lord which explains the fact that he was accorded a secret service allowance of £3800 a year in 1761.³⁴ He was assiduous in his attendance from the time of his succession. He first acted as chairman in 1760 and chaired a total of seventeen committees before taking over from Willoughby at the beginning of session 1765. Rockingham's secret service accounts reveal that Delamer's allowance from this source had been raised from £3800 to £31,200 by October 1765.³⁵

The most likely explanation of this development would appear to be that the £3400 allowance from the secret service formerly received by Willoughby was transferred to Delamer on his appointment. Delamer remained chairman until his death on 9 January 1770, taking the leading part as chairman of committees of the whole house in each session except that of 1766-7 when he was absent for most of the time, probably on account of sickness, and his place was taken by the fourth Lord Botetourt. So far as select committees were concerned he acted more frequently than any other peer except in sessions 1765-6 and 1766-7.

Delamer's successor, as revealed by the analysis, was the first Viscount Wentworth. Succeeding as ninth Lord Wentworth in 1745, he was created a viscount in 1762. Before his appointment he had never played a large part in committee work, chairing only sixteen committees between 1756 and 1770, nor had he attended the House very regularly. He was not, like his three predecessors, a poor lord and the reasons for his selection remain obscure. Once appointed he took a leading part as chairman in sessions 1770 and 1770-1. Thereafter his attendance declined, possibly on account of ill health. In session 1772 he was absent except in May, attending only seventeen out of a possible seventy-eight sittings. Nevertheless, he chaired a majority of the committees of the whole house in that session. In his absence the first Lord Boston almost invariably acted as chairman of committees of both types. In session 1772-3 Wentworth attended fifty-nine out of a possible 106 sittings. He played the leading part as chairman of select committees but chaired only twenty committees of the whole house while Boston chaired thirty. Although he did not die until 31 October 1774, Wentworth did not attend the House after 19 June 1773 and was therefore absent for the whole of session 1774 when Boston once again acted as chairman. It is impossible to say with certainty whether Wentworth was still regarded as chairman at his death or whether Boston took over this position after 1773. It may well be that Boston was regarded as acting as his deputy until such time as he was fit to attend the House again in the same way as Botetourt acted during session 1766-7 in the absence of Delamer. There is no evidence to indicate what remuneration, if any, Wentworth received as chairman.

Wentworth's death took place during the parliamentary recess. At the beginning of the next session which opened on 29 November 1774 Boston usually took the chair although it is not clear whether he was regarded as the permanent chairman or was acting on an interim basis until a successor to Wentworth could be found. He last chaired a committee on 23 December 1774 and died on 30 March 1775. Before his death a permanent chairman had already emerged in the person of Lord Scarsdale, who first took the chair on 8 February 1775. As Nathaniel Curzon, Scarsdale had sat in the Commons from 1748 to 1761 when he was elevated to the peerage. He was a rather surprising choice for the post of chairman. During his fourteen years' membership he had rarely attended the House of Lords and had never chaired a committee. A possible clue to the reason for his selection may have been his financial difficulties. His estate was

considerably encumbered on account of his vast building programme at Kedleston.³⁶ There is reliable evidence that he enjoyed a sessional allowance of £31,500 from the secret service money as chairman of committees from at least 1778-9.³⁷ It is impossible to say when this allowance began to be paid. The last chairman whose sources of income from the government are known is Delamer who received a total of £31,200 a year during his period as chairman. It may be that the sessional allowance of £31,500 was provided in the first instance for Wentworth on his appointment in 1770 but, in the absence of the relevant accounts, it is impossible to be certain. Conceivably the fact that this relatively large allowance was attached to the post induced Scarsdale to seek the appointment in 1775.

Scarsdale remained chairman until the end of session 1788-9. While he can be seen to have undertaken the bulk of the committee work during the period, he was not especially assiduous in the performance of his duties. In the early part of each session he was invariably active but he only rarely attended the House after the end of May with the result that in three out of a total of sixteen sessions - those of 1780-1, 1782-3 and 1784 - other lords, Sandys, Chedworth and Walsingham respectively, actually chaired committees of the whole house more frequently than he did. On the other hand his record for select committees was better and he surpassed the performance of any other lord in each session throughout his period of office. However Scarsdale's conduct is viewed, the report of the debate on 1778 already quoted provides clear evidence that the chairman had a recognised place in the conduct of the business of the House at this period. An indication that it could be thought of as a potentially influential office is to be found in the fact that in 1783 Lord Walsingham was seeking to succeed him. The significance of this fact will be considered later. That the chairmanship was now regarded as having a permanent character is illustrated by the fact that Scarsdale was granted a pension on his retirement in 1789. As already noted, he enjoyed an allowance of £31,500 as chairman of committees. This sum continued to be paid from the secret service until the reforms brought about by Burke's Civil List Establishment Act in 1782. It was then transferred to the special service account from which successive chairmen received their remuneration until 1799.³⁸ Scarsdale was paid the allowance until 1789. In 1790 he was granted a civil list pension of £31,200 for life payable from 5 July 1789, the quarter day nearest to the date on which the session of 1788-9 had been prorogued.³⁹ The most plausible explanation of this pension is that in 1789, when Scarsdale had reached the age of 62, he or the government decided that the time had come for him to vacate the chair in favour of a younger man and that Scarsdale was able to persuade the government that the post of chairman had enough of a permanent character to justify the grant of a retiring allowance.

The choice of Scarsdale's successor fell upon the tenth Lord Cathcart.⁴⁰ Cathcart had studied law at Dresden and Glasgow, and he had been admitted a member of the faculty of advocates in February 1776. He succeeded to the Scottish peerage of his father on the latter's death in August of the same year. In the following year he entered the army, serving with distinction in America until October 1780 when ill health obliged him to return to England. In March 1787 he failed to secure election as a Scottish Representative Peer and wrote to Pitt asking for a British peerage, stating in the course of his letter⁴¹ that 'I believe that you are convinced that my object in wishing to get into Parliament was to endeavour to come forward in Business, to be useful, and therefore to be employed'. He characterised his predicament in the following terms:

A Lawyer until I succeeded to the Title, a Soldier, but in a Profound Peace, and a Peer, not in the House of Lords, not rich enough to undertake an ordinary Foreign Mission, such is my damned Situation!

In January 1788 Cathcart was elected a Representative Peer. However, the problem of obtaining a post for him still remained. In July he wrote to Pitt seeking military promotion⁴² and in October he was asking to succeed James Stuart Mackenzie, who was rumoured to be dying, in the office of keeper of the privy seal of Scotland. He told Pitt that the possession of this post

would effectually enable me to relieve my estate of all its Embarrassments, I mean those by which it is overburthened: But what would make it beyond all others an object of the last Importance to me would be the Hope that you would not allow it to remain a sinecure but that in time you might find means to call for the services of the holder of that office.⁴³

However, Stuart Mackenzie survived and no vacancy occurred.

In the House of Lords Cathcart was a firm ministerial supporter, being selected to second the address in reply to the

speech from the throne in March 1789.⁴⁴ His reward came with his appointment as Chairman of Committees at the beginning of the following session when he had been in the House for less than two years and after he had chaired only one of its committees. It is clear from the evidence already cited that Cathcart intended to take his duties seriously. For four sessions - until the end of that of 1793 - he was by a large margin the peer most frequently chosen to fill the chair in committees of the whole house. His record for select committees was less remarkable. He chaired these committees more frequently than any other lord in his first three sessions of office although he increasingly left this work to the Bishop of Bangor. In session 1792-3 the bishop actually played the leading part as chairman of select committees. Out of a total of 234 such committees he chaired 102 as opposed to Cathcart who chaired only fifty-eight.

The outbreak of war with France transformed Cathcart's situation. He evidently found the prospect of resuming his active military career more attractive than that of remaining chairman. In November 1793 he was made a brigadier general and appointed to command a brigade in the army then assembling for embarkation to France. From then on he was out of the country for long periods. In session 1794 he was present on only five occasions and took the chair only once, his place as chairman both of committees of the whole house and of select committees being taken at other times on a temporary basis by the Bishop of Bangor.⁴⁵ However Cathcart received the allowance for session 1794 and remained chairman, at least formally, until prorogation in July 1794.⁴⁶ Cathcart's delay in finally relinquishing office may have been due partly to uncertainty about the duration of the war. Another factor may have been the need to find a suitable means of compensating him for loss of office. A solution to this problem was eventually found in January 1795 when he was granted the post of vice admiral of Scotland, a sinecure with a salary of £31,000.⁴⁷ At the same time it was proposed that his wife should be given a pension to make up the difference between the salaries attached to the two offices.⁴⁸

Cathcart's successor was the second Lord Walsingham who took over as chairman at the beginning of session 1794-5 and served for twenty years until his retirement in 1814.⁴⁹ As Thomas de Grey, he had sat in the Commons from 1774 until he succeeded his father in 1781 at the age of thirty-two.⁵⁰ An important politician of the second rank, Walsingham was sworn of the privy council in 1783 and made joint postmaster general in 1787. His occupancy of this office was the immediate cause of this appointment as chairman. As part of the complex arrangements made by Pitt in July 1794 for the admission of the Portland whigs into the government, it was agreed that William Windham should be made secretary at war. This involved displacing Sir George Yonge who had to be compensated with another office that was compatible with a seat in the Commons. Yonge was, therefore, made master of the mint, displacing in his turn the Earl of Leicester who was accommodated with Walsingham's place of joint postmaster general.⁵¹ Finally provision had to be made for Walsingham. On 7 July Pitt wrote to him in the following terms:

In order to facilitate an extensive Arrangement which is at this Time of great Importance to the King's Service, I am induced to mention to your Lordship that it will be a very essential Accommodation to open the Office which your Lordship holds of Joint Postmaster General. There is a Situation vacant which I flatter myself it may not be disagreeable to you to accept in Exchange, which is that of Chairman of the Committees of the House of Lords, the duties of which I understand you have already occasionally had the goodness to discharge. *No Idea can certainly be entertained, that by acceding to this Arrangement for the Convenience of Government, your Lordship should suffer any Diminution of Income.* I therefore hope you will allow me to recommend a Pension *equal to the difference of Value in the two Situations* to any Part of your family whom you may think proper to name.⁵²

Walsingham acquiesced in this proposal. The discrepancy between the salaries attached to the two posts -£32,500 in the case of the joint postmaster general and £31,500 in that of the chairman - was duly made good by the grant of a pension of £31,200 in trust for his two sons, the largest sum that could be made available without recourse to an address from parliament.⁵³

In spite of this generous provision Walsingham was not entirely pleased with the manner in which his appointment had been handled. Writing to him on 19 July 1795 George Rose, the secretary of the Treasury, was at pains to stress that, in making the arrangement 'Mr. Pitt was not actuated by the slightest Disinclination towards your Lordship'.⁵⁴ In fact the office of chairman was one in which Walsingham had earlier shown an interest and, as is clear from the letter already quoted, this was one of the reasons why Pitt decided to appoint him. Walsingham had been a member of the House of

Lords for only two years when, in July 1783, his aspirations were characterised in the following terms: 'Speculates, Wishes for Lord Scarsdale's place'.⁵⁵ This comment is interesting in that it shows that the office of chairman could at that date be the object of the attention of a young and energetic man who had already made his mark in politics. Possibly his interest in the post was first aroused as a result of his marriage in 1772 to the daughter of Lord Boston who, as has been seen, acted as chairman of committees during the absence of Lord Wentworth. It is evident that Walsingham did not regard it simply as an office with merely routine duties to which a reasonable salary was attached. On the contrary, his subsequent career suggests that he may already have seen it as a position of consequence in the House of Lords and in Parliament with potentially important responsibilities in connection with the legislative process.

In the event eleven years were to elapse before Walsingham obtained the appointment. In the meantime he gained a certain amount of relevant experience, chairing fifty-eight committees of the whole house and six select committees between 1781 and 1794. On becoming chairman he at once set a distinctive mark on the post, chairing eighty-seven out of a possible eight-nine committees of the whole house in session 1794-5 and every single such committee in the five following sessions up to 1800. His record for select committees was equally impressive. In session 1794-5 he chaired 148 such committees out of a total of 190, the Bishop of Bangor acting in thirty-seven instances. In the next session Walsingham chaired 173 out of a possible 184 select committees, the bishop's total being reduced to eight. In the four following sessions Walsingham chaired 801 out of a possible 817 select committees. Walsingham's record is in striking contrast to even his most assiduous predecessors and it is clear that his appointment marked a turning point in the evolution of the office. How far this development was due to Walsingham's own qualities and how far it resulted from a deliberate move to invest the post with a more comprehensive authority it is impossible to say in the present state of the evidence although, as will be seen, recent developments in the field of private bill procedure lend some support to the view that the latter consideration was not without its importance.

While it was not until 1800 that the office of Chairman of Committees was finally recognised in resolutions of the House there is no reason to suppose that these resolutions did anything more than give official sanction to conventions that were already well established. It is interesting to note that the office had already received a degree of public recognition before 1800. When the resolutions relating to the promulgation of the statutes were formulated in 1797 the Chairman of Committees was one of those accorded a set of sessional acts by virtue of his office.⁵⁶ From the same year Walsingham was styled Chairman of Committees in the *Royal Kalendar*.⁵⁷

The reasons which prompted the adoption of the resolutions of 1800 are not entirely clear, given that Walsingham was not invested with any functions or duties as a result of them which he had not in practice exercised before. The only procedural effect which they had was to place the Chairman of Committees automatically in the chair both of committees of the whole house and of select committees whereas before a question had, at least in theory, to be resolved in each case before this result could be secured. One possible explanation of the resolutions is that they were prompted by the need to regulate the chairman's position before he was accorded an increased, and publicly acknowledged, salary. Until 1799 Walsingham received an allowance of £31,500 a session from the special service account like his two predecessors.⁵⁸ In June of that year he began to press the government for an increase in remuneration. Two proposals were put forward: one was that the chairman should be accorded a fee on private bills and the other was that he should receive an increase in his allowance. During the course of the next year the matter was considered by Pitt, Loughborough, the Lord Chancellor and Grenville, who, in addition to being Foreign Secretary, acted as 'leader' of the House of Lords. In the event Pitt came down decisively against the proposal for a fee and in favour of an increase in the allowance.⁵⁹ The necessary address to the crown was agreed to on 23 July 1800, immediately after the resolutions regulating the office had been passed. In the following month the Treasury gave authority for the allowance to be increased by £31,000 to £32,500.⁶⁰ This very substantial increase in remuneration is a significant indication of the importance now attached to the post.

The resolutions of 1800 make no reference to what has long been regarded as the most distinctive and important function of the Chairman of Committees - the detailed supervision of private legislation.⁶¹ Nevertheless it is clear from the exchange of remarks between Lord Grenville and Walsingham which took place in the House when the resolutions were moved on 23 July 1800 that it was this aspect of the chairman's duties which was foremost in the minds of the lords. In view of their intrinsic interest and of the fact that they are not recorded in the *Parliamentary History* these remarks are worth quoting at some length.⁶² In introducing the resolutions on behalf of the government Grenville said

that

the office of Chairman of Committees (both public and private) was an office that required great ability, great industry, and a perfect knowledge of parliamentary forms, and the rules of proceeding; and that no noble Lord could be found who possessed a larger share of those qualifications than the noble Lord who now, so highly to his own credit, and so much to the advantage of the House and the Public, held that office, the duties of which he discharged with singular diligence, correctness and propriety.

In reply Walsingham said

that whoever undertakes the trust which the House is pleased thus to repose in him, undertakes no light or trivial concern. If we consider the weight of property of which we have already cognizance in these Committees, and that of which we shall now have cognizance, we shall agree that we are all deeply interested in paying as much attention to this part of our public duty as to any other, and the House judge wisely ... in providing that one and the same person shall be constantly and permanently in the chair, whose more immediate duty it shall be to take care that these bills proceed upon one settled and uniform principle, that no innovation shall be made upon the long-established usage and practice of Parliament, and that the property of individuals shall be improved without injury to the public.

... if it is true, and ... I really believe it is so, (for it is no merit of mine,) that these bills are now passed in a way which gives general satisfaction to the public, it is owing to the constant and ready attendance which is given by your Lordships in these Committees, insomuch that I verily believe not a single day has been lost in the course of this session for want of attendance; and I look forward to a continuation of the support which I have constantly and uniformly met from so many of your Lordships, upon whose wisdom and experience I know I may safely rely, in preference to my own frail and fallible judgment ... it will be the object of my life to deserve the confidence and protection of the House, and it will give me the greatest satisfaction if by any industry or attention of mine (which is all I have to give) I can be instrumental in settling these bills, with a view as well to the private and local benefit of those who solicit them as to the general interest which the public may have in them.

The language used on this occasion makes it abundantly clear that the role of the chairman in private legislation was universally understood and accepted by 1800. The origin of his functions in this respect remain obscure. They were, of course, never conferred upon him in any formal sense by the House.

However, once it became accepted that one peer should undertake the bulk of work of chairing private bill committees, it was natural that that peer should evolve certain principles for his own guidance. When the promoters of private bills became aware of this development it was inevitable that they should endeavour to save themselves trouble and expense by drafting their measures in a manner that they knew would be acceptable to the chairman and that they should consult him on difficult points at an early stage in their progress. It was only a step from this for promoters of bills in the Commons, where no figure comparable to the chairman had yet emerged, to do the same. This process is illustrated by a letter written by Walsingham to Lord Hawkesbury in May 1796 in which he said that 'they send to me all the private Bills whilst they are in the House of Commons that I may suggest any alterations I think fit lest such alterations should lose the Bill in the Committee of the Lords'.⁶³

Of course, the authority of the chairman rested on no more than convention at this date. He himself had no formal power to disallow any provision in advance but all parties were aware that, should the matter be taken to the House, his decision would in all probability be upheld. In the nature of the case this would have an evolutionary process. Any evaluation of the role of earlier chairman in supervising private legislation will have to await the discovery of further evidence. However, it seems beyond dispute that Walsingham greatly extended the functions of the office in this direction. The year 1793 had witnessed the introduction of new standing orders to tighten up the procedure relating to canal bills which had been found to be inadequate in the light of the experience of the 'canal mania' of the early 1790s. Similar regulations were made for other classes of private bill during Walsingham's chairmanship.⁶⁴ While there is no direct evidence to connect Walsingham's appointment with the standing orders of 1793 it may well be that it was felt that the effective enforcement of parliamentary control over private legislation demanded the services of a chairman who would devote substantially more attention to his duties than any of Walsingham's predecessors had been prepared to

do. [65](#)

One aspect of the matter which remains somewhat obscure is the question with whom the right of selecting the chairman rested. From 1800, when the practice of appointing him by sessional resolution was instituted, the necessary motion was customarily moved by the lord who managed the business on behalf of the government, or leader of the House as he later came to be called. It seems reasonable to infer from this fact that the responsibility for selecting the chairman when a vacancy occurred had previously fallen to the government. There was an obvious government interest in regulating the arrangements with regard to the chairmanship since, by this means, the orderly passage of its own business was facilitated. The provision of a sessional allowance payable out of public funds was a reflection of this fact. That the 'Lords in administration' felt a responsibility to sustain the regular chairman when his position was called in question is evident from the debate of 1778. Such evidence as survives relating to the selection of chairmen points in the same direction. Although the Hardwicks were instrumental in obtaining the post for Willoughby in 1759, the decision to appoint him rested in the last analysis with the First Lord of the Treasury, the Duke of Newcastle, and it was Pitt, the Prime Minister, who offered the office to Walsingham in 1794.

The analysis established beyond reasonable doubt that it was the general rule for there to be one lord who, if present, took the chair in committees of the whole house. That this was the distinctive characteristic of the Chairman of Committees is confirmed by the statements made in the debate of 1778. The analysis also made it clear that, while there was no question until the time of Walsingham of the chairman taking the chair in all select committees, it was the rule for him to take a leading part in this field as well. Obviously, actual practice must have varied considerably according to the conscientiousness of particular chairmen and inevitably, absence on account of sickness must have affected their record. In any event there is a substantial number of occasions when a lord other than the regular chairman is found acting. Such lords fall into two broad categories. On the one hand there is a large group, each member of which chaired a relatively small number of committees, some as few as one a session. The reasons for the selection of the lords in this group as chairmen must have varied considerably. In some cases it may have been the mere fact of availability and willingness to serve. There is little evidence of specialisation according to the type of bill or matter being considered although bishops were occasionally selected for committees on bills dealing with ecclesiastical concerns and Scots lords sometimes served as chairmen of committees dealing with Scottish questions. In the case of the various types of local bills there is some evidence that lords with relevant territorial interests were chosen as chairmen when they were available and sufficiently concerned. Occasionally lords related to the parties affected took the chair in committees on estate bills. An evaluation of the importance of the work of the peers in this group is outside the scope of this enquiry and must await the outcome of more detailed research than has yet been undertaken.

In relation to the total number of committees in the eighteenth century the contribution of the lords in the category just described were not, in numerical terms, very important. Much more significant was the performance of a handful of peers whose activities can only be explained in terms of a strong inclination towards the business of the House generally rather than to the particular character of the bills or matters actually being considered by the committees. The work of this group of lords may be best summarised in the form of a table:

Lord	Limits of Service	Committee of whole house	Select Committees	Total	Remarks
Willoughby of Parham, 5 th Lord	1735-59	58	227	285	Appointed Chairman of Committees 1759
Sandys, 1 st Lord	1744-70	17	551	568	Died 1770
Marchmont, 3 rd Earl of	1751-80	45	231	276	Ceased to be representative peer 1784

Botetourt, 4 th Lord	1765-8	63	175	238	Appointed Governor of Virginia 1768
Boston, 1 st Lord	1762-75	114	411	525	Died 1775
St. Davids/Bangor, Bishop of (Warren)	1783-97	67	413	480	Died 1800

Although only one of these lords, Willoughby, ever achieved the position of Chairman of Committees itself, the frequency with which they all acted almost entitled them to be regarded as deputy or associated chairmen. Their principal contribution was in the field of select committees but four of them also acted as chairmen of committees of the whole house in the absence of the regular chairmen. These were Willoughby, Botetourt, Boston and the Bishop of Bangor who acted in the absence of Warwick, Delamer, Wentworth and Cathcart respectively. Marchmont, during his long membership of the House, tended to confine himself more exclusively to select committees. There seems little doubt that his extensive activities as chairman were linked with his known interest in the history and records of the House, to which his chairmanship of the committee which was responsible for supervising the printing of the journals and rolls of parliament testifies.⁶⁶ Sandys confined himself even more than Marchmont to the chairmanship of select committees. The intimate knowledge of the proceedings of the House that he would thus have acquired was probably an important factor in his selection to act as speaker of the House during session 1756-7 while the great seal was in commission.⁶⁷ As already noted in connection with Delawarr, this was a function normally reserved for one of the presiding judges of the courts of law.

The early history of the office of Chairman of Committees remains in many respects obscure, but, on the basis of the evidence presented here, it is clear that from the time of Clarendon (c. 1715-23) there was a regular succession of lords who were recognised as holding the post. This development appears to have been encouraged by the government and was, no doubt, found convenient by the House generally. From the time of the appointment of Warwick in 1734 until the death of Delamer in 1770 the post was occupied by lords who were entirely dependent on the crown for financial support and who received annual sums of varying amounts from the government. Thereafter the office passed into the hands of lords who, while not necessarily affluent, were less dependent upon support of this kind. Possibly from the time of Wentworth (1770-4) and certainly from that of Scarsdale (1775-89), a sessional allowance was paid to the Chairman of Committees as such. From the chairmanship of Warwick (1734-59) the post was evidently understood to be permanent in character, the holder remaining in office until his death or until some financial provision was made for his retirement. Of the functions of the chairmen before 1800, insofar as they went beyond the immediate business of presiding over the committees themselves, little can be said in the present state of knowledge. It has been suggested above that the role of the chairman in the supervision of private legislation, while extended and consolidated by Walsingham, was to some degree exercised by his predecessors. It is hoped that, now that it has proved possible to identify these predecessors more securely than was the case before, detailed research will be undertaken so that their contribution to the process of legislation in the eighteenth century may be correctly evaluated.

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Appendix

Notes:

1. O. C. Williams, *The Historical Development of Private Bill Procedure and Standing Orders of House of Commons* (1948-9), i, 91-105.

2. *Lords Journals*, xliii, 636, resolutions of 23 July 1800.
3. F. H. Spencer, *Municipal Origins* (1911). The letter is printed on pp. 327-9; the chairman's role is discussed on pp. 95-113.
4. *Parliamentary History*, xix, cols. 651-3; *Lords Journals*, xxxv, 287.
5. A copy of this analysis has been placed in the House of Lords Record Office. In the following remarks no account has been taken of the short sessions of 1707, 1714 (2), 1721, 1727 (2), 1754 and 1768 in each of which only four or fewer committees were appointed. Cf. Appendix.
6. For these records, see M. F. Bond, *Guide to the Records of Parliament* (1971), pp. 33, 43.
7. For the principle involved, see *Lords Journals*, ii, 707.
8. See *ibid*, xiii, 582.
9. See, for example, *ibid*, xvii, 344, 384; *ibid*. xviii, 429; *ibid*. xx, 632; *ibid*. xxi, 242, 319; *ibid*. xxxv, 224.
10. The committee for privileges constitutes a special case. It customarily sat in the chamber and its membership was, in practice, unlimited. Technically it was not a committee of the whole house. For the purposes of the analysis its sittings have been included under the head of select committees. No special conventions were observable in relation to its chairmanship and the number of its sittings was not sufficiently large to import any significant distortion into the figures.
11. See, for example, *Lords Journals*, ii, 385.
12. Unless otherwise noted, information relating to peers is taken from *Complete Peerage*, ed. G.E.C. 2nd ed. (1910-59).
13. *Calendar of Treasury Books*, xxviii, 487, 497.
14. *Ibid*. 135, 314; *ibid*. xxix, 585.
15. *Lords Journals*, xxiv, 237; *ibid*. xxviii, 249.
16. Public Record Office (hereafter cited as P.R.O.) T. 52/31 pp. 316-17, warrant 12 Oct. 1721. The pension was renewed by George II; see T. 52/35 pp. 202-3, warrant 16 Oct. 1727.
17. British Library Additional MS. (hereafter cited as Add. MS.) 32896 fo. 431.
18. L. B. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*. 2nd ed. (1957), p. 179 n.1.
19. *Lords Journals*, xxiv, 423-4.
20. Those of 1734, 1735, 1737, 1741-2, 1742-3, 1744-5, 1751 and 1753-4.
21. My attention was drawn to this material by Mr. P. J. W. Higson's article "Lord Willoughby of Parham; a neglected Society President", *Antiquaries Journal*, lii (1972), 169-84.
22. Add. MS. 35401 fo. 233.
23. *Ibid*. 35399 fo. 106.
24. *Ibid*. 35401 fo. 236.
25. *Ibid*. 35399 fo. 123.
26. *Ibid*. 35596 fo. 38.
27. *Ibid*. 35399 fo. 108; *ibid*. 35352 fo. 123.
28. *Calendar of Treasury Books*, xxxii, 550.
29. Namier, *Structure of Politics*, pp. 429, 436, 441, 449, 456, 462, 467, 474, 479.
30. Add. MS. 35352 fo. 123; *ibid*. 35606 fo. 305.
31. Namier, *Structure of Politics*, p. 222 n.2
32. P.R.O. T. 52/50 p. 292, warrant 21 Dec. 1759; the pension was renewed by George III; see T. 52/52 pp. 113-22, warrant 3 April 1761.
33. During Willoughby's period of office the Irish House of Lords began to entrust its committee business to a permanent chairman. In 1768 the fourth Viscount Ranelagh was granted £31,000 in respect of his services since October 1761. Thereafter the chairman received a series of sessional grants which varied from £31,000 to £32,000 until 1789 when he was given a fixed annual allowance of £31443 6s. on the Irish establishment. Ranelagh died in 1797 and was succeeded by the first Earl of Portarlington (1797-8) and then by the fourth Earl of Mayo who acted until the abolition of the Irish Parliament in 1800 (*Lords Journals (Ireland)*), iv, 487, 530, 608, 725, 813; *ibid*. v, 26, 148, 255-6, 417, 585-6, 704; *ibid*. vi, 66, 197, 273-4; *ibid*. vii, 549, 570; *ibid*. viii, 137, 211; E. M. Johnston, *Great Britain and Ireland 1760-1800; a Study in Political Administration* (Edinburgh, 1963), p. 307.
34. Namier, *Structure of Politics*, pp. 222, 223, 473, 475, 477, 479.
35. Sheffield City Library, Rockingham MS. R. 15/1, payments of 30 Oct. 1765, 26 April and 17 July 1766. I am grateful to Mr. J. Bebbington for providing me with this information.
36. For Scarsdale's career, see L. B. Namier and J. Brooke, *The History of Parliament; the House of Commons 1754-1790* (1964), ii, 287-8.

37. Add. MS. 37836 fos. 68, 80, 114, 138.
38. 22 Geo. III, c. 82, s.29. Payments to Scarsdale may be traced in P.R.O. T.38/741 fos. 23, 37, 49, 68, 95, 109, 124, 137.
39. P.R.O. T. 52/78 p. 398, warrant 7 May 1790.
40. Except where otherwise noted the details of Catchcart's life have been taken from the article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.
41. P.R.O. 30/8/121 fo. 226.
42. *Ibid.* fos. 228-9.
43. *Ibid.* fo. 230.
44. *Parliamentary History*, xxvii, cols. 1300-1.
45. Writing to Pitt on 27 Dec. 1794 the Bishop of Bangor assured him that "he would be very ready to serve the House of Lords as Chairman of Committees during the approaching (1794-5) Session in the same Manner as he did all last (1794) Session, unless he finds that a different Arrangement is to take place" . (P.R.O. 30/8/87 fo. 63). I am grateful to Professor M. McCahill for this reference.
46. For the payment of Cathcart's allowance, see P.R.O. T. 38/741 fos. 150, 163, 177, 186; T.38/742 fo. 2 See also *Gentleman's Magazine* (1943), cxiii(2), 314.
47. P.R.O. H.C.A. 50/12 fo. 28, warrant 2 Jan. 1795.
48. *The Later Correspondence of George III*, ed. A. Apsinall (Cambridge, 1962-70), ii, 262.
49. *Lords Journal*, 1, 8, 20, 22, 27; *Parliamentary Debates*, 1st series, xxix, cols. 27-8, 91-2.
50. For Walsingham's earlier career, see Namier and Brooke, *House of Commons 1754-90*, ii, 307-8.
51. Norfolk and Norwich Record Office, Walsingham Papers, Box XLVIII/2, George Rose to Walsingham 19 July 1795. I am grateful to Lord Walsingham for permission to make use of these papers.
52. *Ibid.*, Pitt to Walsingham 7 July 1794.
53. *Ibid.*, Rose to Walsingham 11 July 1794; 22 Geo. III, c. 82, s. 17; P.R.O. T. 52/81, warrants of 15 and 27 July 1794.
54. Walsingham Papers, Box XLVIII/2, Rose to Walsingham 19 July 1795.
55. *Complete Peerage*, ed. G.E.C. 2nd ed. (1910-59), xii pt. 2, 334 n.
56. *Lords Journals*, xli, 265.
57. *Royal Kalendar* (1797), p. 14.
58. For the payment of Walsingham's allowance, see P.R.O. T. 38/742 fos. 16, 24, 36, 48, 63.
59. Walsingham Papers, Box XLVIII/2, Rose to Walsingham 24 June, 2, 7 and 12 July 1799, 21 March 1800.
60. *Lords Journals*, xlii, 636, 647; P.R.O. T.29/76 p. 539, Treasury minute 13 Aug. 1800; T.52/86 p. 156, warrant 2 Oct. 1800. The sessional allowance to the chairman of ways and means in the House of Commons was raised from £3500 to £31,200 at the same time (*The Diary and Correspondence of Charles, Lord Colchester*, ed. Lord Colchester (1861), i, 200; P.R.O. T.38/742 fo. 63; *Commons Journals*, lv, 790, 792).
61. For a description of the chairman's role in this connection see Williams, *Private Bill Procedure*, i, 55-6, 92-103; *The Clerical Organisation of the House of Commons 1660-1850* (Oxford, 1954), pp. 156-7; S. Lambert, *Bills and Acts* (Cambridge 1971), 92-5.
62. The report of this discussion is to be found in J. Debrett, *Parliamentary Register*, xii, 475-6.
63. Add. MS. 38231 fo. 31. See also Spencer, *Municipal Origins*, pp. 102-4.
64. *Lords Journals*, xxix, 556-7; H.S. Cobb, *Sources for Economic History amongst the Parliamentary Records in the House of Lords Record Office* (House of Lords Record Office Memorandum no. 50, 1973), p.8.
65. Walsingham was also credited in some quarters with considerable influence over the fate of public legislation. Writing to Spencer Perceval on 23 May 1805 about the Irish Post Roads Bill, Lord Redesdale said that "I cannot blame Vansittart (chief secretary for Ireland) for suffering this bill to be hurried through the House of Lords. A single word to Lord Walsingham would have stopped it" . (Gloucestershire Record Office, Redesdale Papers, T. 3030/7/73). I am grateful to Dr. A. P. W. Malcolmson for this reference.
66. *Lords Journals*, xxxiii, 214; *ibid.* xxiv, 728.
67. *Ibid.*, xxix, 4.