

T H O M A S C R O M W E L L
ASPECTS OF HIS ADMINISTRATIVE WORK.

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Thomas Cromwell: Aspects of his Administrative Work.

(Brief summary of thesis).

The thesis is concerned with these points:

- (1) The features of Cromwell's administration.
- (2) The light they throw on his personality.
- (3) The place of his rule in the history of administration.

The introduction defines the limits set and reviews the sources. A first chapter discusses Cromwell's rise to power, showing that he rose by degrees and as an administrator, his arrival to power being marked by his obtaining an office. Chapter two investigates his chief lay offices (master of the jewels, clerk of the hanaper, chancellor of the exchequer, principal secretary, master of the rolls, lord privy seal), dealing with their functions, their importance to Cromwell, and the effect on them of his tenure. His choice of offices is seen to have been determined by a desire to control the financial and secretarial organisations, and these are then discussed. In the former, note is taken of Cromwell's personal treasurership which made him the main disbursing officer for the king's money, of his relations with the chamber machinery whose decline was due to him, and of the agencies established to administer the new revenues. Then come his dealings with the various secretariats: orders which tightened up the organisation of the signet office; a stricter definition of the use of the signet and privy seal in the process of a grant under the great seal, and Cromwell's evasion of his own rules; his personal activities as secretary and lord privy seal; his use of Thomas Wriothesley as "undersecretary" in charge of the clerical departments. The last chapter investigates Cromwell's relations with the council; he is seen to have encouraged conciliar government and himself to have organised the privy council proper as early as 1536. The conclusion attempts to account for the fact that in his administration Cromwell seems to have been guided by contradictory desires (to organise bureaucratically, and to evade bureaucratic organisation in the interests of personal ascendancy), and to assess his place as the founder of modern government in England.

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THOMAS CROMWELL

Aspects of his Administrative Work

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PREFATORY NOTE.

The following abbreviations have been used:

- A.P.C. - Acts of the Privy Council.
- B.M. - British Museum.
- Bull. - Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.
- Cal.S.P.Dom. - Calendar of State Papers, Domestic.
- Cal.S.P.For. - Calendar of State Papers, Foreign.
- D.N.B. - Dictionary of National Biography.
- E.H.R. - English Historical Review.
- H.M.C. - Historical Manuscripts Commission.
- L.J. - Lords' Journals.
- L.P. - Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the
Reign of Henry VIII.
- P.R.O. - Public Record Office.
- Span.Cal. - Calendar of State Papers, Spanish.
- V.C.H. - Victoria County History.
- Ven.Cal. - Calendar of State Papers, Venetian.

Figures after references to L.P. and Ven.Cal. are to numbers of documents, that being the practice in the respective indexes; in all other cases they are to pages. Where the original of a document calendared in L.P. has been consulted the reference to the manuscript is usually given, followed by the reference to L.P. For the sake of brevity, P.R.O. manuscripts are quoted by the call number there in use; a key to these with a full description of the classes which they represent will be found in the bibliography (App.B, Section I). In transcripts, abbreviations have been extended and modern punctuation has been adopted, with the result that capitals have occasionally been put where there are none in the original; otherwise the spelling of the manuscript has always been rendered exactly. References to printed works in the footnotes are usually given in more or less abbreviated form; the complete description will be found in the bibliography.

Introduction.

SCOPE AND SOURCES OF THIS STUDY.

"In the whole line of English statesmen there is no one of whom we would willingly know so much, no one of whom we really know so little, as Thomas Cromwell."¹ Indeed, although volumes have been written on Henry VIII, on Wolsey, Gardiner, and Cranmer, although whole shelves could be filled with the literature that has grown up round Thomas More, our knowledge of the man to whom Green ascribed the Reformation and whom another historian called the creator of the Church of England² is still scanty. The standard biography contains a collection of his letters, with an introductory "Life" which does no more than give a résumé of the political history of the period with Cromwell in the centre of the stage.³

Thus seventy years after Green deplored our ignorance, we must still ask ourselves what sort of man Thomas Cromwell was. The word that springs to the mind, the word that has most commonly been used to describe him, is "Machiavellian".

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1. J.R.Green, History of the English People (1878), ii.142.
 2. J.A.Froude, History of England, iii.339.
 3. R.B.Merriman, Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell. Quoted hereafter as "Merriman".

The picture usually left with us is that of a very diligent man, subservient to his overbearing master, clever and unscrupulous, cruel and ruthless, a spider in his net, a vicious enemy to the gracious light of More and the gentle piety of bishop Fisher, not even inspired by the zeal of a new faith. Apologists may discover extenuating features. He was, we are told, a sociable companion; he never forgot old friends; he lacked all trace of vindictiveness. Sometimes we are reminded, by way of excuse, that More persecuted heretics and that Fisher engaged in treasonable traffic with the emperor's ambassador. But in truth, this is no picture. It is the caricature of emotional partisanship or of insufficient knowledge, and the use of a convenient, though meaningless, label indicates the depth of the appreciation attained. The men who knew him in life have taken their knowledge with them.¹ No faithful son-in-law or gentleman usher was inspired by Thomas Cromwell to leave a memorial to one who was either a great statesman or a magnificently great scoundrel.

We shall therefore have to seek him in the monument which he erected for himself, in his work. For something like ten years he stood near or at the centre of affairs.

1. Though Nicholas Harpsfield might apparently have left us some revealing anecdotes told by one who knew him very well (cf. R.W. Chambers, Thomas More, p.292).

His correspondence, confiscated at his fall, survived in fifty-two volumes, until it was broken up and rebound with the other state papers of the reign. The history of the time, the records of his doings, ought to provide the clues which we are seeking. Some, we have seen, have made him the moving spirit behind the Reformation. On the other hand, Professor Pollard could tell the story of Henry VIII with practically no major reference to Cromwell. There is a passage in his book which exemplifies his attitude.¹ When the Reformation really got under way, he tells us, in 1532-3, everybody opposed Henry's policy. Firm supporters of the divorce began to waver when they saw where things were going. He gives a few names - archbishop Lee, bishops Tunstall, Gardiner, and Longland. "It was the King, and the King alone, who kept England on the course which he had mapped out." There is no mention of Cromwell. The policy of the 1530's was Henry's own and no-one else had a hand in it. Merriman, looking at the matter from the other side, ascribed every act of policy to Cromwell, leaving Henry in the cold, and we are left to wonder whose the mind was that directed the course of the Reformation. Biographers will always exalt their subject, and it may be unprofitable to engage in a controversy which may for ever remain undecided.

1. A.F. Pollard, Henry VIII, p.306.

King and minister are so inextricably entangled with each other, and the evidence is so insufficient, that every answer will, in the last resort, remain a personal verdict. In any case, it is not intended here to enter that dusty arena.

Nevertheless, since the greatest modern historian of this period felt justified in practically ignoring Cromwell, it may be permissible to review quickly the reign of Henry VIII, in order to see whether there is not good reason, on a general view, for ascribing importance to him. Henry's reign falls into three parts. Until 1529 Wolsey ruled and Henry remained in the background. The period was one of wars and brilliant diplomacy. England achieved a new position of eminence in Europe, and the great cardinal seemed at times to arbitrate in the councils of princes. However, the glory was a sham and Wolsey's magnificent building lacked foundations. With his fall the second period of Henry's reign began, the period of the break with Rome and the subjugation of the English church to the royal power. It was in the 1530's that the permanent achievements of the reign were produced, and it was during these years that Cromwell stood beside the king. After 1539 we can detect the third period, one of rapid decline and retreat. Indeed, it is as though the death of Cromwell removed the

inspring of the machinery. Professor Pollard rests his interpretation of the reign on the psychology of the king. Henry, he maintains, matured slowly, and it was not until 1529 that he came to his full stature as a statesman. That may be so, but are we to see no significance in the fact that whatever of lasting value was done in England under Henry VIII was done while Cromwell was in power? Why, for instance, was it only after 1540 that England went to war again, that the coinage was debased and the monastic lands were squandered? Does not the drift into lamentable failure, the general disorganisation, which characterise the last seven years of Henry's life, suggest that there is something wrong with an interpretation which pushes Cromwell to the back of the stage?

These are large questions, and they cannot receive their answer within the limits of this study. Cromwell the Hammer of the Monks, Cromwell the policy maker, Cromwell the political thinker, Cromwell the financial and commercial genius, all these and other facets of his fascinating personality we shall have to ignore. Doubts may for ever be raised whether it was he or the king who guided the course of the Reformation, but there is one aspect of his work which is most clearly and fully his. The surviving evidence leaves no doubt whatever that it was he who saw to the administration

of the kingdom. The details of government, the day-to-day work of the executive, the control and reform of the administrative machine, these were in his hands. Thousands of letters, warrants, drafts, accounts, bear eloquent witness to that. Nor has this aspect of his work received the attention and detailed study which it deserves. Few men can ever have identified their lives so completely with their public work, and Cromwell the administrator may provide us with many a clue to his true personality.

There is another, less biographical reason, why his administrative work ought to be studied. Reform of the administrative machinery was one of the outstanding features of the Tudor century. Few things are more striking in a survey of the public records of England than the manner in which many medieval series run down to about the time of Edward IV, while most of the modern series do not begin until the last thirty years of Elizabeth's reign.¹ The intervening hundred years are filled with a turmoil of fragmentary and sometimes ill-assorted evidence through which there run occasional strands of the dying past or the germinating future. The state of the records, as is so often the case, reflects a development in the practice of govern-

1. This is particularly true, e.g., of the exchequer and the signet, much less so of the chancery which preserved many of its medieval series though it lost some and added others.

ment. Whatever credit may be given to the Yorkist kings - and we are beginning to realise more and more that the Tudors did not start from scratch - the plain fact is that Henry VII ascended the throne of a mediievally governed kingdom, while Elizabeth handed to her successor a country administered on modern lines. A most significant history of the century could be written round the work of its great administrative reformers - Henry VII, Cromwell, Winchester, Burleigh, and many lesser names.

This is, then, a study of the administrative work of Thomas Cromwell, but as the title indicates it will deal with certain selected aspects only. Cromwell's work affected so much of the country's history, covering as it did every sphere of government activity, that a study of the whole of it would involve us in the writing of a full biography as well as in detailed investigations into a dozen different fields. That could clearly not be done within the limits of a thesis. It thus became necessary to make a choice, and the first and most obvious dividing line was that between lay and ecclesiastical administrations. No account is here taken of the latter: we do not propose to deal with Cromwell's work as the king's vicar-general and vicegerent in spirituals, with the dissolution of the monasteries except inasmuch as it was a financial measure, or with the admin-

istrative side of the subjugation of the church to the crown. We are only concerned with the field of lay administration. Even this proved so large that further selection became unavoidable, but it was possible to select a few aspects of administration which formed a reasonable whole.

Starting from Cromwell's rise to power, a rise which took place within the administrative machine and was marked by his obtaining office, we shall be led to a discussion of the six chief lay offices which he held. The significance of these offices will take us into an investigation of the two indispensable pillars of every administration, the financial and clerical organisations, and finally we shall have to deal with the coping-stone of the administrative structure, the king's council. These are the fundamental aspects of Cromwell's administration, and his work in these spheres is essential for an understanding of the man and his ideas; other points of considerable interest, such as the royal household, local government, the administrative use and control of parliament, have had to be omitted as distracting from the main theme. A whole separate study could and should be written on administrative projects and ideas, both inside and outside the government, but this could obviously not be included within the limits of a thesis.

To turn to the sources which have been used. Everyone

who works on the history of the first half of the sixteenth century must start by acknowledging his debt and paying his tribute to that magnificent series of calendars, the Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII.

The editors have anticipated much labour and drudgery, but in ransacking the Public Record Office and British Museum they have made the task of finding anything really new, at least in London, very difficult indeed. Although much reliance has, of course, been placed on the calendar, an attempt has been made to see every document of importance, every document on which a crucial argument might depend, in the original; the manuscript has also been consulted where the abstract in the calendar seemed doubtful or ambiguous. At the same time it has been necessary to glean where the editors of the calendar had reaped; on the one hand, large numbers of documents of possible relevancy have been gone through, more often than not without positive result, and on the other records not used in the calendar have been exploited, as for instance many rolls and accounts in the exchequer. A good deal of manuscript material not printed even in abstracts has therefore been used, but the nature of the work and of the sources makes it impossible to describe any large classes as particularly important. All has had to be grist to this mill, but a good deal had to be thrown

away as useless. A list of all the material which has actually contributed to the writing of this study will be found in the bibliographical appendix, and where it seemed advisable individual classes of manuscripts have been discussed in the relevant places in the text.

Apart from the important articles by Professors Pollard and Newton, and the work of Dr. Dietz on finance, little has been written on the administrative history of the time. I have had the benefit of discussions with Professor W.C. Richardson, of the Louisiana State University, whose forthcoming book on the financial machinery of the early Tudor period is bound to mark a new stage in discussions of the subject, and to provide the much needed larger picture into which such more detailed studies as those in Chapter 3 of this thesis ought to fit. That chapter was written before I first saw Professor Richardson whose larger conclusions I was glad to see were in agreement with my own. Other works have provided the necessary background and setting for other administrative problems; they are noted in the bibliography.

The material has varied in usefulness and character for each of the succeeding chapters. Cromwell's rise and the story of the council have had to be written almost entirely from sources calendared in the Letters and Papers, with

frequent references to the originals, while Chapters 2 and 3 have benefited most from investigations into materials not used before. The survey of the available sources has often taken me outside the narrow limits set for this thesis; it has revealed, for instance, how much might be done on the growth of legislation and its shaping by Cromwell whose handwriting appears on so many drafts. Such matters, as well as the details of his memoranda and notes, are all almost untouched as biographical material and as means of illuminating the inner history of the time; perhaps it will be possible to make more of them in the future. In the meantime it is hoped that the investigations of Cromwell's offices, of the financial and clerical organisations, and of the council, will throw some light both on Cromwell personally and on the history of the changes which produced the modern administrative system in England.

Chapter 1.

CROMWELL'S RISE TO POWER.
-----I. The Manner of his Rise.

Wolsey was deprived of the great seal in October 1529; by the beginning of 1533 Cromwell was, in the words of the imperial ambassador, the man who had "most influence with the king".¹ In the space of three years the servant of the fallen cardinal had attained to a degree of influence which differed little from that wielded by his old master. What is in doubt is not the achievement but the way of it: Cromwell may have gradually climbed to supremacy, as Cavendish suggests,² or, as other more or less contemporary writers say, he may have presented the king with a full plan for the divorce and the break with Rome almost as soon as he entered his service, thereby immediately becoming the power behind the throne. Professor Merriman took the latter view.³ The methods employed in carrying through the Reformation, the contrast with Wolsey's policy, and his consequent belief that we must suppose a new adviser in order to explain the new line of action, convinced him that what he called "the sinister genius of Cromwell" was at work

1. Span. Cal. iv(ii).644.

2. Cavendish, Wolsey, pp.198f.

3. Merriman, i.89ff.

behind the scenes. He admitted that there is little concrete evidence for such a view but suggested that it was in Henry's interest to keep his minister in the background and assume responsibility himself, thus using the prestige of the royal name to protect measures "universally unpopular", and incidentally also to shield Cromwell from the people's revenge.

Such reasoning clearly depends on a personal estimate of equally personal factors in the story. The biographer of Henry VIII held a different opinion. To Professor Pollard the ecclesiastical legislation of the years 1530-34 was due to foreseeable and long foreseen circumstances and developments.¹ He showed that Merriman's suggestion of a deliberate suppression of Cromwell's part in affairs will not stand up to investigation: it was not Henry's "habit to assume a responsibility which he could devolve upon others",² and indeed it seems hard to say - as Pollard says - why Henry should have found it more difficult to protect his minister in 1530 than in 1536. Pollard came to the conclusion that "Cromwell, in fact, was not the author of that policy [the Reformation], but he was the most efficient instrument in its execution". Similarly, Dr. Gairdner

1. A.F. Pollard, Cranmer, pp. 66ff. and note on p. 68.

2. A.F. Pollard in Enc. Brit. (4th ed.), vol. 7, p. 500a.

affirmed that Cromwell played a subordinate part at first, being "the mere tool of the court" and, in the years under consideration, but a minor member of the council.¹

We must turn to the evidence on which these different views were based. Merriman's opinion could claim the authority of Chapuys, the imperial ambassador,² of Cardinal Pole,³ and of John Foxe,⁴ all of whom make it appear that Cromwell entered the royal service and achieved pre-eminence at one bound as the result of one interview with the king at which he submitted a plan for solving Henry's difficulties which was immediately accepted. Their stories, however, can be credited only if they are reasonable in themselves and agree with other known facts, and these requirements none of them fulfil.

Chapuys relates how soon after Wolsey's death Cromwell was involved in a quarrel with Sir John Wallop and therefore sought the king's protection. "He asked and obtained an audience from king Henry whom he addressed in such flattering terms and eloquent language - promising to make him the richest

1. J. Gairdner in D.N.B., v.198b-199a. Cf. A.F. Pollard, Wolsey, p.340: "There was an interval...between Wolsey's and Cromwell's predominance; and during that interval...Norfolk and Gardiner rather than Cromwell and Cranmer were the advisers on whom Henry relied."
2. Span. Cal. v(i).568f. (L.P. ix.862).
3. Reginald Pole, Apologia, pp.66ff.
4. John Foxe, Acts and Monuments, v.366ff.

king in the world -¹ that the king at once took him into his service and made him councillor, though his appointment was kept secret for four months." This can hardly be true. Men were sworn of the council, that is, they took an oath before their fellows which made their appointment manifest.² Moreover, we know that if Chapuys is right about the time of the interview Cromwell's councillorship did not remain a secret for four months. Wolsey died on 29 November 1530;³ thus we should have to assume that Cromwell's appointment did not become known until at the earliest in April 1531. Yet on 10 January 1531 an obscure priest of York who was certainly not in any of the king's secrets addressed a letter to "Master Cromwell, one of the kinges most graces Counsaill",⁴ and letters to Cromwell as councillor become quite frequent after that. Chapuys wrote his account in 1535 by which time Cromwell was undoubtedly the king's leading minister. He relied on information which, however good, could no doubt be wrong at times, and he could not have learned of what happened at

1. Thus Span.Cal. The original French says more reasonably that Cromwell promised Henry "de le faire le plus riche que oncques fut en angleterre" (Merriman, i.17).
2. W.S.Holdsworth, Hist.of Law, iv.64; J.F.Baldwin, King's Council, pp.71,346,354 ("a well-understood feature of the constitution" by the time of Henry VI). Fortescue thought the oath an essential feature of the council (ibid., p.207). The swearing-in of councillors is noted in the liber intracionum of the reign of Henry VII (ibid., p.347; cf. E.H.R. xxxvii, pp.356f.).
3. A.F.Pollard, Wolsey, p.301.
4. P.R.O. SP 1/65, f.60 (L.P. v.38).

at the supposed interview with any certainty except from Henry or Cromwell, neither of whom would have told him this particular story. In all likelihood he obtained the material for his report from more than one source, throwing together in one dramatic story events which had taken place at different times, and mixing in as well common reports and personal beliefs which may not have been anywhere near the truth at all.

Even less credence can be placed in Pole's account. He tells how Cromwell, as the "messenger of Satan", came to the king and persuaded him to the evil way in an interview at which he submitted the whole of his future policy. Easily convinced, Henry "*sine mora dedit ut inter intimos et primarios conciliarios cognosceretur ille*".¹ This story, in Professor Pollard's words, has been too readily accepted,² though its reliability was torn to shreds by Professor Van Dyke who proved beyond doubt that - to put it moderately - Pole was not incapable of error.³ Writing some nine years after the event and influenced by all that had happened since he left in England in 1531, Pole not surprisingly ascribed both to himself and to Cromwell such views and insight at so early a date as 1529-30 as ought in truth to have been spread

1. Pole, Apologia, p.125.

2. Enc.Brit. (44th ed.), vol.7, p.499b.

3. Paul Van Dyke, Renaissance Portraits, pp.377ff. (appendix on "Reginald Pole and Thomas Cromwell").

over the whole intervening period.¹ He himself affirms only that the sentiments which he ascribes to Cromwell are such as Cromwell truly held, adding that he has heard their like at divers times from Cromwell and his friends. He does not appear so concerned with the truth of the setting which he has given to the supposed speech.² He may have reported rightly some of the things that occurred, but we cannot trust him in his account of how things happened.

Foxe, too, has an interview. He says that it was brought about by "Lord Russell, earl of Bedford", anxious to repay Cromwell for saving his life at Bologna when Russell was there on the king's service. Russell - not elevated to the peerage until 1539 -³ was at Bologna in 1525 when there is ample evidence that Cromwell was in England engaged on Wolsey's business.⁴ Cromwell, Foxe relates, went to the king armed with the bishops' oath to the pope in order to prove his allegations against the clergy, and left with the king's signet ring to go down to Convocation and scare the bishops out of their wits. If this were true, the silence of contemporary accounts of the proceedings in Convocation would indeed be surprising. The whole story is unconvincing, and

1. Ibid., pp.387f.,397f.

2. Apologia, pp.123f. Merriman (i.92n.) does not seem to realise that Pole's words prove nothing for the story of the interview, whatever light they may throw on Cromwell's political opinions.

3. L.P. xiv.I.477.

4. D.N.B. xvii.445b.

Foxe's reliability is not increased by his stating that Cromwell was knighted and made master of the king's jewel-house "the next year" (1531), and admitted to the council. In fact, Cromwell was not knighted until 1536,¹ on the occasion of his elevation to the peerage, and was officially styled "armiger" in September 1532.² His appointment as master of the jewels was dated 14 April 1532.³ Moreover, Cromwell was of the council by the beginning of 1531, well before he attained any other position. We may discard Foxe as an authority on this matter.

However, it is of some importance that all those writers were convinced that Cromwell had some one important interview with the king, an interview of decisive influence on his later career. They may have been right to this extent that Cromwell took every opportunity to see the king and acquire his confidence, though they were hardly right in assuming that all the rest followed from one such meeting. Cavendish mentions a number of interviews, though he did not ascribe to them any such startling and immediate consequences.⁴ According to his version Cromwell had occasion to see the king repeatedly because he had "the ordering and disposition of the landes" of Wolsey's colleges, for which reason he acquired

1. W.A. Shaw, The Knights of England, ii.50.

2. Rymer, Foedera, xiv.439.

3. L.P. v.978(13).

4. Cavendish, Wolsey, p.199.

much importance in the eyes of courtiers hungry for these lands, and "grewe continually into the kings favour". "The conference," as Cavendish puts it, "that he had therein with the king, caused the king to repute him to be a very wise man, and a mete instrument to serve his grace." What Cavendish meant by conference is clear from what went before: he was thinking, not of one meeting, but of Henry and Cromwell constantly conferring together on the disposal of these lands. Perhaps it is in this liberty and frequency of access to the royal person that we must seek the origin of the "interview" story.

Evidence in favour of the view that Cromwell rose gradually in the royal service is to be found in the record of his day-to-day activities from the fall of Wolsey onwards, a record provided by the extant portion of Cromwell's correspondence. There is no reason to suppose the collection of incoming letters seriously deficient in any part, though it is unfortunate for us that the business methods of the time had not yet advanced as far as the keeping of copies of out-letters. We are told that "Henry and Cromwell made every effort to conceal their traces; scarcely any information can be gleaned from their correspondence".¹ It would have been more correct to say that there is hardly any

1. Merriman, i.89.

correspondence between them extant for this time. We possess three letters from Cromwell to Henry and none at all from Henry to Cromwell for the years 1530-32, and these three letters belong to the last eight months of 1532 when Cromwell had gone far in his rise to power.¹ Moreover, these letters do not support Merriman's contention, for in each of them Cromwell reported in detail, and without attempting to conceal any traces, on various administrative activities in which he was engaged: news received from abroad, the affairs of an attainted traitor, the making of jewelry to the king's design, a case concerning land in which the king had an interest. The fact is that in these early years Cromwell knew that his influence depended on proximity to the king, so that naturally there was rarely any correspondence between them. On the other hand, there is no reason whatsoever for confining ourselves to the letters which Cromwell and Henry may or may not have written to each other. From what survives of Cromwell's papers it is easily discovered what he was doing at any given time, though it may not always be possible to say with certainty what he was not doing.

Whatever his position at court may have been, from Wolsey's fall to Wolsey's death his main business was with and for Wolsey. Though intent on power, he spent much time on

1. L.P. v.1055,1092,1298.

the affairs of a fallen man; while it is true that he used Wolsey's business to advance himself, it must also be said that there seems to have been a strong trait of loyalty in him. As early as November 1529 he saw the king himself about Wolsey's licence to go to his province of York and transmitted Henry's displeasure at a delay in the conferment of a benefice.¹ All through the year we find those numerous appeals from the fallen master to the rising servant which have caused so much moral censure.² For the first few months Cromwell was Wolsey's only hope.³ He was to see to Wolsey's pardon, to achieve the restoration of Winchester, to intercede with the new powers - the Boleyns and Norfolk.⁴ If his visits to Esher lacked the regularity which seemed desirable to the cardinal's sick and worried mind he was assailed with abject and pressing entreaties.⁵ He still drafted Wolsey's letters to the king.⁶ He tried to move Gardiner, apparently to lukewarm for the faithful Sadler, to help his old master,⁷ though Wolsey himself spared no pains to enlist the man who as the king's secretary might be thought to have been in a better position to assist than Cromwell.⁸ In small things as in big Cromwell was Wolsey's stand-by this year. He was

1. L.P. Add.665.

2. E.g., Merriman, i.73.

3. L.P. iv.6076,6098,6114,6181.

4. Ibid. 6222; 6181,6226; 6076,6098,6114,6226,6262,6554.

5. Ibid. 6114,6203,6263.

6. Ibid. 6467.

7. Ibid. 6112,6202.

8. Ibid. 6202,6224-5,6260-1,6299.

to obtain medical aid, he was expected to look after a horse-deal and after money, he settled Wolsey's bills and handled his library, he drafted a privy seal to secure Wolsey hospitality on his way north, he was asked to look into some trouble among the tenants of Wolsey's house at Battersea, he was deeply involved in the complicated story of Thomas Strangways' suit for £700 against Wolsey.¹ In other words, he was still, as he had been, Wolsey's solicitor.

Wolsey's immediate troubles were by no means all the business which his fall put in the way of his servant. Wolsey made some grants of land to influential men at court, and the negotiations concerning them were in Cromwell's hand. It is not improbable that he had persuaded the cardinal to make these grants; at any rate, he made good use of them in advancing his own importance, a fact already realised by Cavendish.² When the king granted the keepership of Farnham Castle, part of Wolsey's surrendered possessions, to lord Sandes, a grant which needed Wolsey's seal and consent, Cromwell was approached about the drafting of the king's letter and for information where the seal of Winchester was;³ the advantages of all these activities were shown in the letters of thanks which the recipient, lord chamberlain of the house-

1. L.P. iv.6151,6249,6108,6436,6186(ii),6390,6294,6494,6582-8.

2. Cavendish, Wolsey, 198f.; Merriman, i.71f.

3. L.P. iv.6420.

hold, wrote to Cromwell.¹ The business connected with these patents of Wolsey's continued to occupy Cromwell right through July, August, and September 1530.²

In addition to all this varied work there was another big part of the Wolsey legacy: the colleges at Oxford and Ipswich required Cromwell's attention. He had superintended their foundation and the dissolution of the monasteries used to found them.³ The cardinal's fall and his praemunire put them in a very difficult position, but their ties with the cardinal's most prominent agent were not severed. By 9 November 1529 William Capon, dean of the Ipswich college, was in despair because he did not know who was actually in control of his affairs, Wolsey or the king, and as a matter of course he appealed to Cromwell;⁴ Cromwell was immediately informed when the king's commissioners came to take an inventory and to depart with a portion of what they found,⁵ he did the college's legal business.⁶ For the Oxford college he continued to supervise the collection of rents, and his servant William Brabazon made the rounds at the Buckinghamshire monasteries of Tickford and Ravenston,⁷ both of which belonged

1. Ibid. 6435, 6460.

2. L.P. Add. 693-4, 697.

3. L.P. iv. 989, 1137(2-20), 3360, 3461, 3536, 4117, 4229(9), 4230, 4441, 5186.

4. Ibid. 6055.

5. Ibid. 6061.

6. Ibid. 6230.

7. Ibid. 6033, 6217. Brabazon was also surveying Daventry lands at this time (February 1530), a fact which suggests that Cromwell continued to look after some of Wolsey's own property. Daventry was still in Wolsey's possession in March 1530 (ibid. 6263).

to Cardinal's College.¹ He assisted in the sale of goods belonging to the colleges.² None of this activity, however, indicates that Cromwell was in any way connected with the government. He had acted midwife to the college at Ipswich, yet when the king sent a commission there Cromwell was not on it and had to be told of its activities. Like all the other business which we have so far mentioned, this work came to him as a consequence of his service with Wolsey.

This conclusion is confirmed by the colleges' subsequent history. Their position became critical about the middle of 1530 when the king turned his attention to the problem of their future, and when it seemed for a time as though both might be dissolved. Wolsey was in despair, and appeals went out to Gardiner, to the chief justice of the king's bench, to the attorney-general, to the king himself.³ Cromwell was similarly approached.⁴ Nevertheless he played no part in the negotiations which followed. Neither Capon, for Ipswich, nor Tresham and Higdon, for Oxford, mentioned him in their reports to Wolsey.⁵ They went to Gardiner, who appears to have done his best to prevent the threatened dissolution,⁶ but they did not go to Cromwell whose connection with the colleges had been

1. V.C.H. Bucks., ii.113,363f.

2. L.P. iv.6222.

3. Ibid. 6529,6574-8.

4. Ibid. 6524.

5. Ibid. 6377,6579,6666; 6510,6523.

6. Ibid. 6523,6579,6679. He seems to have had a good deal to do with the re-founding of the college, knowing about it as early as 1 August 1530 (ibid. 6545).

so much closer and by no means yet at an end. The men appealed to - Norfolk, Gardiner, More, Fitzwilliam - all held official and influential positions; Cromwell, we must conclude, had no such position at this time (1530), and his work on behalf of the colleges was not work in the king's service.¹

While thus occupied with matters arising from the eclipse of Wolsey, Cromwell did not neglect his own private business. He continued his legal practice: a certain Richard Reynolds appears several times in the correspondence, both in connection with a legal arbitration undertaken by Cromwell between him and another merchant,² and with a request that Cromwell intercede for him with the king.³ Arbitration in legal suits seems to have been a not uncommon employment of Cromwell's at this time, and drafts of awards and agreements to abide by his decision survive among his papers.⁴ A parson threatened with praemunire sought his advice; he represented a man sued for debt by the king's officers; a man who had been told to submit a petition to the council retained his services for the drafting

1. Strype (Eccl. Mem., I.i.181) states that the continuing of the Oxford college was due to the efforts of both Gardiner and Cromwell, but he adduces no proof beyond the fact that they were both appealed to by Wolsey.

2. L.P. iv.5948,6005,6133,6137.

3. Ibid. 6064. In this letter, written on 29 November 1529, Reynolds oddly enough declared that he had no-one to intercede for him except Wolsey and Cromwell.

4. Ibid. 6102,6126.

of the "instrument".¹ Nor did Cromwell's private trading cease in this year when he first embarked on a fully political career. His friend, Stephen Vaughan, was entrusted with some spermaceti to sell for him in Flanders,² a task that was not done by the time Vaughan returned to England in 1532. Some light is thrown on Cromwell's business methods by a remark of Vaughan's that the spermaceti were "very subtly packed", being nothing like as good on the inside as on the outside.³ For a friend Cromwell acted as intermediary in a horsedeal.⁴ He received many appeals for assistance, and it is noticeable that in 1530 such letters did not request official patronage but were addressed to the man who was Wolsey's right hand or were quite private in nature.⁵ We may see in this one more proof for the fact that so far Cromwell did not occupy a sufficiently public place to justify any assumption that he had yet any influence on policy.

But Cromwell sat in the Reformation parliament, and traces survive of his activities there in its first session. They are all evidence of his work and standing as a private

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1. Ibid. 6058; L.P. Add.676,666. There is nothing in this last letter (dated by the editor "November 1529") to suggest any personal connection between Cromwell and the council.
 2. L.P. iv.6744, and in many other letters from Vaughan.
 3. B.M. Galba B.x, f.4 (L.P. v.808).
 4. L.P. iv.6800.
 5. Ibid. 6116-8,6139,6682,6783; L.P. Add.691.

member and do not show him as a royal servant in the house. He was a lawyer, and as such was no doubt included among the lawyers whom the commons appointed to draft the bills concerning probate of wills, mortuaries, and pluralities;¹ Hall suggests that all the lawyers in the house were thus appointed, and Cromwell, who had taken a prominent part in the parliament of 1523, was something of an old parliamentary hand.² We also have a draft bill concerning "protections" which is endorsed "for proteccions Master Cromwell, Master Pol Withepoll, Master Halle of Greyes Ynn, Master Seye, Master Brannyng".³ All these men except Seye are known for certain to have sat in this parliament,⁴ and they were undoubtedly the committee to whom the bill was entrusted for consideration and drafting. The matter with which it attempted to deal - abuses of the king's protection - was one on which Cromwell, himself a lawyer and a merchant, may have been something of an authority; at any rate, he presided over the committee which included a leading London merchant (Withepoll) and the lawyer and chronicler Hall.

Cromwell was concerned with another bill in parliament. It can be shown that parliament attempted in this session to

1. Hall, Chronicle, p.766.
2. Merriman, i.27ff.
3. P.R.O. SP 1/236, f.166 (L.P. Add.663). The endorsement has been largely destroyed since the document was calendared, but such traces as remain confirm Mr. Brodie's reading.
4. Official Returns, i.368ff.

present a petition which was worked up, two years later, into the "Supplication against the Ordinaries". Of the four surviving drafts of this Supplication three were drawn up before the passage of the acts concerning probate and mortuary, that is they were drawn up in the 1529 session, and it was these that Cromwell corrected.¹ If the Supplication was imposed on the commons by the king, Cromwell's revision of it would show him to have been in the royal service as early as November 1529; but if the document really originated in the commons, then it would seem that Cromwell was entrusted by the house with its drafting. The fact that nothing came of it for the time being suggests that the king had no hand in it, a conclusion strengthened by the fact that grievances against the clergy were genuinely entertained by the commons and did not have to be fostered by the government.² Moreover, the first draft of all looks most convincingly like a document emanating from the commons.³ Cromwell's corrections must, therefore, also be considered as part of his parliamentary activities rather than as signs of royal service. All this

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1. The drafts are L.P. v.1016(2-4) and L.P. iv.6043(7), which latter was completely misunderstood by the editors. They have been investigated in the original, but as a full discussion is impossible in this place it will be necessary to confine ourselves to stating the conclusions arrived at.
 2. Cf., e.g., A.F. Pollard, Factors in Modern History, pp.114ff. The importance of the true nature of the "Supplication", as a measure of the attitude of parliament and nation, is clear but cannot be gone into any further here.
 3. L.P. v.1016(3).

goes to show that Cromwell achieved a certain position of importance in parliament, as he told Cavendish he would,¹ but not that he was as yet in the king's service.

Mention must now be made of the slender evidence of such service in 1530. There survives the draft of a council letter, dated 31 May (1530), requesting the sending up to London of two criminals who had taken refuge in the liberty of Ripon.² It is unsigned, but the calendar heads it "[Cromwell] to [the Town of Ripon]". It is not, however, in Cromwell's handwriting, or in that of any known clerk of his, and it is difficult to see on what the editor based his assumption that Cromwell wrote or dictated the letter which was, in any case, written on the behalf of a number of men, "vs of the counsell". In August 1530 Cromwell's handwriting appeared on two drafts to be signed by two messengers of the King's Receipt, acknowledging the receipt of various commissions, indentures, and the like, from the attorney-general.³ This was the work of a subordinate civil servant. Lastly we may mention a petition from the city of Bristol to the king, dated late into 1530, on which there appear a few corrections in Cromwell's hand.⁴ This might suggest that he handled such

1. Cavendish, Wolsey, p.180.

2. P.R.O. SP 1/286, f.307 (L.P. Add.687).

3. P.R.O. SP 1/58, ff.19-22 (L.P. iv.6598).

4. L.P. Add.705. An inspection of the original has failed to reveal any significance in the corrections.

petitions before they reached the king, offering advice on details of phrasing, or even that he received petitions for the king, but it is much more likely that he was only approached by the petitioners as a person suitable for that sort of thing, and that the document in fact belonged to his private legal practice which included the drawing up of petitions to the council.¹ Thus the picture which we must have of Cromwell in the first year after Wolsey's fall is composed largely of work for Wolsey, for himself, and in parliament, with the first faint beginnings of a career in the royal service.²

The picture changes with quite dramatic suddenness at the beginning of 1531. To this extent we may credit the stories of Chapuys and Pole: there certainly seems to have

1. E.g., ibid. 666.

2. We have not included in the evidence for Cromwell's activities a letter from Richard Strote to Dr. Lee, requesting him to see Cromwell about the succession to the Staffordshire priory of Calwich (P.R.O. SP 1/37, ff.60-1). This letter is calendared under 6 April 1530 (L.P. iv.6313). We believe it to belong to 1531, for these reasons: (1) The answer to Strote's letter is L.P. v.277, written in May 1531, not 1530. (2) The letter is addressed to Dr. Lee, chaplain to the king. Brewer's index makes it plain that he thought this to mean Edward Lee; we suggest it meant Rowland whom we meet as Cromwell's agent in monastic affairs in 1532-3, and who was not chaplain to the king until 1531 (D.N.B., xi.815a). (3) Calwich was suppressed by agreement with the founder's heir on 27 April 1532 (L.P. v.696). This heir is reported to be claiming rights of presentation in L.P. iv.6313; it seems unreasonable to suppose that the suppression, agreed on clearly because of the vacancy, should have come two full years after the last prior's death.

been a point at which Cromwell became a man of some importance about the court, and the change seems to have been expressed in his appointment as councillor. This mode of address was first used in a letter dated 10 January 1531,¹ and it became normal after that. But the exact degree of importance, the actual influence exercised on policy, can again only be established by a scrutiny of Cromwell's correspondence and an analysis of his work.

Wolsey was dead, and there was no more work to be done on his behalf. The colleges continued to trouble Cromwell, but not so frequently as before. His pleasure was requested when the king wrote to what was now to be called King's Collogo, Oxford, for the next avoidance of the place of beadle at law; he continued to supervise the college accounts and finances; people farming the college lands bothered him with their affairs; when the dean died the canons would do nothing without consulting him.² He was one of the trustees at the re-founding of the college.³ Although it was not until 1532 that he was officially appointed the king's receiver-general and supervisor of the lands lately belonging to the colleges,⁴ he looked after the collection of rents from these lands all through 1531.⁵ But this business was

1. L.P. v.38.

2. Ibid. 196, 334, 341, 228, 899, 1632, 1647.

3. Rymer, Foedera, xiv.443.

4. L.P. v.701.

5. Ibid. 83, 174-5, 273, 842.

no longer in the foreground, and it came to occupy less and less of his attention.

Private affairs continue to play their part in the correspondence. Cromwell bought and rented lands and houses in these years and began his building activities in London,¹ he did not allow his private legal practice to drop altogether,² his business enterprises in Flanders were not yet at an end,³ there were still a good many private letters mixed up with the more official correspondence.⁴ But while an occasional letter of appeal for help or patronage still does not suggest any official powers in the person appealed to,⁵ the large majority - and they are a very large number - request things which only a man in favour and power at the court could be expected to procure.⁶ Cromwell's growing importance is illustrated by the fact that people seeking his favours included now such men as the earl of Huntingdon, Sir Nicholas Carew (master of the king's horse), Sir John Gage (vice-chamberlain of the household), Christopher Hales (attorney-general), the earl of Essex, and the duke of Suffolk.⁷

1. Ibid. 671, 679, 963, 1028, 1065(33), 1562, 1192, 1339, 1435, 1442, 1454, 1464, 1573, 1723.

2. Ibid. 142, 172, 386, 440-2, 499, 541, 620, 672, 1161.

3. Ibid. 311, 808.

4. A few references will suffice: ibid. 15-22, 212, 479, 496, 591.

5. Ibid. 279, 338, 359, 481, 644, 840.

6. Such letters occur constantly from 1531 onwards; there are something like 200 in L.P. v (1531-2) alone.

7. L.P. v. 323, 429, 538, 620, 945, 1403.

The bulk of Cromwell's correspondence now concerned royal and official business. The corporation of Salisbury appealed for a gaol delivery which they thought long overdue;¹ Cromwell received advance information on legal suitors coming to appeal to him;² he was joined with the king's legal officers in executing the king's legal business;³ alone or with others he heard and adjudged legal appeals;⁴ prisoners and felons were brought to his notice and disposed of at his pleasure.⁵ It was as one engaged on legal business for the king that he now began to be the king's agent for parliament and legislation.⁶ Even when he was with the king at Calais in September and October 1532 he was consulted by people at home on

1. Ibid. 182.
2. Ibid. 23,298,360.
3. Ibid. 627(18).
4. Ibid. 507,668-70,759,793,1057,1298.
5. Ibid. 830,1092,1139(18),1120; L.P. Add.771.
6. Cf. L.P. v.394 for instructions to Cromwell on such matters. A case has been made out for supposing that he was engaged as early as the beginning of 1531 on the revision of treason bills to be submitted to parliament (I.D.Thornley, "The Treason Legislation of Henry VIII," Trans.R.Hist.Soc., 1917, pp.87ff.). Miss Thornley based her case on her claim that the corrections on all five extant drafts of the treason act are in Cromwell's hand, and she quotes the support of Mr. Brodie for her assumption. It is, however, quite certain that on only two of the drafts the corrections are in Cromwell's hand, nearly all the remainder being in that of lord chancellor Audeley. There is some superficial resemblance between their handwritings, but the difference is really quite clear. Cromwell's writing is more regular and inclines slightly to the right, and is invariably easily read, whereas Audeley's is usually upright and more of a scrawl. Audeley also used a number of orthographical peculiarities which never occur in Cromwell's writing (e.g., the plural ending in -z and the use of "yt" for "that"), and employs a small c which is quite different from Cromwell's. There are other smaller differences. The only drafts of the treason act corrected

legal matters.¹

In addition, he began to be active about the royal revenues and possessions. He is frequently found receiving grants of land to the king's use,² and he was, for instance, the king's agent in the exchange of lands by which Henry acquired the manor of Pishow from lord Scrope for Anne Boleyn.³ He supervised the king's works at Westminster and the Tower of London.⁴ When Sir John Russell wanted repairs done at the manor of the More Henry refused to do anything without seeing Cromwell first.⁵ The first sign of Cromwell handling the king's money is an entry of £13.6.8 which he received for the building of the king's tomb on 31 December 1530.⁶ In 1531 he is found supervising the collection of revenues from the vacant sees of Coventry and Lichfield, and of the clerical subsidy.⁷ However, his full activities as a financial minister did not begin until his appointment as master of the king's jewels on 14 April 1532.⁸

. by Cromwell were those called by Miss Thornley A2 and A3, i.e. the two drafts prepared for the session of 1532 in accordance with the instructions received in L.P. v.394.

1. L.P. v. 1444, 1446, 1450, 1476.

2. Ibid. 285, 409, 814, 1136, 1309, 1445, 1470, 1537, 1571, 1580-1, 1607, 1611, 1684.

3. Ibid. 915-6, 1015, 1445. Cf. statute 25 Henry VIII c.31.

4. L.P. v.260, 1086, 1467, 1487, 1719, 1781.

5. Ibid. 976.

6. Sir Harris Nicolas, Privy Purse Expenses, p.101.

7. L.P. v.277, 332, 848-9, 1475.

8. Ibid. 978(13).

All these activities show that Cromwell was entrusted with a growing amount of legal and financial business, but such work is, after all, the field of an executive agent, of an administrator, and does not imply any connection with the shaping of policy. So far, nothing has been found to justify Merriman's assumption that before 1533 Cromwell was already the moving spirit behind Henry's anti-papal policy. On the contrary, one thing has emerged clearly enough. Cromwell's work shows him to have gradually risen in the king's estimation and to have gradually attracted to himself more and more of the administrative detail of government. He built up a position of power and influence by degrees and did not achieve it at one bound. Nor did he gain this position by presenting some plan of policy but by close attention to the routine work of administration.

In October 1532 he accompanied the king on his expedition to Calais and Boulogne, and the work he did in connection with that enterprise shows where he stood at the time when his apprenticeship was drawing to a close. In the main, he was employed on details of preparation and finance.¹ It is also clear that he was still working his way up, for it was thought worthy of remark that he had managed to acquire golden opinions

1. Ibid. 1237, 1239, 1297, 1298-9, 1392, 1600.

with both kings.¹ He remained close to the king, but even while he was out of England he was careful to keep in touch with affairs there.² In January 1532 he could deprecate his own importance in a letter to Gardiner, reporting Henry as saying that Gardiner's absence was "the lacke of my right hand, for I am now so moche pestred with busynes and haue nobodie to rydde ne depeche the same".³ But in August that year Gardiner wrote to him: "I sende vnto youe herwith...the treaty with fraunce and a commission signed redy to be sealed to the doing wherof ye must necessarily helpe or it shal I feare me be vndoon."⁴ It seems that during this year 1532 the king's right hand was changing identity, though there is no reason to suppose that Henry was not master of his brain and originator of his own policy. It is in connection with the French treaty and the Boulogne meeting that we get a glimpse of Cromwell acting in a more than purely executive capacity when a draft letter on the "king's great matter" was sent to him for correction with a view to leaving out things too secret to be communicated to the French.⁵ However, this piece of evidence comes late in the period under review, and

1. P.R.O. SP 1/72, ff.11-12 (L.P. v.1509), Alvard to Cromwell: "Also I am veray glad to here the good Reaporte howe the Kynges grace hath you in so great favour, And the ffrenche King also."

2. L.P. v. 1457-8, 1467, 1472, 1513.

3. Ibid. 723 (Merriman, i.344).

4. P.R.O. SP 1/70, ff.230-1 (L.P. v.1245).

5. L.P. v.1305, letter of 9 September 1532.

in general the case is clear enough. Cromwell rose gradually in the royal service and was an agent rather than an originator of policy until about the middle of 1532.

We must yet deal with the negotiations which Stephen Vaughan, Cromwell's friend, carried on with William Tyndale in Flanders in 1531, negotiations of which Merriman made a good deal.¹ It was his view that Cromwell needed an "intelligent and consistent ally to help him carry out his schemes of 'political Protestantism'", and hoped to find him in Tyndale whose "Obedience of a Christian Man" advocated the policy of subjecting the church to the king which Merriman held was peculiarly Cromwell's. Henry had denounced Tyndale's books, in particular his translation of the bible, in the star chamber on 25 May 1530,² and at first sight it would indeed seem, in Merriman's words, that "the fact that Cromwell was able to persuade the King to permit him to attempt" the enlistment of Tyndale "is a good proof of his influence with Henry". Yet it is certain that what we have so far seen of Cromwell's activities and position early in 1531 makes it difficult to believe that he had any such influence.

The story of the negotiations is simple. On 26 January 1531 Vaughan wrote from Bergen-op-Zoom that in accordance with instructions, perhaps received before he left England at

1. Merriman, i.99ff.

2. Hall, Chronicle, p.771.

the end of November 1530,¹ he was trying to get in touch with Tyndale. On 25 March he had a copy of Tyndale's "Answer" to More the printing of which he was hoping to hold up, and on 18 April and 20 May he reported conversations with Tyndale which seemed to indicate that the reformer might at last begin to trust Henry's promises.² But some time in May Cromwell wrote a violent letter to Vaughan, describing Henry's anger at Tyndale's latest book and ordering an immediate end to the negotiations.³ Despite this command Vaughan once more resorted to the business,⁴ but any chance of bringing Tyndale back to England was obviously gone.

The question of who was the prime mover in the affair can be answered if it can be established what advantage was expected from having Tyndale in England, and how and why the business fell through. Vaughan usually reported to the king, but occasionally also to Cromwell whose friend and servant he was. He was not at the time in the king's service, and the original reason for his living in Flanders was that he had business there as a merchant adventurer. The fact that he was used might therefore suggest that the idea of enlisting Tyndale originated with Cromwell who may have pointed out to Henry that he had a good man on the spot, a man moreover with

1. J.F.Mozley, William Tyndale, p.187.

2. L.P. v.65, 153, 201, 246.

3. Ibid. 248.

4. Ibid. 303.

decidedly reformist leanings.¹ On the other hand, the idea of employing pamphleteers, of finding men able to support "the king's great matter" by word and pen, was older than the Tyndale affair. The speed with which Cranmer's suggestion of asking the universities for their opinions was adopted by Henry shows how readily his mind embraced such methods of warfare, and this strategy of collecting and publishing opinions was still going on while Vaughan was trying to win Tyndale. The addition of another writer to the team who were propagating Henry's point of view would not have marked a new departure in policy.

The king himself directed the negotiations. Vaughan was commissioned to obtain "the knowlage of such thinges as your magestie commaunded me to lerne and practise in these parties, and therof taduertise youe",² he received his instructions "from my Maister maister Cromwell, at the comaundement of your magestie",³ and though Cromwell was his usual channel to the king he was not the only one.⁴ No-one wanted Tyndale's help because he was a reformer. The argument which Cromwell put forward in the king's name was that "if it were possible by good and holosome exhortacions to reconsile and

1. Cf. *ibid.* 574 for Vaughan's religious views.

2. B.M. Galba B.x, f.46 (*L.P.* v.65).

3. P.R.O. SP 1/65, f.271 (*L.P.* v.246).

4. B.M. Galba B.x, f.47 (*L.P.* v.65): "Wheras I lately apperceyued by certeyn letteres directed to me from Maister ffitzwilliam, tre[sourer] of your householde...".

conuert the saide Tyndale from the trayne and affection whiche he is nowe in, and so to excerpto and tooke awaye the opynyons and fantasies sorely rooted in hym, I doubt not but the Kynges highnes wolde be much ioyous of his conuersion and amondement. And so being conuerted, if he then wolde return into this Realme, vndoubtedly the Kynges royall magestie is so inclyned to mercie, pitie, and compassion that he refuseth none whiche he seythe to submyt them self to the obedyence and good order of the world".¹ Tyndale would first have to recant. The reason why he steadfastly refused Vaughan's overtures was that he knew too much of the persecution of heretics then going on in England,² and when Vaughan was told to turn his attention to Frith it was made plain that an abjuration of Lutheran views was the first condition of the king's mercy.³ There were no "schemes of political Protestantism" behind the negotiations.

The king terminated the business when it became clear that no help for the divorce was likely to come from Tyndale who had just condemned it in his "Practice of Prelates". This book, though published before Vaughan left England, probably did not reach Henry until some time later.⁴ The book against More clinched the matter; this was no possible

1. P.R.O. SP 1/65, f.271 (L.P. v.246).

2. L.P. v.65, 201.

3. Merriman, 1.338.

4. J.F.Mozley, William Tyndale, pp.163ff.; R.Demaus, Tyndale, pp.282f.

meek advocate of the royal views.¹ Henry personally controlled the negotiations while they went on and personally decreed their end, and Cromwell was but an agent of the royal will, though an agent on a rather larger scale and in a more important matter than any we have so far seen him connected with. It becomes reasonable to suppose that Cromwell was the moving spirit in the affair only if he is assumed to have already achieved a position of influence, but such an argument moves in circles. Cromwell was still working his way up, and his fear that a false step might ruin a position as yet very precarious best explains the almost hysterical tone in which he communicated to Vaughan the king's orders to drop the matter.

Thus, notwithstanding the presence around the king of such great men as the duke of Norfolk, Gardiner, and the Boleyns, Henry had no chief minister between Wolsey's fall and about the middle of 1532. By then he had found and tested another man who could be trusted with the multifarious details of domestic administration and with the delicate manipulation of a diplomacy which relied on keeping in with both France and the emperor, and who had moreover an original mind and a policy of his own which Henry found to his liking. The revolution which began on 3 November 1529 with the meeting

1. Merriman, i.335ff.

of the Reformation parliament may have been Cromwellian from the start in that the things done agreed with what we know of Cromwell's political views, but they agreed equally well with the imperious will of the king. Furthermore - though this would take us too far into a field which we have purposely excluded from the present study - a good case can be made out from the statute book for the view that Cromwell's arrival to power at the end of 1532 resulted in a new forcefulness and a wider sweep in the measures taken to break with Rome and subject the church to the crown which go far to prove that his influence on policy must be rated very low until that time. The evidence of his correspondence has shown a gradual increase in the amount of business handled by him, a gradual spreading of his influence over different spheres of the king's affairs, a gradual accumulation of duties and responsibilities on his shoulders. There were definite stages in his rise to power under the king, points at which his position appears crystallised for a moment and from which the upward path assumed a different aspect. These stages, which are simply significant points reached by Cromwell in the administrative organisation, must now be ascertained and as far as is possible dated.

II. The Stages of his Rise.

In October 1529 Cromwell's position was very serious. It seemed inevitable that the cardinal's fall should also involve his servant and agent, his "asseccla" as Pole called him.¹ He himself appeared for a moment to have given way to despair, though the mood did not last and was soon replaced by more characteristic features, purpose and energy.² If Pole can be believed, people were clamouring for his head and the rumour went round London that he had been sent to the Tower and was to be executed.³ Vaughan, in Flanders, was very worried: "I...am greatly in doubt how youe ar intreated in this sadyn ouerthrow of my lorde, your master. I neuer longed so sore to here from youe as now."⁴ He assured Cromwell of any service it was in his power to render and advised him "to praye to god to lende youe a constant and pacient mynde, not doubtyng that ye shall...escape without any daungier." This was on 30 October 1529; three months later, on 3 February 1530, he wrote again, in answer apparently to Cromwell's reply to the letter just quoted: "I...was therby assertheyned all thinges to haue succeeded euyn as I desired. Youe now saile in a sùre havyn."⁵

1. Pole, Apologia, p.121.

2. Cavendish, Wolsey, pp.169ff.

3. Pole, loc.cit.

4. P.R.O. SP 1/55, f.246 (L.P. iv.6063).

5. P.R.O. SP 1/56, f.252 (L.P. iv.6196).

What steps had Cromwell taken so to alter his position? He left Esher on 1 November 1520, determined - in his favourite phrase - to make or mar, and promising Cavendish that he would shortly hear from him again. He returned two or three days later, and when he came to Esher "with a pleasaunt countenance" he told Cavendish that he "had once adventured to put in his feete, where he would be better regarded, or ever the parliament were finished".¹ He had entered parliament, and the manner of his entry is of considerable importance to us as it helps to explain his "pleasaunt countenance" and air of hopefulness.

Cavendish asserts that Cromwell changed places at the last moment with the son of Thomas Rush who had been elected as a burgess to the Reformation parliament.² Fantastic though this sounds, there is at least one known case of such an exchange being effected.³ Cavendish adds a good deal of circumstantial detail, claiming that he saw Cromwell ride off from Esher in the evening of 1 November together with Ralph Sadler, his clerk; yet he was mistaken.⁴ At four o'clock on that very day Sadler wrote a letter from London which cannot possibly have been meant for anybody but Cromwell.⁵

1. Cavendish, Wolsey, pp.177,180.

2. Ibid. 179.

3. Cf. A.F.Pollard, "A Changeling M.P.," Full., x.20ff.

4. Cavendish, Wolsey, 177.

5. B.M. Cleop.E.iv, f.178 (L.P. iv, App.238). The leaf with the address is missing. The letter is printed in full by Merri-man (i.67f.), with one small but important mistake.

He had been to the court and had spoken to Sir John Gage, the vice-chamberlain, "and according to your commaundement moved him to speke vnto my lorde of Norffolk for the burgeses Rowme of the parlyament on your behalf... Wherevppon my saide lorde of Norffolk answered the saide Master Gage that he had spoken with the king his highnes and that his highnes was veray well contented ye should be a Burges, So that ye wolde order yourself in the saide Rowme according to suche instructions as the saide Duke of Norffolk shall gyue you from the king". Cromwell was to come to London to discuss matters with the duke, and possibly with the king himself; Sadler's language is not quite clear on that point. "As touching Master Russhe ...I will speke with him this night, god willing, and know whether ye shalbe Burges of Orforde¹ or not. And if you be not elect there I will then, according to your ferther commaundement, repayre vnto Master paulet and requiere him to name you to be one of the Burgeses of one of my lordes townes of his busshopriche of Wynchester."

There are here two distinct points. The king's approval was sought for Cromwell's entry into parliament, but neither

1. This is the correct reading, as the original proves beyond a doubt (cf. also A.F. Pollard in Bull., x.24). Both L.P. and Merriman misread "Oxford". Orford also makes sense where Oxford does not; Rush had no connection with the latter, but he (a Suffolk man) was styled burges of Orford in 1521 (H.M.C., Var. Coll., iv.274), and his son had property there in 1538 (ibid. 259).

the king nor Norfolk had anything to do with the actual provision of a seat. There was no question of official patronage. Both the men appealed to were old friends of Cromwell's; Rush had been associated with him the the establishment of Wolsey's college at Ipswich,¹ and Paulet had been a servant of Wolsey's before he entered the royal service as master of the wards and was still active on Wolsey's behalf in June 1530.² Although Orford, in Suffolk, may be regarded as falling within the duke of Norfolk's general sphere of influence, there is no evidence of any direct connection between duke and borough until 1532 when Norfolk was granted some land there which had once belonged to the priory of Snape at Aldeborough.³ As for the alternative, some borough belonging to the bishop of Winchester, the king might be thought to have held all such boroughs when it is remembered that Wolsey had surrendered all his possessions to the crown.⁴ But an inquisition held after 14 July 1530 declared Wolsey to be still bishop of Winchester and seized of certain manors,⁵ even though the bishopric was not included in the restoration of some of his possessions and he only drew a pension from it in 1530. We must also note a clear distinction between the two possibilities in the wording

1. L.P. iv.1024(vi), 4598. Cf. also ibid. 6110.

2. Ibid. 6436, 6438.

3. L.P. v.1207(37); H.M.C., Var.Coll., iv.279; V.C.H., Suff., ii.79.

4. L.P. iv.6017.

5. Ibid. 6516(13).

of Sadler's letter. As far as Orford is concerned he will find out whether there is a chance or not, and failing Orford he will require Paulet to provide Cromwell with a seat, and although "requiere" may be no more than "ask" it yet is plain that there was no such doubt about the second alternative as about the first. It is probable that Cromwell hoped to enter parliament without using his connection with Wolsey, and that Sadler was therefore instructed to try the less certain way first. The mention of Rush incidentally helps to explain the origin of Cavendish's story; he presumably heard a garbled version of the truth in which the name occurred, and he drew his own conclusions. The most important point about the letter is that Sadler had received his orders before the king's approval had been obtained. This makes it certain that no help was expected from the king in the finding of a seat.

In the end Cromwell sat for Taunton.¹ Considering only the diocesan boundaries, Professor Pollard came to the conclusion that neither of Cromwell's approaches succeeded, thus leaving it open how he managed to secure that particular seat.² Later, however, he seems to have seen the significance of the constituency, though he did not work the matter out completely.³

1. Official Returns, i.370.

2. A.F. Pollard, Henry VIII, pp.254f.; Fact, in Mod. Hist., p.120.

3. Cf. Bull., x.24.

Taunton was, as a matter of fact, one of the oldest and most valuable possessions of the see of Winchester. There exist Saxon charters which claim that it was given to Winchester as early as 721, and as late as the seventeenth century it produced about a third of the see's enormous income.¹ As lords of the manor the bishops appointed the bailiff for town and borough who made the return of elected members, as the earliest extant, from the reign of Mary, show.² Winchester influence was thus supreme at Taunton, and Cromwell actually sat for the pick of the Winchester boroughs. Though Rush could do nothing for him, Paulet responded nobly. Nor need it surprise us that Cromwell could be slipped in at so late a stage, on the day before parliament met. It was not unusual for a return to be made after the opening of parliament, and Taunton itself was not in time for the sheriff's return in 1543.³ One may well suppose a similar vacancy in the return for 1529, Taunton possibly having left the appointment of at least one of its members to Paulet who appears to have had a personal connection with the town.⁴

Cromwell, then, did not rely on the king or Norfolk to get him into parliament, but he sought their approval, or rather, he sought the king's and used Norfolk to obtain it.

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1. R.G.Hedworth Whitty, History of Taunton, pp.1,182,287.
 2. J.Toulmin, History of Taunton, pp.307f.
 3. Cf. A.F.Pollard, in Bull., x.24.
 4. L.P. iv.5407.

Merriman thought that he tried to win the favour of the new minister, that he went "straight over to his [Wolsey's] bitterest enemy".¹ This seems a misreading of the situation. The favour which Cromwell was after was higher and more important than any the duke of Norfolk could bestow. It was not the duke whom Cromwell wished to serve, but the king. His main ambition in entering parliament was to prove his usefulness to Henry and win his approbation. No doubt, there were other reasons why he should wish to take part in the important business which everybody could see would be dealt with in the parliament which met in 1529,² and Cromwell who had sat in 1523 may have acquired a liking for, and some efficiency in, the work of a member. But his chief reason for wishing to sit in parliament was surely that there he would be able to live down the associations of the past and would have a chance of building a new career. As he had told Cavendish, he wished to be "better regarded". Entering parliament was something in itself; entering it with the king's approval was everything.

Cromwell's entry into parliament now appears to us as the first definite step in his rise to power. It was the point at which the new allegiance became possible, though the old

1. Merriman, i.68f.

2. The French ambassador, e.g., foresaw, that the priests would have "terrible alarms" in this parliament (L.P. iv.6019).

was not apparently thrown away.¹ It marked the transition from danger to safety and was clearly the starting point of his career. He had seemed set on the road to fortune as Wolsey's right-hand man, but the cardinal's fall proved this to have been a false start and Cromwell now began again.

His next step was to enter the royal service, that is to say, to become the king's servant in the technical sense. It cannot be stressed too strongly that such a title implied a definite recognised status.² The master-servant relationship governed much of the social and political life of the country, and it was bad for a man to be masterless.³ Retainers no longer composed those large armed bodies of men

1. The story that Cromwell was responsible for the defeat of Wolsey's attainder in the commons has been told often enough (Cavendish, Wolsey, p.180; Merriman, i.69f.; A.Innes, England under the Tudors, p.122). Prof.Pollard (Wolsey, pp. 261f.) doubts its truth. But there seems no reason to think of it as wholly false, though it is fairly certain that even if Cromwell took Wolsey's part he was not risking Henry's displeasure. It seems that the case was really settled in the king's bench and that the parliamentary proceedings resulted from the excessive zeal of Wolsey's special enemies (K.Pickthorn, Henry VIII, p.143). Henry was not among these but Norfolk was, so that Cromwell's defence of Wolsey supplies one more reason for supposing that he sought the king's favour rather than the duke's.
2. In answer to Mr. Pickthorn (Henry VIII, p.130) it must be said that king's servants ought to have meant to Edward Hall something more definite than either "capitalists' hirelings" or "Mr. Baldwin's followers", and that probably it did.
3. Cf. L.P. v.588, where Sir John Gage discusses the case of a man whom he had dismissed from his service without so far providing him with a new master.

who had fought their lords' private wars in the fifteenth century, but every nobleman and many a gentleman still had his servants who frequently wore livery and were sworn to the service of their master, such service now consisting more commonly in keeping his accounts or collecting his rents, or in improving his social position by increasing his household, than in despatching his enemies.¹ In the political sphere a man's servants were his secretariat. The case of Wolsey, who built up a civil service from within his own household, is well known, and even before his fall some of his servants had changed masters and become the king's servants so that the training and knowledge acquired in the cardinal's affairs were put at the disposal of the state. Henry realised the possibilities offered by such an experienced body of men, and as early as 1 November 1529 Sadler reported to Cromwell: "dyuers of my lorde his seruauntes, as Master Aluarde, Master Sayntclerc, Master fforest, Humfrey lisle, Master Mores, & other, ben elect and sworne the king his seruauntes."² The

1. Apart from household servants, retainers of the old type no longer existed. Charged at his fall with keeping them, Cromwell claimed that he had not transgressed because, although he had been compelled by friends to increase his household by many rising young men, their parents "found them", i.e. paid for their keep (L.P. xv.776). Thus when a young man, a knight's son, wished to enter Cromwell's service, his father promised to "furnish him to do you service like an honest man" (L.P. x.206).

2. B.M. Cleop.E.iv, f.211 (L.P. iv, App.238).

phrase demonstrates clearly enough the formal, quasi-feudal, nature of the transaction.¹

The king's servants were not necessarily about the court or engaged on the king's immediate business. Among the people to whom the title was given we find the mayor and an ex-mayor of Oxford who benefited from their status to the tune of four-pence a day.² While their case illustrates one of the advantages to be derived from being the king's servant, a different and to us more important aspect is shown in a letter from Sir Thomas Percy, brother of the earl of Northumberland, who in July 1535 declared to Cromwell his desire to become the king's servant because his brother was not treating him fairly;³ by entering the king's service he hoped to get the king's protection and support. Cromwell, in 1530, had a similar reason for the same desire. If he wanted to get on he had to attach himself to some person of importance. We saw that on the occasion of his entering parliament he had decided to go as high as possible, and he must early have realised the importance of becoming the king's servant. That he achieved this and was properly sworn of the king's service is proved by a grant of January 1533 to Thomas Cromwell, king's servant and councillor.⁴

1. It is true, however, that in one case a man claimed to be Cromwell's servant by the simple fact of being receiver of certain lands which Cromwell had acquired (L.P. xiv.II.298).

2. L.P. xiii.I.1342.

3. L.P. viii.1143(4).

4. L.P. vi.105(13).

It is, however, difficult to establish the date of this step. There exists a letter from Reynold Lytylprow of Norwich, dated 6 February and placed into 1531 by the editors of the Letters and Papers, in which he told Cromwell that "I do here that yow be the Kynges sarvand & In hys heye favor".¹ The year of the letter was probably determined on the basis of the only other sentence of importance it contains: "I do here saye that my Lorde Cardenall ys ded wyche I thynke ys not trewe." If this referred to a true report of Wolsey's death, which took place in November 1530, it must be said that news seems to have been slow in travelling to Norfolk, for two months after it happened such an event ought to have been known for certain. On the other hand, the reference may have been to a false report, for it is quite possible that Wolsey's death was being rumoured freely in the period after his disgrace, and moreover he was very ill in January 1530.² In that case we ought to date Lytylprow's letter into February 1530. One thing, at any rate, this letter makes certain: Cromwell did not enter the king's service before the prorogation of parliament on 17 December 1529,³ for Lytylprow, who sat for

1. P.R.O. SP 1/65, f.132 (L.P. v.86).

2. L.P. iv.6151.

3. Parliament was prorogued several times from 17 December 1529 to 16 January 1531 (cf., e.g., P.R.O. DL 28/7, no.1, f.15). This despite Pickthorn's statement, quoting Busche, that it was prorogued from 5 December 1529 (Henry VIII, p.132).

Norwich,¹ would have known about^{it} and would not have written later after returning home as though it were news.

Hall states that Cromwell left Wolsey and entered the royal service about the time of Wolsey's journey north, that is about April 1530.² Opposed to this is Lytelprow's letter if it was written in 1530, and also Vaughan's statement on 3 February 1530 that he had heard that Cromwell was to be included in Rocheford's embassy then about to leave for France.³ The report was mistaken but it could hardly have been made about a man not in the king's service. The king's ambassadors were either king's servants or king's councillors, and we know for certain that Cromwell was not as yet the latter. The most we can therefore say concerning the exact date of Cromwell's entry into the king's service is that it took place after 17 December 1529 and before April-May 1530, and is likely to have occurred early in 1530. Perhaps we shall not go far wrong if suspect that it came shortly after the end of the 1529 session and that it was a result of Cromwell's activities in parliament which he had entered with the king's approval and pledged to obey the king's instructions. The fact that he worked so largely for Wolsey in 1530 is no argument against this date. Quite apart from the advantages

1. Official Returns, i.370.

2. Hall, Chronicle, p.769.

3. L.P. iv.6196.

in money and standing which this work gave him, he would have undertaken it for any client and more particularly for his old master.

Though he was now the king's servant he had a good way to go yet. A letter from John Russell to Cromwell, dated 1 June 1530, gives a pretty clear picture of Cromwell's position at the time.¹ The king had asked Russell ("knowyng the greate famylyaryte and also you my speciall ffrende") to ask Cromwell "that yt wold please you" to make out a patent for the lord chamberlain of the keepership of Farnham castle which was in Wolsey's gift. "And also he desyryd you to sende hym the fforme of A Letter how the kyng shuld wryte to my Lord Cardenall for his Consent of the same & for his signe and seale, praying you that you wold send yt to my Lorde Chamberlayne as shortly as you can. And also that you wold sende hym worde whether my Lorde Cardenall haue the seale of Wynchester or ellis the Chauncelor of Wynchester." Russell enclosed a friendly letter of his own to be forwarded to Wolsey, and continued: "After your departure from the Kyng his grace hadd very good Comvnycacion of you, whiche I shall aduertise you at owr next metyng."

This letter shows Cromwell in the king's service, drafting a letter patent for a royal grant, and it also shows him as the

1. P.R.O. SP 1/57, f.145 (L.P. iv.6420).

link between court and cardinal. Both the king and Russell were using him as intermediary with Wolsey. The polite and friendly tone of the letter, conveying a royal request rather than a command, may be ascribed more to Russell than to Henry, but it shows that Cromwell was by then a man whom a courtier would be well-advised and ready to address with courtesy. Of greater importance is the little sentence "After your departure from the Kyng his grace hadd very good Comvnycacion of you", which proves that Cromwell had, on the one hand, such freedom of access to the king that it caused no surprise to see them together,¹ and on the other was still much in need of being recommended to Henry by other men. He was still trying to prove his worth.

On 27 November 1530 a correspondent wrote to tell him that "I am enformed that you wer in grete troble for my Lorde cardynall causes and matters, whiche right sore dyd greve me. Howbeit, sithen I haue had comfortable tydynges that you be in fauour hille with the Kynges grace, lordes, and comunyaltie aswell spirituall as temporall".² Hall tells us that Crom-

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1. Cf. Wolsey's words in August: "...and hauyng suche means of access to the Kynges presens..." (State Papers, Henry VIII, i.371). Such statements increase one's doubts of the stories told by Chapuys, Pole, and Foxe all of whom imply that Cromwell jumped into prominence after his first interview with the king.
 2. P.R.O. SP 1/68, f.65 (L.P. v.551). The letter is dated 1531 in L.P., with a note that it may be 1530. In 1531 Cromwell's troubles on Wolsey's account were over by two years which would have made a reference to them rather pointless.

well was "newly come to the fauor of the kyng" in January 1531.¹ There are indications, then, that towards the end of 1530 Cromwell took another step forward by entering the royal favour as well as the royal service, and indeed we know already how this step was expressed administratively. Cromwell became a member of the council.

The nature of the king's council at the time of Wolsey's fall is discussed in another place.² Here, a bare outline will have to suffice. Professor Pollard has told us that though there was a large number of consiliarii in the reign of Henry VII who were "simply retained to give legal or ghostly counsel" the king selected a smaller number "who were appointed for life, sat with some regularity, were admitted on oath to an organised council, and were paid the regular councillor's fee", and that "Henry VIII had clearly as large and varied an assortment of councillors as his father".³ The council of the early part of the reign was, we have been assured, not a definite body but "such team of councillors as the king was then in the habit of consulting".⁴ Recent discoveries seem to indicate that there was more definition, less royal caprice or accident of circumstance, about the

1. Hall, Chronicle, p.775.

2. Cf. below, Chapter 5, Section I.

3. A.F.Pollard, in E.H.R., xxxvii (1922), pp.356ff.

4. K.Pickthorn, Henry VIII, p.12.

composition of the council.¹ It now seems clear that "there was a king's council, not just king's counsel, that the king's council functioned as an institution and was not just a loose body of royal advisers".² All that can here be said with any certainty about the council at the time of Cromwell's entry into it is that the council which transacted the normal day-to-day business of the government did not normally include all the king's councillors and tended to be composed more and more of certain of their number, either because they held high office of state or because the nature of their employment - for instance, an office in the royal household - necessitated their close attendance on the king.

Cromwell, then, became a councillor towards the end of 1530. We have seen that though he continued to be mainly occupied with minor administrative duties the volume of official business which he transacted grew immensely. To this extent the accounts of Chapuys and Foxe, and also of Pole if his interview story can be dated to the end of 1530, were right, and Cromwell began to be of importance when he became a councillor, though they romanticised and dramatised the manner of his appointment.³ An indication of his place in

1. W.H.Dunham Jr., "The Ellesmere Extracts from the 'Acta Consilii' of King Henry VIII", E.H.R., lvi (1943), pp.301ff.

2. Ibid., p.302.

3. What part did Cromwell play in achieving the first submission of the clergy in January 1531? Foxe (Acts and Monuments, v.367f.) makes him alone responsible, but Lord Herbert

the government is conveyed by the "Instructions yoven by the Kinges Highnes unto his trusty Counsaillor Thomas Cromwell, to be declared on his behalf to his Lerved Counsaill and in-delayedlie to be put in executyon" in the Michaelmas Term 1531,¹ which show Cromwell supervising the king's legal business, preparations for parliament, and similar matters which would be entrusted to a purely executive minister. His councillorship did not make him the leader of the council, the king's chief minister, as Chapuys, Pole, and Foxe would have us believe. But he was gradually approaching the heights. In November 1531 the Venetian ambassador, in his report on England, gave a list of the leading councillors which included Cromwell as the seventh of the eight men named.² The same report, however, also stated that Norfolk had been supreme since Wolsey's fall, every employment devolving upon him, an opinion which was fully shared by Chapuys.³ The fact that

(Henry VIII, p.348) says that "some of the King's Council together with Cromwel" persuaded convocation, a phrasing which might almost suggest that he did not think Cromwell was yet of the council. In the absence of contemporary evidence it is impossible to be certain on this point, but it may be suggested that the position in which we saw Cromwell at that time, and which is illustrated by contemporary documentary evidence rather than the words of a panegyrist, makes it unlikely that he played a more than subordinate part. He may have assisted; indeed, it is probable that he did; but he was not the leader in the business.

1. State Papers, Henry VIII, i.380 (L.P. v.394).
2. Gardiner being the last: Ven.Cal. iv.694.
3. Span.Cal. iv(i).292, 416, 460.

Cromwell was employed only in domestic affairs until the beginning of 1533 naturally obscured his growing importance to foreign observers who were more likely to come into contact with Norfolk, Wiltshire, Gardiner, and Fitzwilliam. In the circumstances, the Venetian ambassador's inclusion of Cromwell in the inner council is an earnest of the position achieved by Cromwell by the end of 1531. Whether he belonged to this inner circle from the start it is impossible to say for certain; we think it unlikely in view of the evidence which showed a gradual rise in the king's service and favour. At any rate, by the latter part of 1532 his position was such that experienced officials like Gardiner and Sir Francis Bryan addressed him as "of the Privy Council", and that he was included in the commissions of the peace together with other leading councillors, as the custom was.¹

Even more definite proof of this upward movement is the fact that in the year 1532 Cromwell laid the foundations of that large collection of offices which were to him source of both income and power. In April he was appointed master or treasurer of the king's jewels, and in July keeper or clerk of the hanaper of chancery.² Cromwell had made a position for himself sufficiently strong to allow of his holding

1. L.P. v.1245,1406; 1694(ii): Essex, Kent, Middlesex.
 2. Ibid. 978(13); 1207(36).

appointments and of his being one of the few more important members of the council, but still modest enough to prevent his snatching at any of the greater offices of state or household.

After his return with Henry from the meeting with Francis I at Boulogne, Cromwell seems to have taken the last step to achieve that place where Chapuys first took notice of him as a possible rival to Norfolk.¹ By April 1533 he was described as the man with the greatest influence over the king, and by November he was "ruling everything".² The long struggle for the king's favour was over. It was not by some magnificent plan and sudden inspiration, or by some hidden satanic influence, that Henry discovered the second great minister of his reign. By his hard work and efficiency Cromwell had proved himself in the king's service, showing himself a willing and skilful instrument of the royal policy. He worked his way up after establishing his personal safety by entering parliament with the king's approval, and his rise was bound up with definite positions within the administrative machine. King's servant, king's councillor, member of the inner council, treasurer of the jewels and other offices - these were the stages by which Cromwell reached supremacy

1. Span.Cal. iv(ii).601,618.

2. Ibid. 644; L.P. vi.1445.

in the king's government. He founded his career on his work as an executive minister and administrator rather than as a political adviser, a choice of ground which indicates where his peculiar abilities lay.

Chapter 2.

CROMWELL'S OFFICES.
-----I. Master of the Jewels.

Cromwell was appointed master or treasurer of the king's jewels by patent dated 14 April 1532.¹ He held the office till his death, though at some period of his career he surrendered his patent for a new one, made out jointly to himself and to John Williams, principal clerk of the jewels.² The exact date of this patent is not known as it merely names the regnal year, 27 Henry VIII, the year ending on 21 April 1536. It can be fixed a little more closely than that. The master of the jewels was paid by the exchequer, and the salary is recorded as going to Cromwell alone until Michaelmas 1536.³ The first year in which Cromwell and Williams were paid jointly was the exchequer year 1536-7.⁴ There is no mention of Williams as master of the jewels until the beginning of 1538 when a grant was made to Thomas Cromwell, keeper of the privy seal, and John Williams, treasurer of the king's jewels.⁵ The two offices are also noted separately in the list of new year's gifts in December 1538.⁶ After that time,

1. L.P. v.978(13).

2. L.P. x.776(1).

3. P.R.O. E 164/69.

4. P.R.O. E 405/203.

5. L.P. xiii.I.384(98).

6. B.M. Arundel MS 97: f.54v - lord privy seal; f.55 - master of the jewels.

references to Williams in his now office are frequent,¹ and there can be no doubt that he succeeded as sole master on Cromwell's death.² But the exchequer accounts make it certain that from 1537 to 1540 the office was held jointly by both.³ These accounts, made up at Michaelmas, were always a little behind the times: it was recorded at Michaelmas 1532 that the fee of the treasurer of the jewels went to Robert Amadas who had been dead for some six months,⁴ and in 1540 Cromwell was mentioned with Williams despite his execution three months earlier.⁵ The fact that Williams was not mentioned at Michaelmas 1536 is not, therefore, proof that the regnal year of the joint patent was wrong, but together with the fact that we do not find him called master of the jewels until a later date it goes far to prove that the joint appointment was made well towards the end of 27 Henry VIII, that is to say, about April 1536. In September 1535 Cromwell showed an interest in "the patent of the jewel house" and had a copy sent to himself by one of his servants.⁶ Presumably he was then beginning to think of sharing the office.

By a privy seal of 1485, the exchequer had been authorised to pay various household officials, among them the "keeper of

1. E.g., L.P., xiii.I.903; xiv.I.67-8, 905(8), 1354(14); II.780(20); xv.436(25).

2. Cf. D.N.B.; xxi.412b. His patent, if he was given a new one, has not survived.

3. P.R.O. E 405/203-5.

4. B.M. Add.MS 33376.

5. P.R.O. E 405/205.

6. L.P. ix.359, 372.

our jewels within our chamber".¹ The fee of the office as stated in the patent was £50 a year, to be paid in equal portions at Michaelmas and Lady Day,² and Cromwell's private accounts show that he received this sum and no more.³ It is not quite clear what happened after the appointment of two joint holders. One would suppose that the fee was divided, and indeed it was paid in equal parts, and separately, to Cromwell and Williams in 1537.⁴ For the remaining three years it was all paid into Williams' hands though it went supposedly to both,⁵ and we cannot be sure whether Williams kept the total or made over £25 to Cromwell. We may suppose that the latter happened, for there could hardly be any reason for Cromwell to continue holding such a minor office except the money which it brought him.

For it was a minor office, descended - as the privy seal already quoted indicates - from the office of the keeper of the

1. A.P. Newton, in E.H.R., xxxii(1917), p.349.

2. P.R.O. C 66/659, m.36.

3. L.P. vi.841: half year's fee of the jewel house - £25; ibid. ix.478: £75 for the period Michaelmas 1533 to Michaelmas 1535 (that is, £25 each at Lady Day 1534 and 1535 and at Michaelmas 1534, so that the exchequer must have been behind-hand with its payments). L.P. xi.135 gives Cromwell's accounts for Michaelmas 1535 to July 1536 and records £25 as the half year's fee of the mastership of the jewels, so that we may wonder what had become of the £25 due at Michaelmas 1535. The tellers' accounts for that year are missing. Whatever the answer, it is plain that Cromwell drew at the most his official salary.

4. P.R.O. E 405/203.

5. Ibid. 204-5.

jewels in the chamber rather than from the keepership of the jewels in the Tower. It was a household office, closely connected with the chamber; in the time of Richard II the receiver of the chamber had also been keeper of certain jewels there.¹ Although jewels were kept in various places, a special keepership evolved from this official, and when the office of the jewel-house became definite in the fifteenth century its head was at times described as the keeper of the king's jewels and at others as the treasurer of the chamber.² The offices were combined under Edward IV and Richard III,³ and as late as 1533 a royal official - Sir William Skeffington, the master of the ordnance - could make the mistake of addressing Cromwell as treasurer of the chamber.⁴ The keeper of the jewels was responsible for looking after the king's bullion reserve in plate and jewels which was kept in the chamber, and until Henry VII promoted the treasurer of the chamber to a high position in the central financial administration the treasurer was as often as not more important for that part of his duties which would more accurately be described as the keepership of the jewels. However, the reforms of Henry VII separated the two offices, and by advancing the treasurer of the

1. Tout, Chapters, iv.197,204. However, another keeper of jewels of the same period appears to have had no connection with the chamber (ibid.334-5).

2. Ibid., pp.336f.

3. A.P.Newton, in E.H.R., xxxii(1917), pp.350f.

4. L.P. vi.1290.

chamber rendered the keeper of the jewels of secondary importance.¹ Cromwell's predecessor in the office, Robert Amadas, was a goldsmith, a citizen of London,² who appears to have been in charge of Wolsey's jewels before he took over the keepership of the king's.³ Such traces as remain of his activities show that he was concerned only with jewels and plate. He occurs in the accounts of the treasurer of the chamber as receiving and paying money for such matters only, usually for plate given to ambassadors.⁴ As master of the king's jewels he did only such work as a strict interpretation of the title allows, and the appointment of a goldsmith was both obvious and significant.

Such was the office to which Cromwell succeeded in April 1532. Its scope was barely indicated by the patent which appointed him "Magister sine Thesaurarius Iocalium nostrorum" with the usual fees, rewards, and household livery, and with an

1. A complication is introduced by Sir Henry Wyat, treasurer of the chamber from 1524 to 1528, who was also drawing £20 a year as master of the jewels, at a time when others, called treasurers of the jewels, were paid their £50 (P.R.O., Declarations of the State of the Treasury, passim). This is the only case where a distinction was made between a master and a treasurer, and it is obviously merely one of convenience to exchequer officials. Wyat drew his sinecure money without doing any work connected with jewels, all of which was in the hands of Cromwell and his predecessor Amadas.
2. Lists of Early Chancery Proceedings, vi.2,4.
3. L.P. iv.1662,6748(5). His patent was dated 20 April 1526 (ibid. 2114), but he was acting in the office as early as October 1524 (ibid. 695).
4. L.P. v., pp.311, 315,316,319,321,323,325.

annual salary of £50.¹ He was also given the power to appoint a yeoman and groom of the jewel-house to serve under him and during his pleasure. His own appointment, in accordance with precedent, was during good behaviour. The patent said nothing about any powers to appoint a sufficient deputy, a fact which may explain why Cromwell went to all the trouble and expense of sharing the office when he himself could no longer look after it.² He thus held an office which by a fairly recent tradition had become no more than the custodianship of the king's plate and jewels, but which had at one time so far overshadowed even the treasurer within the chamber that officials holding both offices were commonly called by the title of the former. It was primarily a financial office, the first of any importance to fall vacant after Cromwell's entry into the royal service and favour, and it seems clear that Cromwell took it for that reason. His first salaried appointment in the king's service gave him the place of a minor cog in the administrative machine of the royal finances.

He carried out the basic duties of the office, that is, he personally looked after the king's jewels and plate. In September-October 1533 notes about such matters appeared in his "remembrances".³ The king's goldsmith delivered plate

1. P.R.O. C 66/659, m.36.

2. Another reason may have been his desire to promote a faithful servant (and kinsman?).

3. L.P. vi.1194,1382.

to him in 1534, and although the transaction is recorded as having been made with Master Socretary, it was rather as treasurer of the king's jewels that Cromwell was concerned in it.¹ He took charge of the plate received on new year's day 1534,² and in all probability also of the plate coming to the king when bishop Fisher was imprisoned.³ In February 1535 a survey of jewels delivered to the goldsmith for alterations was carried out by his personal servants, Sadler and Vaughan.⁴ It was this attention to the smallest detail which raised him to power, and which gave his career much of its outstanding importance in the history of administration. A similar care for efficiency was shown by his co-opting to the office, when his own immediate control had perforce to cease, a man who had six years' practical experience of its duties.⁵

Though Cromwell by no means neglected the tasks fundamentally associated with the office he did not content himself with them. The details will be worked out in another chapter,⁶ but we may here summarise its conclusions. As master of the jewels Cromwell turned his private office into a department which collected certain small revenues and handled a large expenditure. The master ceased to administer only bullion

1. L.P. vii.1668.

2. Ibid. 91.

3. L.P. viii.888.

4. Ibid. 206.

5. Williams was appointed clerk of the jewels in April 1530 (L.P. iv.6418[8]).

6. Cf. below, Chapter 3, Section II.

and dealt with large amounts in cash and bonds. He rivalled, and in a measure superseded, the treasurer of the chamber as head of a spending department which financed wars and garrisons, and largely contributed to the day-to-day expenditure on rewards, buildings, naval affairs, and a dozen other purposes. For income he relied mainly on equally irregular sources, such as repayments of debts and fines for knight-hoods, and in particular on reserves from the royal coffers. Cromwell wished to have plenty of money ready to hand in order to be able to govern freely and unimpeded by dependence on other departments, and he used the mastership of the jewels to give him that freedom.

Such a development naturally depended on the man. The master of the jewels usurped considerable functions only as long as Cromwell held the office. He created no organised department. The officials allowed to him by his patent, the yeoman and groom of the jewel-house, were employed only on matters directly connected with jewels. The business which Cromwell added to the duties of the office was transacted by himself in person, with the assistance of his own household servants, three of whom in 1535 held his power of attorney to receive all money due to the king in his name.¹ Thus the office dropped back into relative unimportance when he

1. L.P. ix.234.

relinquished it. Williams might still be entrusted with payments to the treasurers of Berwick and Ireland,¹ but very largely he reverted to the duties of a keeper of the jewels. The jewel-house continued to be a treasury which could be mentioned together with the chamber, the court of augmentations, and the exchequer.² However, as the repository of the normal reserves of the age, jewels and plate, it would naturally and without Cromwell's work have held an important place among royal treasuries. The significance of Cromwell's tenure of the office lay rather in the fact that he had made it into a major spending department. Sir John Williams, later to be first baron Thame and chancellor of the court of augmentations, was a more important man than Robert Amadas, citizen and goldsmith of London. By that measure the importance of the office had increased as a consequence of Cromwell's mastership. In the financial administration of England, however, it did not keep the place given to it by Cromwell. Cromwell's mastership of the jewels is of the greatest importance in his own career, being his first post and one which showed what he could make of even the most colourless office, but it left no enduring mark on administrative organisation.

1. L.P. xiv.II.293(2), 616.

2. L.P. xiii.II.434.

II. Clerk of the Hanaper.

The office of keeper or clerk of the hanaper of chancery was granted to Cromwell by a patent dated 16 July 1532.¹ He held it until his death but surrendered his patent for a new one, made out on 24 April 1535 to himself and Ralph Sadler jointly. This patent does not appear to have been enrolled but survives in a copy in a precedent book of the Crown Office.²

The clerk of the hanaper was the official in charge of the profits of the great seal, that is, he was the treasurer of the chancery.³ The office was not, indeed, a major one in the organisation of the government, but it was of some importance. An order in chancery in 1622 declared that it had always been one of great trust and involving considerable business for the clerk who had to be in continual attendance on the great seal, either in person or by deputy.⁴ He was only a clerk "of the second form", but had been a man of some standing as early as Richard II,⁵ and the order just quoted

1. L.P. v.1207(36).

2. P.R.O. C 193/2, ff.61v-64. There is the less doubt about this patent having actually been granted because the hanaper accounts name Cromwell and Sadler together from Michaelmas 1535 onwards (P.R.O. E 101/222/8).

3. Cf. Tout, Chapters, i.286: "The keeper of the hanaper received the fees of the seal, paid the expenses of the chancery organisation, and presented the accounts of the administration for review."

4. Sanders, Orders in Chancery, p.135.

5. Tout, Chapters, ii.444.

says, among other things, that "the clerkes of the Hanaper heretofore were men of great accompt, as the Lord Cromwell Earle of Essex". Cromwell's joint keeper and successor, Sir Ralph Sadler, was principal secretary and keeper of the great wardrobe when he held the office. Though, therefore, it would be wrong to claim that the clerkship of the hanaper was in itself very important, it is clear that it could well be held by men aspiring to importance.

The fees and emoluments which Cromwell was to receive were described in his patent.¹ First came the traditional salary, "*vadia feoda robas & regardia quocumque eidem officio aliquo modo ab antiquo debita & consueta*". These had for centuries consisted of sixpence a day, that is £9.2.6 a year, in fees,² and of winter and summer robes for which the keeper received £2.6.8 in cash.³ Secondly, the patent of appointment granted an annuity of £40 chargeable on the revenues of the hanaper, and lastly, Cromwell was to receive the sum of 1s.6d. for every day spent "*attendendo & equitando cur/cancellario nostro Anglie*". We are told that as early as 1516 this sum had become stereotyped as 1s.6d. for every day of the year,⁴ but, as a matter of fact, the first year in which a fee for

1. P.R.O. C 66/660, m.33.

2. Maxwell Lyte, Great Seal, p.284.

3. Cf. expense accounts of the hanaper, e.g. P.R.O. E 101/222/11.

4. Maxwell Lyte, loc.cit.

365 days was paid was the first of Edward VI (1547), after which this sum of £27.7.6 was paid regularly year after year.¹ The accounts show that while Cromwell held the office at least a pretence was kept up of paying only for days actually spent on duty.² The clerk of the hanaper could, therefore, expect to draw £51.9.2 plus an average of about 200 days at eighteen-pence each, a rough total of £65 a year altogether.

In addition to that there would be the unofficial income, but here we can hazard only the vaguest of guesses. The chancery order of 1622 stated that "one of the choifest profits belonginge formerly unto the said office of clorke of the hanaper was the receipt of fynes for all licenses and pardons of alienacion writts of covenant and writts of entry for recoveries", no doubt a considerable sum, for it was the granting away of these profits ("which were auntyently payd into the hanaper") under Elizabeth which led to the order appointing very large fees for the clerk.³ But did these profits go to the clerk or to the office? The fines mentioned were accounted for in the hanaper accounts, and the complaint in 1622 was that owing to their disappearance the

1. P.R.O. E 101/224/7. In 1544 only 278 days were charged against the hanaper revenues (*ibid.* 224/2), and no accounts survive for the two years following.
2. The known figures are 192, 194, and 213 days for the years ending Michaelmas 1535, 1536, and 1540 (P.R.O. E 101/222/7 and 11, 223/6).
3. Sanders, Orders in Chancery, p.136.

office no longer paid its way. As was the common practice of the time, the clerk could pocket as profit what was left after he had paid the expenses of his office, and it seems that that was little enough. On the other hand, it is possible that he was receiving already in Cromwell's time the two shillings for the sealing of every "perpetuity" which he certainly received later,¹ and which did not go into the official accounts, but nothing is known for certain. At any rate, the office provided a reasonable income for a minor official.

The question of how much Cromwell got from the hanaper is complicated by the fact that the official accounts tell a different story from that revealed by his private accounts. If we believe the petitions for allowances presented by the clerk,² all the fees listed above were paid out year by year, allowance being claimed regularly for the keeper's salary, robes, and annuity, and for a specified number of days of the special allowance. However, the date of an account is small guarantee for the date on which it was actually made up, and these petitions appear to be in general rather schematic and stereotyped. Nor were salaries normally paid in the sixteenth century on the day on which they were due. The mention of a

1. Maxwell Lyto, Great Seal, p.336.

2. Those surviving for Cromwell's keepership are P.R.O. E 101/222/7 and 11, 223/2 and 6, for the years ending Michaelmas 1535, 1536, 1539, 1540.

payment in an account does not, therefore, necessarily prove that the payment was ever made at all. It certainly proves nothing for the date on which it was made. Cromwell's accounts tell a surprising story. During the period from January to July 1533 he received a sum of £66.17.4, stated to be the revenues of the clerkship of the hanaper.¹ This seems reasonable enough: something over £30 would have been due in fees in that half year, and the balance was made up of those unofficial profits on which it is generally supposed officials of the period lived. But what are we to make of the fact that for the two years ending at Michaelmas 1535 he had only £58 from the hanaper?² At the very least, even leaving out the troublesome eighteenpence a day, something like £100 ought to have been expected. For the half year which followed this account Cromwell received £29.6.4,³ broken down in the account into items: his half year's annuity (£20), fee at sixpence a day (£4.11.3), winter livery (£1.6.8), and a fee for his clerk at fourpence halfpenny a day which is not mentioned at all in the official hanaper accounts. Where it came from must remain a mystery; apparently Cromwell managed to put a personal clerk on the hanaper establishment and drew wages for him which were not accounted for in the annual account. It is conceivable

1. L.P. vi.841.

2. L.P. ix.478.

3. P.R.O. SP 1/105, f.97v (L.P. xi.135).

that the clerk in question might be Cromwell's deputy, the underclerk of the hanaper, but the accounts provide no trace of such a sum being paid to him, either. Also it was the underclerk who paid the money to Cromwell's servants, as is noted in Cromwell's accounts, and we should therefore have to assume that the money went from him to Cromwell's private coffer and later back to him again - surely a needless and unlikely complication.¹

However that may be, we must note that after the first half year we cannot find any sign that Cromwell was receiving large sums in customary but unofficial fees. In fact, he barely got the minimum due to him, and it can be said with some certainty that he did not draw the 1s.6d. a day for special expenses to which his patent entitled him. These sums, however, appear year by year in the hanaper accounts. What became of them can only be surmised. Cromwell's patent declared that in consideration of the heavy costs, expenses and burdens which the same Thomas Cromwell or his deputy would have to bear by reason of his office in attending and riding with the lord chancellor "dedimus & concessimus eidem Thome Crumwell decem & octo denarios" for every day thus spent.

1. A further difficulty is introduced by the fact that this full half year's fee was received at a time when Cromwell was sharing the office with Sadler who surely did not go without a share in the profits. Would he perhaps receive the fees for the second half year?

Yet, except possibly right at the beginning of his tenure of office, Cromwell did not draw this money, and it seems most likely that it went to his deputy, the underclerk of the hanaper, who did all the work but ostensibly received only the sum of one mark for his winter robe from the hanaper.¹ The accounts use a rather curious phrase, describing the money as spent "pro expensis equorum circa attendentium cum Cancellario", a wording which leaves it open who actually received the money.² As there is nothing to show that Cromwell received the customary profits due on certain instruments under the great seal, it is more than likely that these also went to the active official, the underclerk. Cromwell clearly did not use the clerkship of the hanaper for the purpose of enriching himself, receiving at most his basic fees.

1. P.R.O. 3 101/222/11.

2. Down to the keepership of Thomas Hall the phrase ran "in expensis dicti Custodis & deputati sui equitantum cum domino Cancellario" (P.R.O. E 101/220/7). Perhaps because the fiction of a travelling chancery could no longer be maintained, it was then changed to "pro expensis equorum" (*ibid.* 221/10; used for the last time in 1544: *ibid.* 224/2). The change to a fixed payment for 365 days coincides with another change in the wording. The money was thereafter spent "pro omnibus custubus & expensis dicti Custodis in seruiciendo domino Cancellario" (*ibid.* 227/8): the pretence that specially arduous duties were to be covered by it had been given up. It may not be fanciful to connect the last change with the appointment of John Hales as Sadler's partner in October 1545 (P.R.O. C 66/785, m.34), and perhaps with lord chancellor Wriothesley's orders of May 1545, part of which is lost (Sanders, Orders in Chancery, pp. 8f.).

It is equally plain, however, that he did not hold the office for the purpose of carrying out its detailed duties. There is an occasional trace of his acting in his capacity as clerk of the hanaper. He attended when the great seal was handed to the new lord chancellor on 26 January 1533, and he is followed in the list of people present by Pexall, clerk of the crown in chancery, Croke, first of the six clerks and controller of the hanaper, and Judde, underclerk of the hanaper.¹ It is very likely that he attended a function intimately concerned with chancery business, and in the company of permanent officials of the chancery, rather because he was a chancery official himself than because of his general position about the court. Admittedly, the other men present - Norfolk, Cranmer, Wiltshire, Gardiner, Fitzwilliam, Paulet - were leading officers of state and household who had nothing to do with the chancery. But unless we are prepared to say that Cromwell alone was there because of his general position rather than because of his office, the fact that all the others held offices strengthens the supposition that he was there as clerk of the hanaper.

A few other examples of Cromwell apparently acting in this capacity can be cited. An indenture of August 1533, by which the wardens of St. Olave's, Southwark, bound themselves

1. L.P. vi.73.

to pay to him, for the king's use, a fine on purchasing lands under a patent lately granted to them, describes him as clerk of the hanaper.¹ The collection of fines payable under the terms of a patent and not for its sealing did not, strictly speaking, belong to the hanaper, and it is therefore unlikely that the designation had any administrative significance. There also survives one of the undoubtedly large number of warrants exempting the bearer from the payment of fees in the hanaper.² This is an order under the sign manual to deliver to Anne Boleyn the patent creating her marchioness of Pembroke, "without taking any fine or fee for vs or to our vse for the seales", and is addressed "To our right trusty and welbiloued Coursaillour Thomas Cromwell, keper and Clerc of our Hanaper in our chauncery, and in his absence to his deputie".³

It may, however, be doubted whether Cromwell ever saw this warrant or handled Anne's patent, and it is more probable that the matter was attended to by "his deputie". It is as clear as the meagre evidence will allow that John Judde, the underclerk, saw to the routine work. It was he who paid the keeper's emoluments from the hanaper to Cromwell's servants, and who paid to him as master of the rolls the profits

1. L.P. vi.970. There is a copy in a precedent book, P.R.O. C 193/2, f.13.

2. Many of the items in the hanaper accounts are marked as "pardonatur" or "excusatur per warrantum regis" or "per cartam", or with some similar phrase.

3. P.R.O. E 163/10/19.

due to that office out of the hanaper.¹ In September 1535 he received from Cromwell the fee for the sealing of his patent as master of the rolls.² His successor, Richard Snowe, wrote to Wriothesley in 1538, asking for the fee due on a "book" sealed in the chancery.³ Judde had been deputy to Thomas Hall, Cromwell's predecessor, and was apparently left in charge when Hall died. Some time in 1532 he handed over to Cromwell the sum of £300, described as the profits of the hanaper in Hall's time.⁴

In August 1532 Judde wrote a letter to Cromwell which deserves quoting at some length because of the light it throws on the administration of the hanaper.⁵ It starts: "Please it your Maistership to understond that I haue receyued your letter... My lorde of the greate seale hath sealed the patent of Armyes, at the sealyng of which patent I was at Eppiswich." Apparently the presence of both the clerk and the underclerk at the sealing could be dispensed with, though the provision of eighteenpence for every day spent in attending the chancellor implied a theory that one of them had to be there. In Judde's absence things had gone wrong: "For, and

1. L.P. xi.135,66(i).

2. L.P. ix.478.

3. L.P. xiii.I.1490.

4. L.P. v.1730; vi.228(£). Hanaper surpluses usually went to the chamber (L.P. xiv.II.13), but in this case Cromwell seems to have used them for his own financial ministry (cf. below, Chapter 3, Section II).

5. P.R.O. SP 1/70, f.207 (L.P. v.1214).

I had ben at thensealyng of it, it shuld haue ben sealed with grene wax and lakis of sylke, whiche cannot nowe conuenyently be don by cause of the cutte that the angnus is in." He went on to elaborate some details for the benefit of his new superior: "For it is a perpetuyte graunted to hym and to his heyres, whiche must pay for the seale to the kynges highnes viij li' ix s', oneles your Mastership do atteyne a warraunt for the discharge of thesame. For and if the kynges hightnes geve but lycence to any man to Inparke any grounde, or to Inbatell his house for hym and his heyres, it is a perpotuyte and shall pay viij li' ix s'." Cromwell probably needed this instruction. He had not been trained in the chancery and its rules were no doubt strange to him, a sufficient reason for leaving the day-to-day work to an experienced underclerk. But however little of the actual work he may have done it was not in his nature to neglect any office or to leave his deputy a completely free hand, and Judde concluded by assuring him that "at my commyng to london I will resorte to your seid Mastership to knowe your ferther pleasur."

Cromwell's active interest is shown in other things. He possessed among his papers a "roll of the charge of the clerk of the hanaper" and one described as a roll "of Thomas Hall, late clerk of the hanaper", that is to say, accounts

or estimates of hanaper expenses.¹ Receipts for payments from the hanaper show that, although the money was professedly received from the clerk, it was the underclerk who did the actual paying.² Thus the treasurer of the chamber, or rather his clerk Thomas Carmarthen, received on 8 December 1538 the sum of £200 "*De Thoma domino Cromwell Custode Privati Sigilli domini Regis et Radolfo Sadler clericis Hanaperij Cancellarie dicti domini Regis per manus Ricardi Snowe*".³ These receipts also show that in co-opting Sadler to the office Cromwell was not looking for someone to do the routine work. He was doing Sadler a favour, and he may possibly have left the general supervision more to him. The normal work of the department, however, continued to be done by the underclerk.

It cannot therefore be doubted that Cromwell did not spend his time in the detailed administration of the hanaper. As he did not receive large sums from the office, it must be concluded that he held it for the sake of being able to exercise a general supervision and control over this branch of the administration, and we have been able to produce some evidence, though little enough, to support a view which is convincing in itself.

1. *L.P.* vi.299(ix.F); vii.923(i,xii).

2. A few of these receipts survive, some of them mutilated:
P.R.O. E 101/222/12 and 15.

3. P.R.O. E 101/222/15, no.1.

It therefore becomes important to know why such control seemed desirable, that is to say, what the scope and place of the hanaper were. It has already been indicated that the keeper of the hanaper was essentially the official charged with the financial side of chancery business, with the collection of its profits and the payment of its expenses. A little more detail now becomes necessary. The hanaper accounts deal with a number of sources of income.¹ There were the fees for the sealing of all documents issued by the chancery, as well as fines payable on certain types of grants: these made up the income of the chancery proper. There were further the fees payable for writs sued out of the courts of justice, collected there but delivered into the hanaper where they were accounted for term by term. Lastly, there were a number of smaller sources, such as fines for the restitution of the temporalities of ecclesiastical benefices, or fines on the bonds known as statutes staple. It is difficult to arrive at any accurate totals, for where a check is possible the figures invariably disagree.² But it can be said that income in the hanaper fluctuated between about £2000 and

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1. The hanaper accounts for the period are preserved among the various accounts of the exchequer, P.R.O. E 101.
 2. The detailed account for the year 1533-4 adds up to a total of £2069 (P.R.O. E 101/222/4), while the abstracted statement of account gives £2886 (L.P. vii.1204). A similar discrepancy exists for 1538-9 where the figures are £2279 and £2486 (P.R.O. E 101/223/1; L.P. xiv.II.252).

£3000 a year. The significant figures, however, are those of surplus after the expenses had been paid, and these averaged something like £1200 a year, though here again there were considerable fluctuations. Of this the better part went to the treasurer of the chamber who could expect between £800 and £1000 from this source. The balance remained in the hanaper.

The chancery thus supplied a not inconsiderable sum every year to the royal revenue, the chief merit of which must have been its regularity and reliability; Tuke, the treasurer of the chamber, described it as "the hamper money whiche was wont to be to me a good shoteanker".¹ This revenue was controlled by the clerk of the hanaper. We have found ourselves compelled to discard two motives which might explain Cromwell's tenure of the office, namely that it was either a source of wealth or a means of employment to him. There remains the third which we have been able to discover, that he wished to control it; for this we have now supplied the reason. The hanaper attracted him as an independent and important financial department, as an essential part of the financial administration.

1. P.R.O. SP 1/153, f.9 (L.P. xiv.II.13).

III. Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Cromwell next acquired the chancellorship of the exchequer, his patent for which was dated 12 April 1533.¹ This was not as yet an important position in the financial administration. The chancellor of the exchequer was the descendant of the chancellor of England's clerk at the exchequer table, and his duties were confined to the upper exchequer.² By the reign of Elizabeth he was the second officer in the exchequer, having "in Court the proper place of the Bench above the Lord Treasurer".³ But such does not appear to have been his position in early Tudor times. We are told that until the first fruits and augmentation offices were included in the exchequer in Mary's reign, that is, until its ancient preeminence had been restored to the exchequer, the lord treasurer rarely attended the exchequer court, leaving his duties there to the chancellor, the undertreasurer, and the barons.⁴ Of all these the chancellor was the lowest paid and therefore the least important.⁵ In the court the chief baron presided, and he and the other barons did the work; in the lower exchequer the undertreasurer supplied the place of

1. L.P. vi.417(22).

2. R.L.Poole, Exchequer in the Twelfth Century, p.189; A.P. Newton in E.H.R., xxxii(1917), p.353.

3. Sir Thomas Fanshawe, Practice of the Exch. Court, pp.19f.

4¹ Ibid., p.13.

5. Cf. the "Declarations of the State of the Treasury", P.R.O. E 405.

his master, the lord treasurer of England, who was also ex officio treasurer of the exchequer.¹

The chancellor's duties are somewhat obscure. It appears from an order sent to the exchequer on Cromwell's appointment that he kept the seal of the court and exercised a certain amount of control over its records.² A sixteenth century disquisition on the exchequer, preserved in a precedent book,³ quotes the Dialogus as saying that no great thing should be done in the exchequer without the consent or counsel of the chancellor, but this is clearly a misunderstanding, for the chancellor referred to in the Dialogus is the chancellor of England. The treatise admits as much when it goes on to say that there is no trace in the records of the chancellor of the exchequer giving judgment in either law or equity, either alone or jointly with the treasurer and barons, of his dealing with any debts, taking accounts for the king, or being put in authority by any of the king's writs or statutes "to doe any of these things, which have & bee not only magna but maxima in Scaccario". All these things had always been done by the treasurer and barons, singly or conjointly. The writer then described what was in his view the chancellor's

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1. The origin of the undertreasurer's office is obscure. Poole makes him the descendant of the treasurer's clerk (op.cit., pp.189f.).
 2. P.R.O. E 159/312, Communia, Easter Term, Recorda, m.3.
 3. P.R.O. E 369/118, ff.13-15. There is a copy at the British Museum (Tit. B.iv, f.55v).

proper sphere: he appoints the controller of the pipe and the clerk of the common pleas, keeps the seal, and is usually learned in the law. Finally, he referred to the changes made in the office "recently", that is to say, in Mary's reign, as a consequences of the reform of the exchequer then carried out. These changes were embodied in a writ of 10 July 1559 which described the new work to be done by the chancellor as a result of the enlargement of the exchequer and assigned him new fees.¹

It is clear, therefore, that up to the middle of the sixteenth century the chancellor of the exchequer was a minor official. He must not be confused with the undertreasurer;² although the two offices came to be held by the same man they were definitely separate.³ Cromwell's successor, Sir John Baker, was the first man to combine them, and in Cromwell's time Sir Richard Weston was undertreasurer, having succeeded Sir Thomas More in 1528. Thus the chancellor had not, by virtue of his office, any dealings with the lower exchequer where receipts and issues were administered, and his place - an inferior place, at that - was in

1. There is a copy in B.M. Lansd. MS 168, f.274.

2. Even Dr. Dietz asserted that the "Declarations of the State of the Treasury" were made by the chancellor (Eng. Gov. Fin., p.234), whereas the documents themselves state explicitly that they were submitted by the undertreasurer.

3. Even in the nineteenth century the same man would still hold the two offices by different patents (F.S. Thomas, Notes on Materials, pp.11f., 15).

the exchequer of audit, as a kind of superior clerk without any particular influence or control. His oath shows that he was mainly employed in the sealing of writs;¹ as has already been remarked, the custody of the exchequer seal was his most definite function, apart from the patronage which belonged to him. In the reign of Elizabeth he held four offices in his gift, those of the controller of the pipe, the clerk of the pleas, the clerk of the nihil, and the sealer of the court;² two of these offices were declared to be his by traditional right in the treatise quoted above. But however small its recognised scope may have been, there were possibilities in an office which entitled its holder to a seat in the exchequer and put no great specific duties on him. It might be turned into a sinecure, as it was by Cromwell's predecessor, Lord Berners;³ but for that very reason it could be made into a post of importance, as its subsequent development shows. We have here one example of Cromwell's fondness for offices with an ill-defined scope

1. B.M. Lansd. MS 168, f. 280.

2. B.M. Harl. MS 5174, f. 54; Lansd. MS 171, ff. 408, 410.

3. Berners was appointed chancellor of the exchequer in May 1516 (L.P. ii. I. 1946) and held the office until his death in 1533. During most of that time he was also deputy at Calais (cf. his life in D.N.B., ii. 920f., and additions in Bull., viii. 107). During 1532, e.g., he spent all his time in Calais (L.P. v. 787, 857, 1041, 1219, 1543), and there is only one mention of him as chancellor of the exchequer: in that capacity he was owed money by the wardrobe (ibid. 1710).

which left much to the will and energy of the individual holder.

Cromwell had shown an early interest in the exchequer. Even before October 1531 he had acquired various documents connected with it, as for instance a paper declaring the exchequer to be the highest court of record - perhaps an early treatise on the exchequer which we should give a good deal to possess -¹ and a number of exchequer accounts and declarations by customers, tellers, and an undertreasurer.² Later he added documents which prove a growing interest in the chancellorship: a copy of the chancellor's oath, a copy of Lovell's patent of the office, an abstract from the Red Book of the exchequer.³ It would seem, therefore, that he intended to control the exchequer, that he wished to give concrete shape to this control by acquiring an office there, and that he decided on the chancellorship.

He held the office from April 1533 until his fall. His patent allowed the appointment of one or more deputies,⁴ but there is no trace of any being appointed; it also granted him all fees and rights which his predecessor had had, and assigned him robes out of the great wardrobe. Financially,

1. L.P. vii.923(xii).

2. Ibid., 923(xviii). The Hasilwood there mentioned was one of the tellers of the receipt, while Sir John Cutt preceded More as undertreasurer.

3. Ibid. 923(xix,xxv,xxxiv).

4. Printed by Rymer, Foedera, xiv.456.

the office was worth little. The chancellor's annual fee was £26.13.4, less than that of the fourth baron, while the lord treasurer drew £365, the undertreasurer £173.6.8, and the chief baron £100.¹ Cromwell's accounts show that he normally received this fee and no more. For the half-years ending in March 1533 and 1536 he received £13.6.8 each.² For the two years ending at Michaelmas 1535, however, he got £65.10.0, or some £12 more than his salary would account for.³ If this £12 constituted special pickings for a period of two years they cannot be said to have amounted to much, and altogether the emoluments of the office were hardly great enough to be its prime attraction. The powers of the office, such as they were or could be made to be, were a more important point in its favour.

Although Cromwell's appointment was dated 12 April, it was not until the 24th that a writ was sent to the exchequer stating that "certis de causis" it was desired to find out what fees, rights, and powers attached to the office of chancellor of the exchequer, and ordering the barons and treasurer to search the records and notify the chancery of the result.⁴

1. "Declarations of the State of the Treasury", passim. It may, however, be taken as one of the first signs of a greater importance attaching to the chancellorship that these declarations always put the chancellor first in their list of salaried officials, i.e. before the barons.
2. L.P. vi.841; xi.135.
3. L.P. ix.478.
4. P.R.O. E 159/312, m.12.

Having thus familiarised himself with his new office, Cromwell appeared in the exchequer on the 30th to be admitted to office and to swear his oath before the barons.¹ He also brought with him a writ which specified among the things which should be handed over to him "sigillum dicti Scaccarij nostri necnon rotulos memorand' record'".

It is not easy to discover to what extent he exercised the chancellorship. He used its powers of patronage and appointed to the office of clerk of the pleas in the exchequer two men one of whom, William Erabazon, had been his own servant and must have been an absentee official as he was undertreasurer in Ireland at the time.² It would also appear that he put in a fairly regular appearance in the court. At any rate, it was noted in Elizabeth's reign that "only this is remembered by some auncient of the Court yet living that Tho: Cronwell, being Chauncellor & the K^s Secretary & after L^d privy seale, did take place vppon the first bench ex dextra domini Thesaurarij; but Sir John Baker, being the next Chauncellor, & after vndertresorer also, did alwayes sit vppon the second Bench where the vndertreasorer now doth. And Sir Walter Mildmay, next Chauncellor after him, did take place & sitt where the L: Cromwell did, but by what authority or reason

1. Ibid. Communia, Easter Term, Recorda, m.3.

2. The office was conferred by Cromwell's deed of 27 April 1538 and confirmed by patent in the January following (L.P. xiv. I.191[31]).

the Chauncellor hath sitten in these severall places it appeareth not in writing found".¹ Perhaps we may guess at the reason and suggest that Cromwell usurped the seat on the first bench, thereby setting a precedent which Mildmay followed though Baker was too prudent or personally unimportant to do so. It is likely that Cromwell invested the chancellorship with some of his own importance. A chancellor of the exchequer who in other capacities governed as the king's chief minister could not be expected to take an inferior place in the exchequer.

It is this question of his various capacities, and of the importance which attached to his person rather than to his office, which makes it difficult to be certain how far he acted as chancellor of the exchequer. When he appears in the exchequer records as acting in the court he is nearly always designated by that title, though sometimes some other office, secretary or lord privy seal, is also mentioned. He used his position in the exchequer to appear there as the king's mouth-piece. The record of an action against one William Evan, merchant stranger, for transgressing a statute of Henry VII concerning the import of Gascon wine, breaks off with the note: "Non fiat hic ulterius executio per mandatum Regis, nunciante Thoma Cromwell Armigero Cancellario huius Scaccarij, quousque

1. P.R.O. E 369/118, ff.12v-13.

&c."¹ The case of another merchant stranger, John Tolargo, which belongs into 1540, shows him acting in the court together with the barons; apparently he had given the chancellor sufficient standing to make him part of the regular judicial machinery of the exchequer. In fact the wording of the record is such that we might assume that he had reduced the barons to assistants in a court presided over by himself,² and it quite possible that by 1540 such a development had come about. If this was so, it is certain that the office did not justify or maintain so exalted a position, and that Cromwell was here using his personal standing as lord privy seal. Another case, concerning a country rector fined for non-residence, shows him acting together with the lord treasurer.³ There cannot be any doubt, then, that he sometimes sat in the exchequer court and that he did not confine himself there to his supposed duties of sealing writs but took a leading part in the business of the court. On the other hand, his activity there was not a common thing, and it is unlikely, in any case, that he could have attended frequently.

1. 2 May 1533. P.R.O. E 159/312, Communia, Easter Term, Recorda, mm.28-28d.

2. P.R.O. E 159/315, Communia, Easter Term, Recorda, m.1. Part of the case is annotated: "Parcatur per mandatum Domini Cromwell & Baronibus presentibus hic xxviij^o Ianuarij A^o xxxj^o."

3. Ibid. 317, Communia, Trinity Term, Recorda, m.15: "Parcatur per mandatum Thessaurarij Anglio & Domini Cromwell ad instanciam Gosneld'."

He had other calls on his time.

There was, however, one other occasion for which he spared time to be in court, namely the admission of new officials. He was there, on 27 April 1534, when Thomas Walsh was made fourth baron, and the day after when Humphrey Bowland appeared to fill the now vacant post of king's remembrancer; though he was in neither case the sole councillor present he alone is mentioned by name.¹ He was alone, however, on 4 May 1535, when his servant Richard Pollard was admitted to Bowland's office, vacant by its holder's death.² On 2 December 1539 John and Clement Smyth were admitted to the office of lord treasurer's remembrancer, "per Barones"; but they swore their oath before Norfolk, as lord treasurer, and Cromwell, as lord privy seal and chancellor of the exchequer,³ and the same procedure was observed with Nicholas Luke, the new third baron, on 14 April 1540, except that others of the council were also present to hear the oath.⁴

This same interest in the staff of the exchequer was shown also in the case of William Elys who was fourth baron at the time of Cromwell's rise to power. Elys was a very

1. Ibid. 313, Communia, Easter Term, Recorda, m.26: "In presencia Egregij viri Thome Cromewell Armigeri, Secretarij dicti domini Regis Ac Cancelarij huius Scaccarij, & aliorum de Consilio dicti domini Regis hic adtunc existencium."
2. Ibid. 314, Communia, Easter Term, Recorda, m.4.
3. Ibid. 318, Communia, Michaelmas Term, Recorda, m.60.
4. Ibid. 319, Communia, Easter Term, Recorda, m.4.

old man, over eighty, with long service to his credit; and desirous, as he told Cromwell, to die in harness.¹ Cromwell, however, appears to have held different views about important officials who were too old and ill to attend to their duties, as Elys evidently was, despite his rather pathetic assertions to the contrary. He therefore asked the old man to surrender his patent of office, a request met by Elys with the counter-request that he might be allowed to carry on for a year or two.² Cromwell retorted by sending his servant John Gostwick to collect the desired resignation, but all he got out of Elys was another letter about his age, service, and continued suitability.³ It is a nice point whether Cromwell's persistence would in the end have conquered the old man's obstinacy, but soon afterwards Elys solved the problem by dying - in office, as he had desired - and Thomas Walsh was appointed in his place.⁴ The affair showed that Cromwell was determined to have an efficiently working exchequer, for which reason he was careful to have the right men appointed and to attend their admission to office. Although he dealt with Elys as the king's minister rather than as chancellor of the exchequer, we have here another pointer to the reason

1. L.P. vi.1308.

2. Ibid. 1485.

3. L.P. vii.34. About the same time, however, Elys wrote another letter in which he admitted that disease prevented his doing his duty in the exchequer (ibid. 35).

4. Ibid. 589(10).

why he became chancellor at all. It was part of a plan for controlling the financial administration.

His correspondence offers further examples of the importance the office had for him. In 1533 Edward Lee, archbishop of York, was in trouble with the exchequer about some money due before his appointment to the see which he refused to pay. He appealed to Cromwell who, Lee said, had ordered the barons not to issue process against the archbishop; nevertheless the sheriff attempted to secure payment, alleging that Cromwell had commanded the money to be levied. Lee therefore pointed out that Cromwell had now a place of authority in the exchequer and could well see to it that such unjust claims were not pressed.¹ Lee, at any rate, ascribed a standing to the chancellorship as exercised by Cromwell which would enable him to enforce orders on the barons which he had issued unsuccessfully before his appointment.

To quote some more examples. The sheriff of Cornwall, addressing his letter to Cromwell as chancellor of the exchequer, begged to be excused from attending the court and promised to send the money of his sheriffwick by his attorney there.² A petition, also addressed to him in that capacity, asked for the restoration of a horse which Cromwell's servant Swyft had wrongly detained. The petitioner lost it at

1. L.P. vi.1158,1219.

2. Ibid. 1309.

Hackney, afterwards recognised it and claimed it as his own in Smithfield market, and then brought an action in the Guildhall. Swyft succeeded in having the suit removed into the exchequer, before the chief baron and Cromwell.¹ Here we have another instance of Cromwell actually sitting in the court. It is possible that at this early stage of his career he sat there with some regularity, and that the memoranda rolls conceal the actual constitution of the court by the use of a traditional formula which implies that all cases were heard by the barons only. A hint like that contained in this petition makes one suspect something of the kind, but nothing can be proved. In these earlier years he certainly attended to exchequer business more frequently than later. Thus a letter, again addressing him as chancellor, informed him of frauds committed in connection with a wardship;² a man against whom a scire facias was out for the collection of a debt asked for the judgment to be deferred until after Easter, by which time he would have recovered his health so far as to be able to come up and arrange the matter with Cromwell and the undertreasurer;³ the mayor of Southampton thanked him for his reassurance about an old fine in the exchequer hanging over the borough, but had to add that Cromwell's orders did not seem to have prevented attachments issuing out of the

1. Ibid. 1668.

2. Ibid. 1680.

3. L.P. vii.113.

exchequer against some ex-sheriffs.¹ These activities suggest that Cromwell had to rely on his chancellorship at a time when he was not yet strong enough to impose his will on the exchequer from the outside. He thus had his good reasons for acquiring an office which gave him some standing in the exchequer and enabled him to exercise some control over that department. Clearly, he exploited it for rather more than it was worth. Refusing to be tied by the traditions of a minor office, he extended its scope to fit his ambitions and designs.

In choosing the chancellorship of the exchequer as the office through which the exchequer could be controlled, Cromwell anticipated the future. The value of the office rose to £113.6.8 a year by Elizabeth's time, so that the chancellor then drew the third highest fee in the exchequer, after the lord treasurer and the undertreasurer whose salaries had remained practically unchanged.² This enormous increase, amounting to an administrative revolution which foreshadowed the future greatness of the chancellor, was mainly due to the exchequer reforms of Mary's reign which had thrown much additional business on the chancellor. It may, however, be asked why the chancellor should have been picked to do the new work. The answer would seem to be that his was an

1. L.P. viii.864.

2. B.M. Harl.MS 5174, f.80.

office of small described scope but with large inherent possibilities of expansion, a fact fully realised by Cromwell and first exploited by him. It could not fail to gain in standing from the fact that he held it. By using the office to control the exchequer he had set a precedent which was followed by the later reformers, Winchester and Burleigh. Baker had not followed Cromwell in visibly asserting the authority of the chancellor by sitting on the first bench on the right of the lord treasurer, but the example was not forgotten. It was taken up by Sir Walter Mildmay who held the office from 1566 to 1589 and succeeded in having it recognised as one of the important posts in the exchequer.¹ It was reserved to the chancellors of James I, led by Sir Julius Caesar, to complete the work started by Cromwell, and to make the chancellor of the exchequer a leading officer of state. All this is not to say that Cromwell set out consciously to add stature to the office as an office. He was interested in it only inasmuch as it gave him access to the exchequer, but a man of his powers and position could not hold any post without in some measure increasing its importance and setting precedents for its future place in the administrative machine.

1. Cf. D.N.B., xiii.375a.

IV. Principal Secretary.

It was during its tenure by Thomas Cromwell that the office of the king's principal secretary became "the binding force of the state, holding together all the various units of administration".¹ He was the first great "modern" secretary. The office was still so ill-defined, so much a personal office in the king's household, that appointment was by word of mouth and delivery of the signet only. In consequence we have no evidence of the exact date on which Cromwell was appointed, though we can put it within fairly narrow limits. Gardiner, the first secretary regularly to countersign signet warrants,² signed his last surviving warrant on 3 February 1534,³ and the first warrant signed by Cromwell is dated 15 April 1534.⁴ The office, therefore, changed hands some time between these two dates. In all probability the date traditionally assigned (April 1534) is correct as it is supported by a statement made on the 15th of that month that Gardiner had lost the secretaryship.⁵

1. F.G.Evans, Principal Secretary, p.31.

2. The warrants preserved for his secretaryship are so signed (P.R.O. PS0 2/4, files for 22 and 23 Henry VIII).

3. P.R.O. C 82/679, no.4. 4. Ibid. 681, no.26.

5. L.P. vii.483. In view of all this evidence, no importance can be ascribed to the fact that warrants to Cromwell do not address him as secretary until later. A warrant of 27 May 1534 (P.R.O. E 101/421/6, no.37) calls him master of the jewels only. It is in the highest degree unlikely that Cromwell should have acted and been addressed as secretary for two months before the appointment took effect.

On the other hand, there is clear evidence that Cromwell was acting as secretary in the last months of 1533. On 30 September, Thomas Derby, one of the clerks of the signet, wrote a letter in which he called Cromwell his master and referred to a warrant which he was forwarding to him or his servants Richard Cromwell and Ralph Sadler to be sealed with the signet.¹ In December of the same year Cromwell delivered to Lord Lisle's agent a bill signed by the king, another duty which properly belonged to the secretary.² The agent, Leonard Smyth, had asked Cromwell to let the licence in question pass without any fees being paid, "but suche comendement he said lay not in hym; notwithstanding, bicause the signett is in his keping, now in the absens of the secretary, Raufe Sadeler~~er~~fold take nothing for the signett".³ The secretary, Gardiner, was away from England from 3 September until the end of the year;⁴ in his absence, Cromwell apparently acted for him, though he did not feel that as a temporary secretary he could authorise the remission of a customary fee due to the clerk sealing the bill. However, despite Cromwell's reluctance, Sadler, into whose pocket the money would apparently have gone, took the authorisation upon himself.

1. P.R.O. SP 1/79, f.114 (L.P. vi.1177).

2. P.R.O. SP 3/7, art.120 (L.P. Add.886).

3. By putting another comma after "Sadeler" L.P. Add.886 makes nonsense of the letter. Sadler was not, of course, to be described as secretary (of state) in 1533.

4. D.N.B., vii.860b.

It therefore appears that Cromwell had given the signet, which was naturally entrusted to his custody while Gardiner was away, into the temporary keeping of Sadler who was his private clerk. This also explains why Derby should have expected Sadler to be in a position to seal a signet warrant. During this short period when he acted as Gardiner's deputy Cromwell seems to have employed his private staff to do the work of the signet, a fact which supports the conclusion that he was not yet actually secretary. He was appointed some four months after Gardiner's return. We shall not go far wrong if we suppose him to have had an eye on the office for some time, though he had to wait until April 1534 before he could finally oust Gardiner from it and thus mark his victory in the king's counsels over all rivals.

The date on which Cromwell relinquished the office is also not quite certain. He continued to hold it after his promotion to the keepership of the privy seal, for he is several times given the two titles together.¹ However, some months before his fall he was succeeded by Thomas Wriothesley and Ralph Sadler as joint secretaries. The warrant appointing them is undated,² but it has usually been put into April 1540. They were first named officially as secretaries on the occasion of Cromwell's creation as earl of Essex on

1. L.P. xii.I.1098; xii.II.445.

2. L.P. xv.437.

18 April 1540,¹ and Wriothesley's cousin, the chronicler, specifically mentions April in his note of the event.²

Nevertheless this evidence might be considered doubtful enough not to preclude an earlier surrender of the secretaryship by Cromwell, were it not for the facts that Wriothesley signed his name as a clerk on a writ of privy seal as late as 30 March 1540,³ and Sadler's register of the signet began on 1 April 1540.⁴ It may therefore be considered certain that Cromwell continued as principal secretary until April 1540, his successors probably taking over on the first day of that month.

Great uncertainty prevails about the emoluments of the office at the time of Cromwell's tenure of it. The only piece of evidence which we possess is an item in one of Cromwell's private accounts which gives the profits of the signet as £94.0.8 1/2.⁵ This account covers the period from Michaelmas 1533 to Michaelmas 1535, or about a year and a half of Cromwell's secretaryship. The accountant, however, noted that he had received the money from another of Cromwell's servants, so that it must be doubtful whether the £94 constituted the whole income from the signet for that period. The

1. Ibid. 541.

2. Wriothesley, Chronicle, (Camden Society), i.115.

3. P.R.O. C 82/764, no.77.

4. B.M. Add.MS 35818.

5. L.P. ix.478.

silence of the other surviving accounts makes it not unlikely that some other member of Cromwell's staff, whose accounts do not survive, administered Cromwell's income as secretary. That there was such an income is proved even by this solitary item which also shows that it was derived from the fees paid into the signet office. We know that later these fees were shared between the secretary and the clerks, and it is probable that a similar procedure was normal in Cromwell's time. The secretary shared the sealing but not the writing fees of the signet, for he controlled the seal but did no part of the labour of making out documents.¹ Whether there was any income apart from these fees we cannot tell. There appears to have been no salary or annuity. Under Elizabeth the two principal secretaries drew £200, presumably between them,² but it has proved impossible to trace any such salary to the reign of Henry VIII. It might be permissible to take the risky step of arguing back from Elizabeth's reign, but the silence of Cromwell's accounts, which are otherwise so informative on his salaries, must make us doubly careful. The warrant appointing Cromwell's successors speaks of such "ffees Droictes Deuties and commodities...as haue doo or ought to belong to thoffice of his Maiesties principal Sec-

1. F.G.Evans, Principal Secretary, pp.206f.

2. Ibid., p.352.

rotarye".¹ This again suggests casual fees rather than a fixed salary. It would seem, therefore, that in Cromwell's time the secretary received no money except his share of the sealing fees, a share which may have amounted to a rough average of £60 a year, though the evidence for this figure is slender and probably unreliable.

In addition, the secretary was entitled to certain benefits attendant upon his position in the household. The warrant just quoted also appointed to the secretaries a lodging in court, with "lyke bouge of courte in al thynges as is appointed to the Secretarye". By the terms of the Eltham Ordinances this was worth £22.7.11 a year.² Thus we may conclude that the secretaryship was possibly worth to Cromwell something like £100 a year, certainly a small sum when his position in the government is compared with that of the lords chancellor, treasurer, and privy seal, all of whom were vastly better remunerated.

But if the office was not unduly lucrative, nor, as a matter of fact, one of great social distinction, it offered

1. P.R.O. SP 1/158, f.153 (L.P. xv.437).

2. Household Ordinances, (Soc. of Ant.), pp.162f. This was increased some time after 1540 to £33.19.1 (ibid., p.210). In addition there appears a great sum for diets: two messes, each worth £406 p.a. were to be served to the secretaries, a term which included the French and Latin as well as the principal secretaries, and very probably their staff as well (ibid., p.192). This entry must be dated after 1540 as the lord great master is mentioned.

an immense scope. Investigations of the secretary's earlier history have shown him as an official in the royal household, superintending the king's personal correspondence and enjoying his closest confidence.¹ Particularly, he was employed in diplomatic missions, apart from his duties as custodian of the signet and head of its clerical organisation.² However, there was no patent to circumscribe his duties, and hardly even a customary sphere to which he was bound to feel restricted. The vast expansion of the secretaryship is a commonplace of the administrative history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This expansion goes back no further than Thomas Cromwell. We have been told that it was he who, by the force of his personality, "brought the office of King's secretary into a position of eminence entirely new to it".³ When he took the secretaryship it was an important household office, but it had hardly begun to be an office of state. His immediate predecessor, Gardiner bishop of Winchester, was probably the most eminent man who to that date had held the office. Yet to him it meant little more than it had done to others for some fifty years before, certainly since Edward IV's secretary William Hatchlyffe. It put him near the king and gave him the king's confidence: in January 1532

1. J. Otway-Ruthven, King's Secretary, pp. 62ff.

2. Mrs. Higham (P. G. Evans), "Note on the Pre-Tudor Secretary," Essays... presented to T. F. Tout, pp. 361ff.

3. Ibid., p. 361.

Cromwell wrote to him of the king's complaint that the secretary's absence meant the absence of "my right hand".¹ But out of a total tenure of office amounting to less than five years Gardiner spent six months abroad on embassies.² He clearly did not think home affairs, the control of every aspect of the administrative machinery, a part of his duties. It was this control which Cromwell was to achieve through the principal secretaryship. For at least a year before Gardiner surrendered the office Cromwell was known to be the king's chief minister. Gardiner was one of a number of leading councillors, but in his capacity as secretary he confined himself to the traditional duties of taking charge of the king's correspondence, controlling the signet office, and engaging in diplomatic negotiations. Cromwell did all these things, but he added so greatly to the work of the secretary that he virtually created a new office.

What did Cromwell do as secretary? We leave his activities as head of the signet clerks to be discussed in another place;³ suffice it here to say that he certainly carried out those duties to the full. The significant point is that there is not an aspect of the government of England which is not to

1. L.P. v.723.

2. Gardiner was secretary from July 1529 (L.P. iv.5798) until March-April 1534. He was out of England from December 1531 to March 1532 and from September 1533 to the end of that year (D.N.B., vii.860a-b).

3. Cf. below, Chapter 4, Sections I and III.

be found in the correspondence of the king's principal secretary from 1534 onwards. In 1592 Robert Beale, Walsingham's chief clerk, wrote a "Treatise on the office of a Councellor and Principal Secretarie to her Majestie",¹ in which he enumerated the business which lay within the secretary's sphere of duty. It included all matters concerning religion, control over the councils established in the borders of the realm, the defence of the kingdom by land and sea, the affairs of the king's dominions beyond the sea (Ireland and the Channel Islands: in Cromwell's time we should have to add Calais), English merchants abroad, the royal revenues and finances in general, the royal household, foreign affairs and intelligence. A comprehensive catalogue indeed, but no more comprehensive than a list of Cromwell's activities which could easily be compiled from his memoranda and correspondence. In certain respects Cromwell did more than most Elizabethan secretaries would have thought their office justified; thus he supervised both religious affairs and finances more closely and completely than any single man ever did again, with the possible exception of Burghley. On the whole, however, it can be said that the sphere of activities which Cromwell established for himself had sixty years later become the norm for the secretaryship. He had made the office into something

1. Printed by Prof. Conyers Read as an appendix to his Mr Secretary Walsingham, i.423ff.

that can only be described as a premiership; he had laid a foundation and erected a scaffolding which the Cecils and Walsingham could easily use in building the finished structure.

One point deserves special notice. A case has been made out for supposing that the secretary's greatness rested primarily on his knowledge and conduct of foreign affairs.¹ Cromwell took his share of controlling foreign affairs,² but while in this respect he may have enlarged and improved he did not innovate. Foreign affairs had been the usual, almost the natural, field for men trained in correspondence and languages and possessed of the sovereign's immediate confidence. Cromwell's great addition to the scope of the office was government at home. He made the secretary supreme in the internal administration of the state. Judging only from the things which he did or supervised, we might well be tempted to call him the king's sole executive minister. Was there any need for any other minister, for anyone else concerned with both the making of policy and the working of the administration, when one man took charge of finance, the civil service, police, economic policy and administration, the control of parliament and council, the preparation and carrying

1. Higham, "Note on the Pre-Tudor Secretary," Essays...presented to T.F.Tout, p.366: "More and more the secretary controlled the various threads of diplomatic intercourse, continually increasing his power in council by his knowledge of foreign negotiations."

2. Merriman, i, chap.12.

out of legislation, the ecclesiastical affairs of the age of the Reformation, and foreign affairs? There were, in fact, other ministers, members of the inner council like Norfolk, or heads of departments like Paulet, master of the wards, or Riche, chancellor of augmentations, but they were one and all under the supervision and authority of Cromwell as secretary and later as lord privy seal. Cromwell was a prime minister who kept a strict control over his associates and subordinates, and who in addition attended to much business in the smallest detail.

It would not, of course, be true to say that a similar preeminence in the king's government had never been known. From the Angevin justiciars onwards there were offices under the crown which offered the widest scope to their holders. By the end of the fifteenth century one officer of state had emerged as the head of the official hierarchy. The chancellor had reached a position of eminence which he was to preserve, in theory at any rate, until the present day. Wolsey had used that office to make himself supreme in a way which was not so very different from Cromwell's supremacy, however much their tasks, attitudes, and activities may have differed. We may therefore ask why Cromwell did not take this office, with all the prestige and power which traditionally belonged to it, but preferred the comparative obscurity of the secretaryship

which only his exploitation made so important. His freedom of choice is indicated by the fact that contemporaries sometimes thought he might yet take the first office of state, and a rumour to the effect circulated as late as November 1535 when Chapuys reported that Cromwell would not hitherto accept the chancellorship but that it was thought he would soon allow himself to be persuaded.¹ Nothing came of this, but it is clear that Cromwell quite deliberately rejected this promotion which others wished to press upon him. The answer is partly, no doubt, to be found in the fact that Wolsey's fate was no encouragement to follow in Wolsey's footsteps, and it is also true that comparative obscurity probably suited Cromwell's character rather better than the pomp and circumstance of an ancient office.

However, there were more cogent reasons. For one thing, the chancellor had become so burdened with routine duties - those of a judge - that it was increasingly difficult for him to be also an administrator and controller of policy. Wolsey himself had greatly increased his judicial work by expanding the court of star chamber, and even he had found it hard to combine the two aspects of the office.² The time was rapidly approaching when the lord chancellor would be above all else the head of the judicial machinery of the realm. Wolsey's

1. L.P. ix.862.

2. A.F.Pollard, in E.H.R., xxxvii(1922), pp.533f.

successor, Sir Thomas More, was much happier in that sphere than in that of politics, and he set the tone for those who came after him.¹ Furthermore, and arising from this fact, the chancellorship as an office of state did not really answer the purpose which Cromwell had in mind. Even its administrative duties were circumscribed and defined. Wolsey had used it mainly to make himself a judge and a foreign minister. Cromwell's choice of offices shows that he had only the smallest interest in being the former, and a very secondary in being the latter. Above all he wished to govern England, and he knew that the first condition for such a government was control of the financial administration. This the chancellorship did not offer. Naturally, no man who aspired to be the king's chief councillor could ignore foreign affairs and diplomacy. But while Wolsey had built his power on these and on the majesty of a judge and cardinal, allowing the administrative machine largely to run itself under the impetus given to it by Henry VII's reforms, Cromwell desired to erect his power on a foundation of administrative control in all its details. He was never a judge, and the day-to-day conduct of judicial affairs is the one large item significantly absent from a catalogue of his activities.² The position to

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1. After Wolsey only one chancellor tried to free himself from some of his judicial duties in order to have time for politics. That was Wriothesley, and he failed (*ibid.*).
 2. This statement is not invalidated by the part he played in

which he aspired was in a sense a new one, for in 1530 general control of the administration rested with no single person except the king. He therefore chose an office which was now to the highest honours in which to embody this position. The reign of Henry VIII marks a transition in the field of ministerial preeminence with a startling directness very different from the usual evolutionary obscurity of these things. The last medieval chancellor was followed by the first modern secretary of state.¹

A word seems necessary on the question how far Cromwell was a free agent in choosing his offices. After all, it may be said that the chancellorship was in Audley's hands and Cromwell could not have taken it even if he had wanted to. To this it must be answered that people at the time thought that he could. As for the secretaryship, we saw that Cromwell undertook its duties at the first opportunity, even while it was yet in another's hand. That he deliberately ousted Gardiner from a position which implied the king's special confidence is indicated by his first securing Gardiner's removal on embassy to France, and by the fact that Gardiner's loss of the secretaryship coincided with his

political trials and investigations, or by the many petitions for redress of grievances which were addressed to him as they were to any other leading councillor.

1. Though Cromwell is never called secretary of state, we may here employ a slight anachronism in order to make plain what his "chief secretaryship" amounted to.

temporary banishment from court.¹ The acquisition of the office marked Cromwell's victory over his chief rival, and there cannot be much doubt that he deliberately picked the office for the purpose of making himself supreme. It may also be remarked in general that a study of the time makes it clear that where details of the administration were concerned the king did not interfere. Unless, therefore, there is definite evidence to the contrary, we may take it that Cromwell held a particular office because he wanted it, and not because the king wanted him to hold it.

It has often been noted that the rise of the secretaryship can be measured by the act of 1539 which appointed the order of sitting in the house of lords.² The chief secretary is there mentioned as one of the great officers of state, following the lords chancellor, treasurer, president of the council, privy seal, great chamberlain, constable, marshal, admiral, grand master or steward of the household, and king's chamberlain. This was promotion indeed for an officer whom Eltham Ordinances of 1526 had placed in the fourth group of those who were entitled to "bouche of court", on a level with the vice-chamberlains of the household.³ In 1526 the secretary had clearly still been a household official;⁴ by 1539

1. L.P. viii.441.

2. 31 Henry VIII c.10.

3. Household Ordinances, (Soc. of Ant.), pp.162f. The lord privy seal was placed two ranks higher (ibid.).

4. F.G.Evans, Principal Secretary, p.29.

he had become an officer of state. His importance was now such that if he was a baron or a bishop he was to take precedence over all other barons and bishops, and if a commoner he was to sit in the house of lords with the other ministers of state. The most significant aspect of the act is that it was not passed specifically to exalt Cromwell. Not only would he have taken his place as lord privy seal but he is actually mentioned by name as the king's vicegerent in spirituals, and as such he was to take precedence of all other members of the house, even the archbishop of Canterbury. Nevertheless the secretary was included in the terms of the act. It was not a question of doing something for Cromwell, but of marking the height to which he had raised the office of principal secretary which first gave him a visible position of preeminence in the government. The historian of the Tudor and Stuart secretaries has summed up Cromwell's new secretaryship as "not merely either the king's private servant or an administrative official, but a minister of the crown with definite political views, representing one among many factions between which the crown had to choose".¹

Though this was the kind of secretaryship which he had evolved for himself, it was not quite the kind which he passed on to his successors. He raised the secretary to a high

1. F.G.Evans, Principal Secretary, p.33.

advisory and executive position, but even he himself found it necessary to attain to a higher dignity when he was created a peer. The title of "master secretary" was good enough only because of what its holder had put into the office, and the higher office and better title of lord privy seal became desirable when master Cromwell became baron Cromwell of Wimbledon. Nevertheless he held both offices together for nearly four years. Perhaps he did not want to lose the profits of the secretaryship; perhaps, again, he feared to put a possible rival in the place which had made him great. At any rate, when he decided, or perhaps was forced during the ups and downs of the last months of his ministry, to give up the secretaryship, he curtailed its scope, powers, and newly-won dignity quite severely. The appointment of two secretaries, equal in power and apparently dealing with the same field of administration and policy, scotched any possibility there might have been of a principal secretary rivalling the lord privy seal. Wriothesley and Sadler were to be Cromwell's subordinates who were to take a good deal of the routine of government off his shoulders. It may well be asked why Cromwell suddenly decided to shed part of the burden which he had carried successfully for so long. The most probable answer would seem to be that the appointment, under himself, of two of his most able and trusted lieutenants was meant

to strengthen his position within the council in the quarrel with the Gardiner-Norfolk party which was reaching its height in April 1540, though other explanations are possible.¹

Whatever the reason, appointed they were, but they were not to be second Cromwells.² They were each to have a signet and to keep a book of what passed through their hands, but both were to know both sides and to pool their fees. The office continued as one exercised jointly by two holders, either because they were to provide a check on each other, or (which we think more likely) because the office was to run smoothly even when Cromwell decided to use either Wriothesley or Sadler for special purposes. They were to get all the profits incident to the office. Paragraph four of the instructions shows clearly for whose benefit they were appointed: "...at suche tymes as the Lorde Pryve seale shalbe present in the Courte" they "shall accompany him at his table". They were not to hold the exalted rank given to the secretaryship by the act of 1539, but were to take precedence after all peers spiritual and temporal and also after the four chief executive officers of the household - the treasurer, controller, master of the horse, and vice-chamberlain. This

1. Cf. below, pp. 353 ff.

2. The warrant of appointment is extracted in L.P. xv.437. The original (P.R.O. SP 1/158, ff.153-4) is printed in State Papers, Henry VIII, i.623; a slightly different later copy (B.M. Stowe MS 163, f.170) is printed by Evans (Principal Secretary, pp.360f.).

was a distinct downward step for the secretaryship. Cromwell presumably intended that an office which might possibly be dangerous to his own position should be cropped, and yet that trusty servants should be promoted to a place where they might be of use to him in the council. He certainly intended to keep them under his own control.

However, in the last resort these measures of downgrading the secretaryship were the result of Cromwell's own higher position as lord privy seal, and of the party struggles which preceded his fall. Cromwell's main influence on the secretaryship were those outlined before. He created the modern secretaryship and gave its holder the character of a minister of state who, if he wished, could put himself in the centre of the government. He fashioned the instrument which the Elizabethan secretaries took over and improved, though none of them ever commanded so all-embracing a supremacy because none of them combined so many offices in the temporal and spiritual spheres. Control of diplomacy and even of the king's counsels had been inherent in the pre-Cromwellian secretaryship and were merely brought to greater fruition by his personality. He did something new and unprecedented when he turned the secretaryship into the agency which co-ordinated the whole of the administration, making it thus the chief executive ministry under the crown.

V. Master of the Rolls.

About May 1534 the master of the rolls, John Taylor LL.D., an old chancery official and once clerk of parliament, was reported to be on the point of resigning his office. Cromwell had publicly mentioned as his successor a master in chancery and one of the leading civilians of the day, Dr. John Tregonwell. However, now that the matter became critical Tregonwell seemed to grow a little doubtful of his hopes and wrote to Cromwell in order to remind him of his previous promises.¹ His doubts were justified, for when Taylor actually resigned later in the year Cromwell took the office himself.² The date of his patent was 8 October 1534,³ but he was reported in office a fortnight earlier,⁴ and the chronicler Wriothesley says that he was made master of the rolls in the beginning of the Michaelmas term and took his oath in the chancery on the first day, that is on 6 October.⁵ Another tradition was thus overthrown, and the second office in the chancery also went to a layman, an innovation upheld by Cromwell's immediate successors. Cromwell laid down the office soon after he

1. L.P. vii.743.

2. Cromwell's patent declared that the office was vacant "per sursum reddicionem literarum nostrarum patencium per nos dilecto nobis Iohani Tgyler Clerico" (P.R.O. C 82/689/2).

3. L.P. vii.1352(3).

4. Ibid. 1182, John Husee to Lord Lisle on 23 September: "Cromwell is now Master of the Rolls."

5. Wriothesley, Chronicle, i.26. For the date cf. Cheney, Handbook of Dates, pp.67,70.

became lord privy seal, being succeeded by the attorney-general, Sir Christopher Hales, on 10 July 1536.¹

The mastership of the rolls was one of the most lucrative offices which Cromwell ever held. In the first year (1534-5) he received from it £291.4.10 1/2.² The period from Michaelmas 1535 to 12 July 1536, when he ceased to hold the office, yielded him £317.13.10 1/2.³ These sums were made up, as Cromwell's accounts show, first of all from the fees due to the master of the rolls for every patent written. In the first year he had £104 from the clerks of the potty bag and £35 from the six clerks, and in the last nine months £167 and £30 respectively from the same sources. He was also entitled to 2s. for every patent sealed,⁴ and entries under that head are duly noted as being paid by the underclerk of the hanaper. Further he received "casualties" from the cursitors, that is, fines on documents prepared by them. He had £8 out of the hanaper for his winter and summer robes, £4 from the chief butler of England for a tun of wine traditionally his due, a small traditional Christmas gift from the prior of the knights of St. John, the rent of the London assize court, and - very

1. L.P. xi.202(17).

2. P.R.O. SP 1/105, ff.24-5 (L.P. xi.66[i]). The same period yielded £284.1.6 by another account (L.P. ix.478). The difference is probably due to several items listed in the later account not having come in in time for the earlier.

3. P.R.O. SP 1/105, ff.26-8 (L.P. xi.66[ii]); or £310.17.0 by another account (L.P. xi.135).

4. Maxwell Lyte, Great Seal, p.333.

much a survival from earlier times - ten marks from the abbot of Thame for a horse to carry the king's records. As the rolls had long ceased to be carried about with the court, this was so much clear profit for the master. As keeper of the house of converts, an office combined with the mastership of the rolls since 1377 at the latest,¹ he was paid a regular annual allowance of £29.10.2 1/2 out of the hanaper, of which £13.6.8 were for himself while the rest went to the other officials and the inmates of the house.² The income which Cromwell derived from the mastership of the rolls was therefore considerable, but it was nothing to what the master might expect seventy years later.³ The great exploitation of crown offices for private gain had not yet begun.

There was another material benefit to be obtained from the office. The master of the rolls was entitled to an official residence, the Rolls House in Chancery Lane, on the site of the present Public Record Office. Very soon after

1. Ibid., p.11.

2. This sum appears also in the hanaper accounts (e.g., P.R.O. E 101/222/11) and, as it was charged on tallies, in the exchequer's declarations of the state of the treasury. In 1536 the money was entered as allowed to Thomas Cromwell, keeper of the hanaper, for payment to Thomas Cromwell, master of the rolls (P.R.O. E 169/69).

3. Cf. Maxwell Lyte, Great Seal, App.B, pp.409ff. In 1614 Sir Julius Caesar was told to expect a yearly income of £2380 from the mastership of the rolls. He found, however, that it decreased year by year from £2200 to £1600, but even that was still vastly more than Cromwell's profits amounted to.

Cromwell became master his letters began to be dated from "the Rolls".¹ Normally the residence went with the office, but Cromwell's letters prove clearly that he continued in possession of "the Rolls" long after he had ceased to be master.² Letters were addressed to "the Lord Privy Seal at the Rolls", and Cromwell had his clothes there as late as 1537.³ In view of this it is hardly surprising to hear that "Sir Christopher Hales being Master of the Rowles dined after at the Kinges Head taverne. He is reported during his tyme at the Rowles to have kept verye small house or none at all".⁴ The unfortunate man was being kept out of his official residence by the lord privy seal who treated the house as his private property.

The duties and scope of the office were basically the custody of the chancery records and of the house of converts. Neither of these need detain us for long. The master of the rolls was still considered personally responsible for the records; there survive orders to Cromwell's predecessor and his successor to cancel recognisances or make alterations in documents among the records in his keeping.⁵

1. Merriman, ii.279. The first surviving letter so dated is of 17 October 1534.

2. *Ibid.*, ii.281. The last surviving letter so dated is of 19 January 1538.

3. *L.P.* xi.769-70; xii.I.669.

4. Sanders, *Orders in Chancery*, p.17.

5. P.R.O. C 82/631/1, 635/10, 650/5, 664/23, 768/35, 767/12.

No such orders to Cromwell are extant, but we must nevertheless conclude that he, too, exercised at least a theoretical supervision. The keeper of the records in the Tower was appointed by the master of the rolls, as were the clerks of the Rolls Chapel;¹ if the master did not himself deal with the records, he was in charge of the officers who did. As for the house of converts, this contained during Cromwell's tenure of office one chaplain, two clerks, and three female converts.² With one official to every inmate, the administrative duties falling to the master's share must have been negligible. At any rate, there is no evidence that Cromwell ever had to attend in person to either of these aspects of his office.

Further, the master of the rolls, as the chief of the twelve masters in chancery,³ was one of the officials entitled to "write to the seal", that is to write documents to which the great seal was to be affixed. Ever since the reign of Edward I it had been chancery practice to write the name of the officer primarily responsible for a document in the lower right-hand margin;⁴ though originally the clerk who wrote the writ may himself have signed, this was clearly not the practice by Cromwell's time. His name appeared under a multitude

1. J.S. Wilson, Lord Chancellor in the early 17th Century, p.5.

2. Cf. the accounts of the keeper, e.g. P.R.O. E 101/254/5.

3. He was appointed as such by an order of the time of Henry V (Sanders, Orders in Chancery, p.7b).

4. Maxwell Lyte, Great Seal, p.266.

of documents issuing from the chancery, as is testified by original letters patent, and by copies on the memoranda rolls and in precedent books.¹ But the originals show that the name was appended by the writing clerk; there are no authentic signatures. Cromwell's name on a document does not prove that Cromwell had anything to do with the drafting, writing, or checking. The reason why his name, or for that matter the names of other masters of the rolls, appears with such frequency is supplied by the evidence of John Croke, master in chancery, who described the organisation of the chancery in 1554.²

Of the officials entitled to write to the seal, Croke said that the six clerks, the clerks of the petty bag, and the two examiners wrote "in the Master of the Rolls his name". In other words, all documents written by them would bear the name of the master of the rolls, and the master would in the last resort be responsible for them. Thus the master of the rolls supervised the greater part of the clerical side of chancery, the only clerks outside his immediate control being the clerk of the crown, the other masters, and the curcitors. The clerk of the crown, according to Croke, was responsible for "all sommissions and proces of the Crowne, and generally

1. E.g., P.R.O. C 193/2.

2. Sanders, Orders in Chancery, pp.10ff.

all processes that toucheth eyther life or member". The other masters would theoretically be able to write the same kind of writs as the master of the rolls, without exercising his supervision of other clerks, and some of their names occasionally appear on a document. They were, however, usually such leading civil lawyers as, for instance, doctors Tregonwell and Oliver, and were widely employed in various capacities by the government. They cannot, therefore, have attended much to their duties in chancery, though it should be noted that according to Croke they alone could make writs of superseas. One of their number, the prothonotary, was responsible for treaties and the like, as far as they were written in chancery. The cursitors could only write writs of course, or standardised writs whose issue required no special authority. That left all patents of grants and many writs to the six clerks and the petty bag who may be described as the two fundamental sections of the writing side of chancery.¹ They composed the special department of the master of the rolls; not only did they "write in...his name", but he also had the appointment of both groups in his gift.²

As master of the rolls, Cromwell, was, therefore, directly in charge of those parts of the chancery machinery which kept

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1. Croke gave a long list of writs affecting the judicial side of the chancery, "where the Master of the Rolles has a fee", which were reserved to the petty bag.
 2. Stat. 14 & 15 Henry VIII c.8; L.P. xii.II.638.

its records and issued, among other things, the less stereotyped kinds of documents. As the chief of the masters and second-in-command of the whole of chancery, he must have exercised a general control over the whole of its clerical organisation. In this respect, the office was of considerable importance in the administration, for though the chancery was no longer the sole or even perhaps the most important secretariat of the crown, it was still the biggest. It handled by far the greater part of the routine clerical work which enabled the government to be carried on. Even if Cromwell did not personally write, check, or "ply"¹ chancery documents, he was as master of the rolls responsible for a great many of them, and was altogether in charge of the whole writing side of chancery. On the available evidence it is impossible to say whether he personally ever carried out the routine duties of the office, but perhaps it may be considered significant that he never appointed a deputy, as permitted by his patent, and that he relinquished the office as soon as he became lord privy seal. This was at a time when his star was definitely in the ascendant, so that we cannot seek for the reason in opposition from the king or court. Nor would fear of

1. In May 1545 lord chancellor Wriothesley ordered "that no ordynarye processe do passe to the seale...but the same be first perused and plyed [~~folded~~] by some one of the Maisters of Chauncery" (Sanders, Orders in Chancery, p.8). Wriothesley learned his business under Cromwell; was he perhaps echoing a practice, or at least an intention, of his masters's?

pluralism explain it; one more office would hardly have made much difference among so many. The mastership of the rolls cannot have been considered too lowly an office, for Cromwell continued to hold the much inferior offices of the jewels, the hanaper, and the chancellorship of the exchequer until his fall. It seems more likely that the duties of the new office, involving as they did the supervision of yet another secretariat, and the mounting pressure of business that fell to the share of the king's chief minister, forced him to surrender an office which can in that case have been no sinecure.

Today however we are inclined to think of the master of the rolls as primarily a judge. Did Cromwell act as one? The answer is complicated by the fact that Cromwell was a councillor and as such endowed with quasi-judicial functions; the many appeals to him and his frequent arbitrations between contending parties are really to be ascribed to that side of his official life. In March 1535, for instance, a number of men were said to be due to appear before him, either by himself, or with others in the star chamber, or with the chancellor.¹ The very mention of the star chamber indicates that conciliar powers are in question, and the fact that most of the cases concerned treasonable utterances strengthens that interpretation. Without investigating all chancery procee-

1. L.P. viii.457.

dings for the relevant two years, a task quite beyond the scope of the present study, it cannot be claimed as fully proven that Cromwell never sat as a judge in chancery, either as the lord chancellor's deputy at Westminster or hearing cases in the Rolls Chapel, as did the master of the rolls of the early seventeenth century.¹ During the reign of Henry VIII the master of the rolls was sometimes called vice-chancellor, the appellation being given to Cromwell himself on one occasion,² and Wolsey began to delegate part of the chancellor's judicial duties to him.³ While, however, we know of commissions to Cromwell's predecessor and to one of his successors to hear cases because the chancellor was too busy in other affairs,⁴ there survives no such commission for Cromwell. During his rule the chancellor, Audelay, confined himself to his judicial duties and needed no help. It is, moreover, clear that the real rise of the master of the rolls as a judge dates from the early seventeenth century,⁵ while the theory that the master had no original authority of his own but acted only as the chancellor's deputy persisted into

1. J.S.Wilson, Lord Chancellor in the early 17th Century, p.6.

2. L.P. viii.225.

3. W.S.Holdsworth, Hist. of Law, i.419.

4. L.P. iv.5666: commission to John Taylor, master of the rolls, and others, to relieve Wolsey; and L.P. xix.II.527(24): the same to Sir Robert Southwell and three masters in chancery, to relieve Wriothesley.

5. Holdsworth, op.cit., i.420; Wilson, op.cit., pp.5f.

the nineteenth.¹ The weight of the evidence is, therefore, against any supposition that Cromwell acted as a judge in chancery.

A slight doubt is raised by the appeal to him of a defendant in a chancery suit.² But John Clifford's petition is addressed to Cromwell as secretary and merely mentions his mastership of the rolls as an office which would enable him to help the petitioner against the chancellor's hostility. The wording makes it quite plain that the only judge in the chancery would be the lord chancellor himself. The case dragged on until May 1537 when it was decided by Audley against Cromwell's petitioner;³ his mastership of the rolls does not seem to have enabled Cromwell to speed up or influence a case under consideration.

Though Cromwell was not commissioned to hear cases, there was some special business which he had to transact as master of the rolls. Perhaps nothing particularly appertaining to the office was implied by his acting in land purchases for

1. Holdsworth, op.cit., i.421.

2. L.P. vii.1631(2). The original has been examined (P.R.O. SP 1/88, ff.66-7). The letter under ibid. 1631(1) belongs to 1528 as stated in L.P., and therefore to Cromwell's private practice in those early years. Not only is the date with its day of the week conclusive, but there is also the mention "Mayster Norwyche...my seriaunt" (not in the extract). Sir Robert Norwich was appointed chief justice of the common pleas in November 1530 (L.P. iv.6741[22]).

3. L.P. xii.I.1138.

the crown, for he had taken such action before he became master of the rolls; but when we find him associated in such a purchase with the chancellor, attorney-general, and solicitor-general, we may well suppose that he was acting by virtue of the one legal office he held.¹ Of more interest is the ~~the~~ commission to him, as master of the rolls and jointly with the chancellor, which gave him power to grant denizations.² The patent rolls prove that he used the powers thus conferred only a little.³ As master of the rolls he was also commissioned to take compositions for first fruits under the act of 26 Henry VIII c.3; the details of this are discussed in another place.⁴

It would appear, then, that the mastership of the rolls did three things for Cromwell. It greatly increased his income and gave him a house; it gave him control over the clerical, that is the administrative, side of chancery; and it gave him an office of antiquity and such standing that during those years he was usually described as chief secretary and master of the rolls. He seems to have attended to

1. L.P. viii.362. He is described there as chief secretary and master of the rolls.
2. Ibid. 291(17).
3. P.R.O. C 66/665 (26 Henry VIII, part 2), where of 105 denizations entered on the last three membranes 11 are marked "per T Cromwell". There are no traces of denizations granted by Cromwell on the other patent rolls of 1534-6.
4. Below, Chapter III, Section IV.

the administrative duties of the office rather than to its legal and judicial possibilities. There is nothing to show that he altered its scope or functions in any way, or gave it an increased importance in the official hierarchy.

In view of the fact that the mastership of the rolls interested Cromwell mainly for the control it gave him over the chancery clerks, this seems the right place to discuss the few changes which took place in the chancery organisation during his rule, and to see whether he was concerned in them. By far the most interesting development is the appearance of an official apparently charged with examining the patents granted. A warrant delivered into chancery on 29 April 1536 is annotated " R Cupper exa[minavi]t paten'",¹ after which time Cupper's name becomes ever more frequent in the files until nearly every warrant is thus countersigned by him. Who he was is uncertain. He was not one of the six clerks or clerks of the petty bag in 1535, for their names are listed in one of the accounts of Cromwell's income as master of the rolls.² He was, however, definitely concerned with the writing and passing of grants, as is proved by a note written by a clerk of the signet on the back of a warrant delivered in September 1540, in which Cupper is requested to pass a signed petition as warrant for the great seal in the absence

1. P.R.O. C 82/708/41.

2. P.R.O. SP 1/105, f.24.

of the lord privy seal.¹ His duties were probably to examine grants and compare them with the warrant, so that they resembled and anticipated those of the office of examiners of letters patent, first granted in 1547.² As Cupper began his activities during the time of Cromwell's mastership of the rolls it seems permissible to see here a reform sponsored by Cromwell himself.

We must further note two new clerkships established by patent. Though both were earlier than Cromwell's appointment to the rolls, they both involve him to a certain extent. There was, firstly, the clerkship of dispensations and faculties, an office created by the act of 25 Henry VIII c.21. The clerk's duties were to prepare confirmations under the great seal of dispensations and faculties granted by the archbishop of Canterbury who by the statute had taken over the pope's powers in that respect.³ Not only, therefore, was the office an outcome of Cromwell's general policy, but it was also granted to Cromwell's old friend and servant, Stephen Vaughan.⁴ The appointment was the more surprising because Vaughan had no training in the chancery so that his patent had explicitly to state that he was not to be handi-

1. P.R.O. C 82/772/2.

2. Maxwell Lyte, Great Seal, p.266.

3. Ibid., p.277.

4. L.P. vii.587(13), where the exact nature of the office is not made plain. Cf. the original, P.R.O. C 66/663, m.37.

capped by the fact "quod prefatus Stephanus in Curia Cancellario nostre educatus seu in cursu eiusdem eruditus non existat". Such an appointment, over the heads of trained chancery clerks, of such a man, can only have been due to Cromwell's personal influence. Neither his lack of experience, nor the fact that he was empowered to employ a deputy seem, however, to have prevented Vaughan from carrying out the duties of the office during such time as he was in England. The transcript of a letter patent on a memoranda roll adds his name, with the explanatory note, necessary perhaps because of the novelty of the office, "Stephanus Vaughan Regie maiestatis Ad facultates clericus".¹

The other new office, that of the clerk of the leases, who was to "write, expedite, and exemplify all Letters Patent of grants of land",² dates from 11 June 1534 when it was granted to John Croke, one of the six clerks.³ The patent appointed him an annuity of £20 backdated to the previous Easter, thus proving that he had already held the office for some time. Croke was an old-established chancery official, one of the six clerks as early as 1523,⁴ and a master in chancery in 1554.⁵ He was also, however, a friend of

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1. P.R.O. E 159/315, Communia, Michaelmas Term, Recorda, m.18.
 2. Maxwell Lyte, Great Seal, p.274.
 3. P.R.O. C 66/665, m.27. L.P. vii.922(6) describes him simply as "clerk of the enrolments".
 4. He was mentioned in the act of 14 & 15 Henry VIII c.8.
 5. Sanders, Orders in Chancery, p.10.

Cromwell's who had originally appointed him one of the executors of his will of 12 July 1529.¹ His appointment to the clerkship may, of course, have had nothing to do with Cromwell, but the fact of their friendship is suggestive.

There would appear to have been no other changes in the organisation of the chancery during the 1530's. The chancery as a department was sufficiently developed and stereotyped to require no attention from Cromwell in his reforming activities. He was content, as master of the rolls, to supervise a secretariat whose routine had become fixed long before his time.

1. Horrigan, i.63, n.1. Later Cromwell replaced Croke by Vaughan.

VI. Lord Privy Seal.

On 2 July 1536 Cromwell was appointed to be keeper of the privy seal in succession to the earl of Wiltshire.¹ Wiltshire's position as one of the king's chief councillors had been doubtful ever since the fall of queen Anne, his daughter, and Cromwell had in fact been carrying out the duties of the office for at least a week before the appointment took effect under his patent. The writ to the exchequer which ordered the first payment of his fees also authorised payment for the period 24 June to 2 July.²

Cromwell thus became the fourth great officer of state, after the chancellor, treasurer, and president of the council, and for the rest of his life he governed the country, and controlled the administration, in that capacity. Even after he had been granted the greater but empty dignity of lord great chamberlain of England³ he was still habitually addressed as lord privy seal, for it was as such that he headed the government. The office provided not only a high place in the official hierarchy but also a handsome income of £365 a year, specified in his patent of appointment as derived from the customs collected at various ports.⁴ This fee of one pound

1. L.P. xi.202(3).

2. P.R.O. E 159/314, m.39d.

3. On 18 April 1540 (L.P. xv.540).

4. £90 from the port of Poole, £56.13.4 from Bristol, £200 from the petty customs of London, and £18.6.8 from Plymouth and Fowey.

a day had originally been intended for the maintenance of the keeper of the privy seal and his staff when absent from the royal household, but it had long ago become the lord privy seal's personal salary.¹ Unfortunately there survive no accounts of Cromwell's with details of official incomes for later than the beginning of 1536 so that we cannot tell whether he received more from the office than this £365. It is, however, likely that he shared in the profits of the seal.²

As Gardiner's eclipse had been marked by his loss of the secretaryship, so the fall of the Boleyn party became manifest with Wiltshire's loss of the keepership of the privy seal, and in both cases Cromwell stepped into the vacancy. All the other offices which he held had always been vacant through the death or resignation of the last holder, but the two positions which gave him his chief political and ministerial powers were acquired at the cost of dispossessing one of the king's chief councillors. It was possible to do this because the secretary had no patent of appointment at all, while the lord privy seal's patent granted the office during pleasure. Both offices were therefore freely at the king's disposal. We feel justified in concluding that Cromwell took his minor offices, which were to him mainly a means of particular control

1. Tout, Chapters, v.83f.

2. In 1634 the keeper of the privy seal was one of the officials authorised to profit from the process by which tobacco licences were granted (Maxwell Lyte, Great Seal, p.355).

within specified departments, as they happened to fall vacant, while the secretaryship and the keepership of the privy seal were his deliberate choice. He intended to govern through them because he saw the possibilities inherent in their lack of fixed duties and defined scope.

In a way, it was the choice of the secretaryship which was decisive. That office gave him all the power he could want, but however much lustre he might add to it it was not yet one to be held by a peer,¹ and apparently it was thought that the time had come for the king's chief councillor to be rewarded with a title of nobility. It may of course have been the other way about, for a lord privy seal who was neither a bishop nor a peer was as unheard of as a noble secretary. The dates of Cromwell's promotion to the keepership (2 July or 24 June) and of his creation as baron Cromwell (8 July)² are too close together for any argument to rest on their sequence. It is likely that both steps were decided on together and taken conjointly. If Cromwell was to be promoted, the office of lord privy seal was the obvious next step. Not only was it the only high office of state occupied by a councillor fallen from grace and therefore readily removed,³ but

1. The first secretary of state who was also a peer was Lucius viscount Falkland, appointed in 1642 (Evans, Principal Secretary, p.350). Burleigh, unlike Cromwell, relinquished the secretaryship in 1572 when he was created a peer.

2. L.P. xi.46,202(14).

3. The lord chancellor, Audley, was not the man to oppose

it was also the traditional promotion for the secretary.¹ Moreover, it alone offered possibilities similar to those which Cromwell had exploited in the secretaryship. The chancellor was tied up with legal business and had lost his place at the head of the administrative machine; we have seen that Cromwell appears to have avoided the office deliberately.² The lord treasurer's departmental duties were to supervise the exchequer, but the exchequer was the least important of the great financial departments of the time. The office did not regain great practical importance, in addition to its traditionally high standing which it never lost, until the reforms of Mary's reign restored exchequer supremacy in the financial field.³ As for the president of the council, his position was so obscure and purely titular that we might doubt his existence if he were not mentioned in two acts of parliament.⁴

The office of the lord privy seal, on the other hand,

either Cromwell or Henry. The offices of lords treasurer and president of the council were held by the two dukes, Norfolk and Suffolk, whom Cromwell could not afford to antagonise. Moreover, they were firmly enough in favour, owing to a similar absence of independence of mind.

1. In the fifteenth century six secretaries became keepers of the privy seal (J. Otway Ruthven, King's Secretary, p. 87, n. 2).
2. Above, pp. 111ff.
3. Therefore, Burleigh (was he modelling his career on Cromwell's?) took first the office of lord privy seal but exchanged it for that of lord treasurer as soon as possible.
4. 21 Henry VIII c. 20, and 31 Henry VIII c. 10. Cf. A. F. Pollard, in E. H. R., xxxvii (1922), pp. 353f.

provided all the opportunities for a premiership which had also been inherent in the humbler office of the secretary. Its holders during the reign - Ruthal, Marny, Tunstall, and Wiltshire - had all been great men in the state and leading councillors. The reports of the imperial ambassador show, for instance, how large a part the lord privy seal might play in diplomacy. Between Wolsey's fall and Cromwell's rise, Wiltshire was clearly the king's chief councillor after Norfolk. Nevertheless, the use which Cromwell made of the office was peculiar to himself. There is no need to recite again the spheres of government with which he concerned himself as lord privy seal; they have been set out in detail in our account of his secretaryship. Cromwell's work continued unchanged after he took on his new dignity, and the significance of his promotion was social and personal rather than political.

Apart from its general powers as one of the great offices of state, the keepership also involved departmental duties. The lord privy seal was very definitely the head of the privy seal office, but this and Cromwell's dealings with it will have to be discussed in another place.¹ Furthermore, the lord privy seal was regarded as the ex officio president of the court of requests. Although this association was never established by anything more definite than

1. Below, Chapter 4, Sections II and III.

custom or, at the most, prescription, and although the normal practice of the sixteenth century did not support it, it was considered so ~~■~~ certain by legal writers like Coke that we must concern ourselves with this aspect of the lord privy seal's duties.¹

In Cromwell's time the court always described itself simply as the king's council, but it was referred to by others as a court,² sat regularly at Westminster,³ and showed clear evidence of a fixed personnel. The phrase "court of requests" occurs for the first time in its order books at the beginning of the Hilary term, 20 Henry VIII (1529), where a list is given of "suche Counsaillours as be appoynted for the Heryng of Power mennes causes in the Kynges Courte of Requestes".⁴ The lord privy seal is not in the list of fifteen names which are headed by the bishops of Lincoln and St. Asaph and the dean of the chapel. We are also assured that there is no evidence that any keeper of the privy seal took an active part in the affairs of the court under Elizabeth.⁵ On the other hand, bishop Foxe as lord privy seal

1. Cf. Sir E. Coke, Fourth Institute, p.97: "wherein the Lord Privie Seale at his pleasure and the Masters of Requests do assemble and sit."
2. A defendant would declare himself ready to abide by the decision of "thys honorable Court" (P.R.O. Req 2/1/18, no.3).
3. Leadam, Select Cases in the Court of Requests, pp.xii ff.
4. P.R.O. Req 1/5, f.86. The list is not later than the date given because the Sir John Huse mentioned in it was created a peer in the 1529 session of parliament (G.E.C., vii.16).
5. W.B.J. Allsebrook, Court of Requests, p.5.

presided over its origins;¹ in 1608 a letter was addressed to the then lord privy seal, enumerating the shortcomings of the court and suggesting that these might be helped "if it pleased your lordship to grace and honour the Court sometyms with your presence" and if the usual judge reported to him daily on what had taken place;² and in the reign of Charles I a reforming lord privy seal at last revived Foxe's activities in the court.³ It therefore seems that we may believe Coke. The lord privy seal was, at least in theory, specially connected with the court of requests, and we must seek to discover whether Cromwell had anything to do with it.

It seems quite certain that Cromwell did nothing materially to affect the growth of the court. Though it might continue to call itself the king's council in general terms, it was a clearly defined branch of that body by 1529, with its residence fixed at the White Hall and a definite body of councillors delegated to do its work.⁴ Nor does it appear that the work of the court either increased or decreased noticeably during the time of Cromwell's supremacy. The

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1. A.F. Pollard, Wolsey, p. 83. Professor Pollard suggested that it was Foxe's long association with the budding court which established the connection.
 2. Printed by Leadam, op.cit., pp. xcvi ff.
 3. The earl of Manchester, ibid., p. xlvii.
 4. Ibid., pp. xii ff. By 1531 the order books at times use the phrase "court of requests" (P.R.O. Req 1/5, f. 254 et al.), though later they revert to an exclusive use of "king's council".

question whether Cromwell himself ever sat in the court is much more difficult to answer. The books of orders and decrees do not mention his name, but their entries are after a pattern and never specify any of the members of the court.¹ We are, therefore, forced back on the proceedings, the only other class of documents in the court which is extant for this period. The 172 cases which we can at present be certain belong to the years of Cromwell's rule have been examined; though there are probably more, the number is large enough to permit some generalisations.²

Many of the documents in the files bear notes and endorsements in the hand of the clerk of the court³ and signed by a number of king's councillors. There are eight such councillors' names in the period with which we are concerned: Nicholas Hare, Edward Carne, Thomas Thirlby, Richard Sampson (bishop of Chichester), John Tregonwell, William Sulyard, Richard Wolman, and Edmund Bonner.⁴ Of these Sampson, Sulyard,

1. P.R.O. Req 1/5-7.

2. All the cases have been gone into which are dated 27-31 Henry VIII (1535-40) in Hunt's Calendar at the P.R.O. It must be supposed that among those he left undated there are some at any rate belonging to that period, but there could be no thought of going through them to date them, and the 172 dated ones are enough to justify deductions.

3. Richard Turnour, the senior clerk of the privy seal (Lambard, Archeion, p.230).

4. A ninth, Robert Southwell, occurs on a document marked by a modern hand as later than March 1539 (P.R.O. Req 2/9/134), but Southwell was apparently not connected with the court until 1541 (D.N.B., xviii.701b).

and Wolman were in the list of 1529, quoted above. The signatures appear singly or in pairs; once Hare, Tregonwell, and Thirlby are associated,¹ and twice we find four names.² These, then, would seem to be the men who did the actual work of the court. Admittedly, it might be possible to argue that bigger men, more important councillors, were present, and that the smaller fry were deputed to see to the issue of privy seals for appearances, or to the committal of cases for local enquiry. But the same men also signed the decrees of the court.³ Interrogatories and letters concerning cases were addressed to Hare and Thirlby;⁴ a petition was endorsed to the effect that "yt is ordred by S' Nycholas Hare Knyght, on of the kinges honerable Councell";⁵ a defendant was ordered to appear "per mandatum magistri Hare", an order transmitted "per nuncium camere";⁶ Hare himself wrote a letter to a defendant in terms which show him to have been in charge.⁷ Perhaps we may already call these councillors who did the actual work the masters of requests, though their number indicates that the final system of two masters-

1. P.R.O. Req 2/3/147.

2. Ibid. 3/112 - Sampson, Hare, Carne, Thirlby; and ibid. 12/184 - Hare, Thirlby, Bonner, Carne.

3. P.R.O. Req 1/5, ff.379,435 (Wolman and Sulyard); Req 2/3/31, 147,187 (Hare and Tregonwell).

4. Ibid. 4/104 and 6/172.

5. Ibid. 3/78.

6. Ibid. 6/175.

7. Ibid. 6/107: "otherwyse I shall be drevyn of Iustice at the request of the said partye to send for you by proces."

in-ordinary had not yet evolved.¹ At any rate, the evidence is clear on two points: there were a number of councillors specially detached to do the work of the court of requests and actually engaged in doing it, and the lord privy seal was not one of them. There is nothing to show that he ever took an active part in this work.

While remembering that an argument based on the absence of evidence is always liable to be overthrown by the discovery of fresh evidence, we might yet be content with this definite assertion. But there are two cases among the 172 investigated in which Cromwell appears. The first is that of Henry Reed (alias Sagon) v. Sir Thomas Tyrell, to be dated roughly into the second half of 1538.² It is not at first sight different from any other case, except that the plaintiff addressed his petition to the "right honorable the lord pryvyseale", in defiance of the custom that bills in the court of requests were addressed to the king, or to king and council.

1. In this connection it is of interest to note that the two most frequent signatories, and the only two common lawyers in our list (the others were all well-known civilians), viz. Hare and Sulyard, do not appear ever to have acted together. Hare first appears on 22 November 1537 (P.R.O. Req 2/2/162), and Sulyard last on the 27th of that month (ibid. 8/284). He was appointed to the council in the marches of Wales towards the end of 1537 (L.P. xii.II.1094,1152); was Hare his successor as representative of the common law?
2. P.R.O. R31 2/1/18. The privy seal included in the file is dated 1 July and orders an appearance by 14 October; an endorsement is dated 29 June 1538.

This same petition, however, bears endorsements (orders for defendant's appearance and commissions of enquiry to local magistrates) which are signed by Hare and Carne and prove clearly that the case went through the usual stages in the court. So does the whole of the file, which contains plaintiff's petition, defendant's answer, commission under the privy seal - all part of the regular proceduro. Why, then, was the petition addressed to Cromwell?

The answer would seem to lie in its contents. Reed stated that his quarrel with Tyrell was of long standing. He had appealed four times to the duke of Norfolk who had eventually ordered Tyrell to leave the plaintiff in peace, but after some time new disturbances had provoked an earlier appeal to Cromwell, with again a temporary end to the nuisance. Now, however, Tyrell was once more causing trouble, and Reed was therefore once again appealing for justice. He appealed to Cromwell personally, but there is no doubt that his appeal was investigated by the court of requests. May we not conclude that Cromwell grew tired of so persistent a petitioner, or was doubtful of himself achieving the desired result against a man who had already disobeyed his instructions? Perhaps, too, he did not wish to antagonise a man who was one of the leading gentlemen in his county and had, for instance, been of some use to the government during the

northern rebellion.¹ It seems clear that for some such reason he preferred to leave the matter in the hands of the established court into whose jurisdiction this "poor man's cause" belonged. Thus he passed on a petition meant for himself personally, so that it was afterwards handled by the usual officers of the court, in the manner usual there, a fact which tends to confirm our argument that Cromwell did not personally attend its sittings. He was petitioned by many men, many of them poor, but only one such petition is found in the records of the court of requests. Usually he dealt with such matters directly, as he had done with Reed's earlier petition, but he asked the court to settle this particular business.

The other case which we must consider does not at first sight fit into the picture here presented. However, it actually confirms our view that Cromwell did not receive petitions as the president of the court of requests, but rather as one of the king's councillors and the most powerful subject in the land. The case is that of Simon Stretton v. William Butler.² Here we find none of the procedure usual in the court of requests. The file consists of five documents: an order to defendant signed by five Warwickshire J.P.s, a petition (or rather, a reminder) from plaintiff to Cromwell, a personal letter from Cromwell to three local magistrates of

1. L.P. xi.615,642.

2. P.R.O. Req 2/4/203.

Warwickshire, their reply, and witnesses' depositions taken by them. The only sign that the papers belong to the court is an endorsement on the last named document, "det' est ut infra". This is written in a different hand from that which wrote "conserning streton" above it; the latter hand is one which occurs frequently on the backs of Cromwell's papers and must therefore have belonged to one of his private clerks.

These documents suggest the procedure of the court in a rudimentary way. Plaintiff's petition was apparently replaced by a personal interview and a subsequent written reminder that Cromwell had promised assistance. There is no defendant's answer, but Cromwell's letter shows that one local gentleman had written on his behalf. Instead of a commission under the privy seal there is an informal letter signed by Cromwell, which is, however, described by the recipients as a "lettre commyssyve". Their answer is not a formal certificate rendered to the council but again an informal letter, this time to Cromwell. The documents make it quite plain that Cromwell dealt with the case personally and on his own. There is no mention of court or council, no name or signature of one of the regular judges, everything is on paper instead of parchment. We have here, in fact, an example of the way in which Cromwell handled petitions addressed to himself; he used the method common in the council and conciliar courts of

getting the facts established by the local magistrates before deciding on the merits of a case. There is nothing in this to show him acting as a member of the court of requests.

The question how the file came to be among the records of the court of requests can only be answered by a conjecture suggested by the endorsements on the depositions. Having discovered the facts of the case Cromwell apparently handed the papers to the court for a decree to be made, a procedure which may have seemed advisable to him because previous attempts to secure justice for the plaintiff had apparently failed. This reason is very similar to that offered as an explanation for the earlier case. Together, the two cases suggest that while Cromwell did not habitually use the court of requests for the redress of grievances brought to his notice, and while he did not preside over the court in person, he yet employed its authority - the authority of the king's council - in cases where less formal and therefore less authoritative steps had been unsuccessful.

The keepership of the privy seal did not, therefore, involve Cromwell in the routine work of a judge, and he did not concern himself with the court of requests in any particular way. The working of the courts, whether common law, chancery, or conciliar, was not one of the reasons for which he acquired any of his many offices. As lord privy seal he held a high

position and earned a considerable salary, and as lord privy seal he superintended the government of England. Though he did not neglect the departmental business of the privy seal, that was but a small part of the work which the office brought him. More even than the principal secretaryship, the greater title and office enabled him to stand forth as the king's chief minister.

VII. The Significance of the Offices.

Cromwell's six major offices have now been examined. We have left out the two ecclesiastical titles of vicar-general and vicegerent in spirituals because they do not concern this study of Cromwell's lay administration, and a number of lesser offices most of which are in any case unconnected with the central government.¹ We have also left out the mastership of the wards which Cromwell never held, despite allegations to the contrary.² What are the conclusions that emerge from this survey?

It is plain, first of all, that none of these six offices were sinecures. Cromwell did the work of the master of the jewels; he did some at least of the work of the clerk of the hanaper, the chancellor of the exchequer, and the master of the rolls; he created for himself the immense amount of work which he did as secretary and as lord privy seal. Every one of these posts, except perhaps the mastership of the rolls, was given a new scope, greater powers, a higher standing, through being held by him. His main concern cannot have been with the money the offices provided, for in no case have we seen him making large profits out of his official positions, and such evidence as there is has suggested that he

1. Cf. the list in Merriman, ii.283f., to which should be added the surveyorship of the king's woods (below, p.167, n.1).
 2. See the note at the end of this chapter.

never got more than the bare minimum due to him. The incomes of the mastership of the rolls, of the lord privy seal, and possibly that of the secretary, were large but not so large as to suggest that they provided the main attraction. It has already been said several times that Cromwell's reason for holding these offices must primarily have been a desire to control the government by means of direct powers in various branches of the administration. We have pointed the contrast between him and Wolsey. Both were the king's chief ministers, exercising a greater power under the crown than perhaps any single man had ever held before, during the reign of a strong king. But while Wolsey concentrated on his work as a judge and a foreign minister, seeking power in the star chamber and in the councils of Europe, Cromwell turned to the work of detailed supervision of the administrative machine for which his abilities so peculiarly fitted him. He deliberately neglected aspects of his offices which would have given him the powers of a judge, and we can only conclude that he was not interested. The nature of his work was less obviously brilliant than Wolsey's; by the same token it was also more enduring.

At the same time, there is a danger in thus discussing Cromwell's offices one by one. They were held together and by one man, and the first thing that strikes one is the wide

sweep of Cromwell's influence and interests, as well as the perfectly incredible powers of work which he must have possessed. During the two years when he was master of the rolls he also held the offices of principal secretary, master of the jewels, clerk of the hanaper, and chancellor of the exchequer, not to mention other minor tasks in the government which would also require his personal attention, such as the surveyorship of the king's woods, or a commission of sewers, or a commission of the peace. In March 1540 he was, at one and the same time, lord privy seal, principal secretary, and chancellor of the exchequer, in addition to his ecclesiastical offices; we may suppose that the duties of the jewels and the hanaper were by then carried out by his fellows, Williams and Sadler. When he fell, three months later, he had exchanged the secretaryship for the title of great chamberlain of England; his work and industry had remained the same. Throughout these years he was, moreover, the man who guided the king's policy and diplomacy and organised parliament. It seems almost incredible that one man, with only twenty-four hours at his disposal every day, should have been able to do so much. But it is well to remember that his pluralism, glaring though never criticised by contemporaries, was not motivated by greed or ostentation. The basis of his magnificent collection of offices was the desire to control every

branch of the administration, and to do so, as far as possible, through the possession of an office and a standing in every branch.

From one point of view, Cromwell's offices fall into two groups: the departmental posts offering a limited scope in a definite field, and the secretaryship and keepership of the privy seal which carried all-embracing powers without traditional limitations. Another division is, however, more interesting from an administrative point of view. There are, firstly, the three financial offices - jewel house, hanaper, and exchequer. They were the first appointments which Cromwell held, and their choice indicates that his first concern was to gain control of the financial machinery. He followed herein in the footsteps of such a leading financial official as Sir John Heron who had combined the offices of treasurer of the chamber, chamberlain of the exchequer, supervisor of customs in the port of London, clerk of the jewel house, and clerk of the hanaper.¹ It must have seemed in 1533 that Cromwell was making for a similar accumulation of financial offices in one hand. However, he was something more than a leading civil servant and would not concentrate all his energies on relatively minor administrative posts. Nevertheless he acquired a footing in the chamber machinery of finance, in

1. Cf. A.P. Newton, in E.H.R., xxxii(1917), p.357.

the treasury of the chancery, and in the exchequer, and thereby enabled himself to become a minister of finance.

The second group of offices, too, has a common denominator. It provided control over the three secretariats of state. The clerks of the signet, of the privy seal, and of chancery were the subordinates of the secretary, lord privy seal, and master of the rolls. Here again, something more than coincidence, some definite plan, suggests itself. Naturally, the first condition of power under Henry VIII was a personal standing at court guaranteeing the possession of the king's ear. But anyone who wished to govern through a close control of the machinery of government would have to make himself master of those who provided the means of government and of those who were the agents of the executive. He would have to be master of the financial machine and of the bureaucracy. Cromwell's choice of offices proves that he realised this, and that he was working towards just such a direct and personal control of the machinery. We must therefore now investigate his relations with these sections of the administration, the financial and clerical organisations.

Note to Chapter 2: Master of the Wards.

In his life of Cromwell in the Dictionary of National Biography Dr. Gairdner stated that in 1532 Cromwell was made master of the king's wards,¹ and the assertion was repeated by Merriman.² The office was normally granted by patent, but there is no trace of Cromwell having obtained one. The evidence must therefore be circumstantial rather than direct. It is true that about the end of 1532 there are to be found certain indications that Cromwell held the office. On 16 September, Sir John Lamplough wrote to him that "the saying here is ye shulde be Master off the Wardes", and went on to assure Cromwell of his readiness to "doo the Kynges Hennesse suche service Concernyng the same as shall pleyss you to Command me".³ Similarly, a gentleman of Cumberland wrote to him on 18 October: "Sir, hit his shewyt me yt z^e ar master off the kynges wardes, qwyh I wald be glad y^roff, & yff so be y^e hade neyd off a substanciall feodore" - and he proceeded to outline the local difficulties of that position.⁴ Twice we find letters addressed to Cromwell as "Master of the kyng our Souereign lorde wairdes" and "maister of the kinges wardes"

1. D.N.B., v.198b.

2. Merriman, i.143.

3. P.R.O. SP 1/71, f.38 (L.P. v.1317).

4. P.R.O. SP 1/71, f.138 (L.P. v.1447). L.P. here contain a bad misreading, "y^e" being rendered as "I" and "feodore" as "favour". The hand is crabbed and the spelling peculiar, but there can be no doubt that the reading given in the text is correct.

respectively.¹ The second address is of special interest, for while the former letter is concerned with a wardship so that the address may be the result of the subject under discussion, the latter is an appeal from a prisoner in the Tower and has not the remotest connection with wards. The fact that Cromwell was master of the wards would therefore seem to have been sufficiently well known for any letter to be addressed to him by that title.

There are a good many other references to wardships in Cromwell's correspondence, but they need be no more than indications of Cromwell's wide control over every sphere of the administration and do not specify that he was actually master. However, the four letters quoted would normally be sufficient evidence and Gairdner might be considered justified, were it not for some stronger evidence on the other side.

The papers of the master of the wards himself never show Cromwell active in that capacity. He appears in an entry book of sales of wardships, but only because he acquired two wardships, incidentally without having to pay for them.² The man who is constantly seen acting as master of the wards is Sir William Paulet.³ The patent roll would seem to deny completely the evidence adduced in favour of Cromwell's tenure

1. P.R.O. SP 1/71, f.46 (L.P. v.1327), and 76, f.137 (L.P. vi. 551).

2. P.R.O. Wards 9/149, ff.94,100v.

3. Cf., e.g., ibid. 179, an entry book of indentures.

of the office. On 21 December 1534 Paulet was appointed sole master of wards, on surrender of the patent of 3 November 1526 which granted the office jointly to him and Sir Thomas Englefield, then serjeant-at-law and later justice of the common pleas.¹ Englefield and Paulet were therefore apparently joint masters until December 1534, although it is of course possible that Paulet alone should have done all the work even before that time. As a matter of fact, even after the time when Cromwell was supposed to be master of the wards Englefield was acting together with Paulet as one party to an indenture,² and there survives, filed in one of the miscellaneous books of the court of wards, a royal warrant addressed to Paulet and Englefield as masters of the wards and dated 16 April 1533.³ We may therefore take it as proven beyond any possibility of doubt that a few months after the time when at least four people thought that Cromwell was or was to be master of the wards Englefield still held the office together with Paulet.

The matter might be complicated by a letter which Englefield wrote to Cromwell, "Thankyng you for your payn taken for me in the Attenyng off my Rocompens ffor my office off the Masterschippe of the kynges wardes". The letter is dated

1. L.P. vii.1601(29).

2. P.R.O. Wards 9/179, f.209 (26 March 1533).

3. Ibid. 149, f.48.

11 February and was placed into 1532 in the Letters and Papers.¹ There would thus be some indication that Englefield left the office at about the critical time. However, the dating is wrong, as two facts prove. Englefield speaks of "the new statute" which will enable him to adjudge at Hereford assizes murders committed in Wales. The reference can only be to the act of 26 Henry VIII c.6, passed after November 1534. He also mentions the criminals in question, "the Vaughans", and their acquittal was reported by bishop Lee, president of the council in the marches of Wales, on 6 April 1535.² Englefield's letter, therefore, also belongs into 1535 and fits perfectly with the date of the surrender of his patent.

It follows that Cromwell was never master of the wards. There is no real difficulty in explaining the contemporary mistake regarding the office. It may have been due to a completely false rumour, or - which we think is more likely - it may have ^{been} based on some genuine intention of Cromwell's to acquire the office. He had so far secured a footing in two of the financial departments of the administration, and the king's wards were certainly an important source of the king's revenue. The idea that the mastership of the wards would appeal to him was reasonable on the face of it. To one of

1. P.R.O. SP 1/69, f.122 (L.P. v.799).

2. L.P. viii.509.

the masters, Englefield, the office was practically a sine-cure after his appointment to the common pleas, and he may well have thought of giving it up two or three years before he actually did. In that case Cromwell would certainly have been in the running for it. If he had any such intention he never carried it out, perhaps because by this time (the end of 1532) he was becoming too busy on matters of state to take on yet another office which required detailed work and immediate attention from its holder. In Paulet there was an extremely able, experienced, and trustworthy administrator to hand who could be relied upon not to go counter to Cromwell's wishes. Altogether, it probably seemed best to give up the idea, but not before enough indications had been given for people to assume for a fact what had only been a vague intention.¹

1. It may also be suggested, though with some diffidence, that Cromwell's correspondents possibly confused the mastership of the wards with the mastership of the woods. Cromwell was sharing the latter office with Paulet by the beginning of 1533 (cf. below, p. 167, n. 1), and the mistake might quite easily be made.

Chapter 3.

THE FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION.
-----I. The Administration in 1531.

It has become almost a commonplace to assert that finance was Cromwell's main occupation in the internal administration of England, and he himself appears to have declared more than once that he wished to make his king the richest that ever was.¹ Yet although his financial policy has been described as "perhaps the strongest point of[his]domestic administration",² there has as yet been no attempt to assess his place in the history of financial administration. The changes which he wrought in the royal revenue, doubling the king's yearly revenue, have found their historian;³ his capacity as a man of business has been fully recognised, though usually with an implied censure of his methods;⁴ it has also been realised that, with him, finance was only a means, though an essential means, towards establishing the royal supremacy in state and church.⁵ Nevertheless, the effect of all this

1. As reported by Chapuys: L.P. vii.1554; ix.862.

2. Merriman, i.133.

3. F.Dietz, Engl.Gov.Fin., chs.9-11.

4. E.g., H.A.L.Fisher, Pol.Hist., v.447: "He was a pastmaster in the art of taking inventories and valuations, of checking accounts and devising fresh sources of revenue."

5. Merriman, loc.cit.; F.Dietz, Engl.Gov.Fin., pp.103ff.

activity upon the financial machinery, upon the agencies employed in collecting and spending money, has not been considered. It is with this aspect of the financial system that we shall now concern ourselves.

We are fortunate in possessing a document which gives a clear picture of the organisation of the royal finances at the beginning of Cromwell's ministry. This paper is headed "A Memoriall for the Kinges Highnes, declaring the kynde of thingis Wherein Risith yerelye aswell his Certain Reuenues as his Casuall Reuenues, and who be officers to his highnes in that behalf". This description is not altogether accurate. Whereas the first part of the paper confines itself to stating sources of revenue and the officers responsible, there are a number of notes in the second part which refer to things to be done, arrears and debts to be checked, and the like. There are a number of additions in Cromwell's hand, and one of the last two paragraphs, which were added by a different clerk, was first drafted by Cromwell himself. The memorandum was as much for the minister's as for the king's benefit, and it reads, in fact, very much like a statement drawn up for the use of someone new to things. We suggest that it was written in answer to a request by Cromwell, or possibly in his private office, at the beginning of his supremacy, at a time when he was about to take charge of

the royal finances.¹

There is no logical arrangement in this paper, and its paragraphs must be rearranged if a classification of the financial machinery is to be obtained from it. We may first distinguish the normal sources of money, what the description calls the "Certain Revenues", and we shall see that they come under three heads. There are the customs and subsidies collected at the ports, for which the treasurer of England was responsible and which were accounted for in the exchequer. Also within the responsibility of the exchequer were the sheriffs' firma comitatus, the profits from escheated lands administered by the escheators, and the profits of the royal justice - fines, amercements, and recognisances in the central and local courts.² These might be called established state revenues which by the reforms of Henry VII had become the sole regular sources of income in the exchequer.

By the side of the exchequer Henry VII had developed a new organisation, systematised by acts of parliament in the

1. The paper is P.R.O. SP 1/67, ff.32-7 (L.P. v.397), and is given in full in App.A(I). The abstract in L.P. hides the characteristics of which we have spoken. It is undated, but from the fact that it does not mention the later new revenues and was drawn up for Cromwell's benefit it appears that the date assigned in L.P. (towards the end of 1531) is substantially correct.
2. That is, chancery, star chamber, king's bench, and common pleas, on the one hand; justices of assize, of sewers, of the peace, of quorum, and of over and terminer, on the other.

reign of Henry VIII, under which the most important royal revenues were administered by the treasurer of the chamber and audited before two specially appointed officials known as the general surveyors of the king's lands.¹ The memorandum shows that these officials were responsible for certain revenue administered by themselves, that is that derived from the king's own lands,² and also audited the accounts of a number of other financial officers. The master of the wards, the surveyor of liveries, the surveyors of vacant ecclesiastical benefices and of the money obtained for the restitution of the temporalities of such benefices, the surveyors of the king's woods, and the clerk of the hanaper, were all accountable to the general surveyors. These various officials did not exist on paper only. Wards and liveries might be administered by one man and were later combined in the court of wards and liveries, but in 1535 Richard Riche was joined with Sir Thomas Neville in the office of surveyor of liveries,³ and Neville's signature is found

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1. For the chamber system of finance cf. A.P. Newton, "The King's Chamber under the Early Tudors," E.H.R., xxxii(1917), pp.348ff., a pioneer article which takes the matter up to 1529, and below, Section III of this chapter.
 2. Cf. the schedules annexed to the acts concerning the office (6 Henry VIII c.24, 14 & 15 Henry VIII c.15). The subordinate agencies were: those entrusted with the lands of Warwick, Spenser, and Buckingham, the duchy of Cornwall, the chamberlains of Chester, of North and of South Wales, and the receivers of the principality of Wales.
 3. L.P. viii.632(34).

frequently on warrants for liveries among the chancery warrants. Special surveyors for the money derived from vacant sees and for the restitution of temporalities are not to be met with as part of the central machinery; such money passed through Cromwell's own hands in 1533,¹ and it probably went to the chamber both before and after this.² What was meant here were presumably local officials appointed as occasion arose, such men as William Strangways who administered the temporalities of the vacant see of York,³ or Richard Streto who did the same at Lichfield.⁴ Surveyors of the king's woods and clerks of the hanaper were, of course, well-known officials, and Cromwell held both offices shortly after the date of this paper.

In addition to the exchequer and the general surveyors there was the chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, responsible for its revenues which were collected by its own receivers, administered by its own receiver-general, and audited before its own auditors. We may include among the regular revenues those listed in the last three paragraphs, which were apparently added as an afterthought: the revenues of Calais and its surroundings, collected and expended locally but accounted for before the general surveyors; the

1. L.P. vi.228,717.

2. Cf. L.P. xiv.II.13.

3. L.P. v.822.

4. Ibid. 277.

profits of the mint; and the profits of the activities of the king's learned counsel, derived from penal statutes and from agreements entered by them on the king's behalf.

The other two sections which can be discerned in the memorandum comprise the uncertain or "casual" part of the royal revenue. These were the sums derived from recognisances entered upon and forfeited before the various financial departments mentioned above, and secondly the debts of subordinate officials owing to their superior departments. These matters were again subdivided to agree with the general organisation.

Thus there was a considerable number of officials charged with the collection of revenue, but we can distinguish three main agencies responsible for collecting from subordinate collectors and for auditing accounts, that is to say, three main agencies responsible to the king or his minister. These were the exchequer, the general surveyors (with the treasurer of the chamber who collected the revenues which they audited), and the duchy of Lancaster council. In addition, there were the smaller and independent departments of the mint and of the king's learned counsel. The latter in particular do not really deserve the name of a department and were apparently still in need of organisation.¹ It is with the three main

1. The memorandum states, as one of Cromwell's projected

departments that we must concern ourselves.

Each of these looked after a specified sphere of the revenue, acquired further irregular sums by the bonds which both its officials and, sometimes, outsiders were compelled to enter into, and made itself responsible for all the debts within its organisation. What was lacking in the scheme was the unifying hand, the single eye to exercise final supervision, the one brain to co-ordinate the three and thus control the whole financial administration of the realm. The fact that Cromwell was determined to occupy that empty place has already become clear from his offices;¹ it is further corroborated by this memorandum which, with Cromwell's

reforms, that the money administered by them should be declared "by a booke so that his highnes might by acertayned therof yerelye". No such records seems to have survived, so that it is doubtful whether the plan ever got beyond the stage of good intentions.

1. To those mentioned in Chapter 2 we may here add the surveyorship of the king's woods, an office which did not seem important enough to deserve a separate section there. Cromwell held it jointly with Sir William Paulet by the beginning of 1533. There are frequent references to their activities in the records (L.P. vi.210,231,406; Add.839). No patent survives though one existed among Cromwell's papers (L.P. vii.923[xxv]). Cromwell and Paulet were also appointed joint surveyors of the woods of the duchy of Lancaster (L.P. vi.1623); from the endorsement on it this latter document is probably the one mentioned in Cromwell's catalogue. Their activities concerned mainly sales of wood from the royal forests; warrants authorising these were signed by both (L.P. vi.5,6). Keepers of the king's woods rendered accounts to them (L.P. vii.46). There is no record of any fees being paid to the surveyors, though on the whole it is probable that there were some. An office under the crown without profit to the holder would have been unique.

correction and additions giving it point, shows that he intended to control every part of the financial system. The outstanding debts were to be ascertained and reported - in theory, no doubt, to the king, but in effect to Cromwell who went over the paper and added, for instance, to the details of the Calais revenues a note that the identity of persons in debt to the king was to be established, "So that leuy might be made therof Spedelye". Twice the impersonal note was dropped; the officers of the duchy of Cornwall were to be examined, being apparently suspected of speculation; and it is surprising to read in a scribe's handwriting that the profits of the mint for six years past shall be enquired into "which I thinke do amount to a greate Summe of money", until the page is turned and the same paragraph appears, drafted in Cromwell's own hand. The man who added these and other notes wished to know and to survey all the agencies responsible for collecting the king's revenues.

We can, therefore, be certain that Cromwell exercised a close and detailed control over every branch of the financial administration as he found it, but even among the three main departments not all branches can be of the same interest to us. To take first the most stable and least important of them, the duchy of Lancaster: all the money which remained after payment of running expenses, fees of duchy officials,

and a number of fixed annuities, was handed over to "the king's use", as the phrase went.¹ Year by year it was stated that nothing remained in the hands of the receiver-general. In the 1530's the sum which went to the central administration varied between £8052 and £8825. It was divided between the assignments to the royal household, fixed by the act of 1531,² and the treasurer of the chamber who took the rest. There is no sign of any changes made in the organisation during the period of Cromwell's supremacy, except that the dissolution of the monasteries raised certain administrative difficulties which will be noticed when we come to discuss the court of augmentations. The duchy ran smoothly enough. Its system and organisation were simple and efficient, and in fact came to serve as models for new departments. No active interference on Cromwell's part can be discovered; not even the changes in the personnel of the duchy show any attempt by him to advance personal friends or dependants.³ As long as the department did its work well there was no reason to interfere.

The exchequer, too, shows no changes or reforms which might be attributable to Cromwell's influence. It had lost

1. All this information on the duchy is derived from the surviving accounts for the period 1530-1539 (P.R.O. DL 28/7/1-7).

2. 22 Henry VIII c.18. The sum was £5486.9.0.

3. Duchy patronage was presumably in the hands of its chancellor (for the king), but Sir William Fitzwilliam was not the man to oppose Cromwell's desires had he wished to appoint protégés.

immensely in importance with the development of the chamber machinery; its revenues and expenditure had been reduced to certain well-defined spheres, and varied little year by year. The amount of money handled in the years 1530-40 shows no appreciable difference from the previous decade.¹ The exchequer was left to carry on with its traditional business, but anything out of the ordinary in the way of income or expenditure was dealt with elsewhere. Like Henry VII Cromwell refused to be tied by the cumbrous process and long delays of the exchequer machinery, and would not submit to the control which its established traditions provided. He went outside the exchequer, to the duchy and the chamber, for a model when his enormous augmentation of the royal revenues made necessary certain reforms in, and additions to, the financial organisation.

Cromwell made one attempt, however, to reform a crying abuse in the exchequer machinery. There survives the draft of a projected act of parliament, corrected and therefore supervised by him.² He had also foreshadowed it in his memoranda.³ The bill was to prevent collectors of revenue from delaying the delivery of the money collected, so as to use it for their private purposes in the interval. It was

1. F. Dietz, Engl. Gov. Fin., "Table II" on p. 216.

2. B.M. Harl. 1878, ff. 22-25 (L.P. x. 246 [18]).

3. L.P. x. 254.

alleged that they thereby defrauded the holders of government annuities charged against these revenues. Fixed dates were to be established by which they were to pay their receipts to the central organisation to which they were responsible. The original draft referred only to money due to go to "the Kynges Cofers", and Cromwell inserted a number of passages which made these provisions applicable to the exchequer as well. The settling days were to be 1 May and 1 November, on which the receipts for the half years ending on 25 March and 29 September respectively were to be paid over. Although the draft is in the form proper to a bill in parliament, it does not appear ever to have been introduced there, and it certainly did not result in a statute. It is, however, an example of Cromwell's reforming activities which aimed at a general tightening up of procedure and at making sure that the king received all that was due to him. The reform was a necessary one and would have been most beneficial if it had come to anything. In the event the evil grew worse, and by the end of the century such officials sometimes died hopelessly in debt to the crown, having lost the royal revenues in the course of their private speculations.¹

So much for the departments which do not require closer

1. Cf. Cal.S.P.Dom., Addenda 1566-79, p.46, for the case of a customer who did not employ his charge in this way, though he did not fare any the better for his honesty. The letter makes it plain what the usual practice was.

attention because their history was not noticeably influenced by Cromwell's administration. The mere fact of his personal control and supervision, which applied to the exchequer and the duchy as much as to all departments of the government, is of no interest here. We are after Cromwell's active reforms in the financial machinery. It may be said at once that one of his guiding principles was a desire to govern freely, without the check which a financial agency outside his control would have provided. Consequently we shall find him personally engaged in the work of a treasurer, and we shall find him concerned with the chamber which constituted the chief expending department of the system as he found it. He was at first content to work through this system while controlling it closely, but soon the revenues which he added to the royal income made it necessary to develop the machinery further. There followed that multiplication of departments which worked well enough under his personal control but was bound to break down without his guiding hand. However, the Cromwellian development had to happen before the marquess of Winchester could reform the exchequer by including in it the new departments of the 1530's and 1540's. In effect, Winchester's exchequer, within which the old exchequer and the new departments largely continued their separate existence, translated Cromwell's personal control into the terms of departmental

organisation. The lord treasurer of the reformed exchequer was automatically in control of the whole of the royal finances, a position which Cromwell had to construct for himself out of his various offices and his personal standing.

II. Cromwell as a Treasurer.

For a considerable period of his supremacy Cromwell himself acted as a treasurer for the king's money. Tasks of this kind were among the first to be entrusted to the new minister, at a time when he was still very much a junior member of the government. On 31 December 1530 he received £13.6.8 "for the king's tomb",¹ and on 7 January 1531 he paid money on the king's account to an Italian sculptor.² As "receiver-general of attainted lands", in particular the lands of Wolsey's colleges forfeited by the cardinal's attainder, he received rents and paid out sums of money.³ The most significant point is that when he was first given an office it was a financial one. The mastership of the king's jewels was, as we have seen, an office of little intrinsic importance, but it was closely linked with the king's private financial administration in an age when treasure was commonly laid up in the shape of plate or jewels. His predecessor, Robert Amadas, was alive on new year's day 1532,⁴ and the terms of the commission to Audeley, Paulet, Kingston, and Tuke, who were appointed to review the royal plate before Cromwell took over, suggest that Cromwell's appointment took place soon after Amadas' death.⁵ Cromwell took the first

1. Sir Harris Nicolas, Privy Purse, p.101.

2. L.P. v.32.

3. Ibid. 341,774.

4. Ibid. 686.

5. Ibid. 939.

opportunity, and took it quickly, of acquiring an office which gave him the visible status of a treasurer for royal revenue.

As master of the king's jewels Cromwell handled money for the king on an extensive scale. Of the many warrants to him, authorising expenditure, most address him as master of the jewels. It may be said at once, however, that some were addressed to the king's chief secretary, and that Cromwell did not cease personally to act as a royal treasurer even when he acquired more important offices and a much larger sphere of influence.¹ The last examples which we possess are given in a paper headed "Money paid by Master Secretary by these ij Warraunttes as folowith", and endorsed "A declaracon of money paid by Master Secretary to the kinges vse Mensse Aprilis Anno xxvij^o Regni Regis Henrici", that is to say, in April 1536.² It can thus be affirmed with certainty that at least from December 1530 to April 1536 Cromwell acted in person as a treasurer for the king's money. In that period, therefore, he was himself a part of the machinery of the financial administration.

How important a part was he? For a considerable section of the period mentioned the volume of money passing through his hands can be ascertained; for another, an approximate

1. For the warrants cf. below, p. 179, n. 1.
 2. P.R.O. SP 1/103, ff. 58-9 (L.P. x. 598).

answer is possible. There exist four accounts of his for the money he received and spent in the king's service. The first of these, hereafter called A, ostensibly covered the time from 29 September 1532 to 17 December 1532.¹ There had been a previous account, made up at Michaelmas,² but it is clear from the body of the document that this previous account did not take matters further than 2 April 1532,³ that is to say, twelve days before Cromwell's appointment as master of the jewels took effect. It is not unlikely that he was regularly receiving and disbursing money to the king's use from the beginning of 1531, though at that time he was perhaps handling only the revenue from the lands of Wolsey's colleges. The existence of an earlier account, closed on 2 April, suggests that he may have taken over the business of the master of the jewels on that day, having drawn a line under the account of the money he had so far dealt with and started a new account to include the new business. The date of his patent, being the date of its delivery into chancery, is not, of course, a sure guide to the actual date of appointment. But whatever may be surmised for the first year of Cromwell's treasurership, we stand on the firm basis of fact from April 1532 onwards.

1. P.R.O. SP 1/72, ff.156-7 (L.P. v.1639), given in App.A(II).

2. Ibid.: "...chargid for the Arrerages of the last accompt... endid at the said ffeast of saint Michell tharchangell Anno ~~xxiiij~~^{to} Regis Henrici viijth."

3. Ibid.: "sence the Determinacion of the saide Accompto which was the Secunde day of Aprill...".

The second account (B) covered the period from 22 November 1532 to 11 March 1533,¹ the third (C) that from 29 September 1532 to 28 June 1533,² and the fourth (D) that from 2 April 1533 to 2 April 1534.³

It is obvious that there is considerable overlapping, nor are these accounts all of one kind. A and D are "views" or short abstracts made from the detailed accounts, stating simply totals of receipts, payments, and surplus or deficit, though A contains some other detail not strictly proper to a view of account. B and C, on the other hand, are detailed. They analyse both receipts and payments into individual sources and destinations, and for that reason will be of great use in determining whence Cromwell received the money and to whom he paid it. For assessing the amount of money that passed under his hands they are naturally less reliable. A and D were taken from finished accounts; B and C are drafts, C being in Cromwell's own hand and B containing additions in his writing. Let us tabulate the results which they provide:⁴

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1. P.R.O. SP 2/N, ff.114-7 (L.P. vi.228).
 2. P.R.O. SP 2/O, ff.190-5 (L.P. vi.717).
 3. P.R.O. SP 1/83, ff.61-2 (L.P. vii.430). The recurrence of the date of 2 April suggests some significance which the present writer has, however, been unable to discover.
 4. In this chapter all sums will normally be given in pounds only.

	Receipts	Payments
A. (2.4.1532 - 17.12.1532)	£25655	£24606
B. (22.11.1532 - 11.3.1533)	£20567	£21240
C (29.9.1532 - 28.7.1533)	£12496	£12332
D (2.4.1533 - 2.4.1534)	£38504	£37232

The three and a half months of B (the only account in which payments exceed receipts) are included in the ten months of C, but the former accounts for £8000 more than the latter, though both mention much the same sources of revenue. They cannot both be right, and unless we are prepared to suspect deliberate misstatements, a suspicion for which there is neither reasonable ground nor reasonable explanation, we shall have to discard C as the less complete. It is, we may suppose, a first draft of an account, written but never completed by Cromwell himself, and based on insufficient data. The fact that it is later than B is not really an obstacle to that interpretation. That it provides the most convincing solution of the discrepancy is confirmed by the fact that D, accounting for only two months more than C, gives figures three times as large, and the general reliability of D is corroborated by the other reliable account, A, which for its seven and a half months accounts for a sum roughly equal in proportion to that given in D.

Let us see, then, what Cromwell's annual income and expenditure amounted to. If A and B are added they will account

for roughly twelve months, in which time, therefore, £46222 would have been received and £45846 spent. These are rather larger sums than those given in D for the full year ending on 2 April 1534. A check is provided by the warrants for expenditure from which it is possible to arrive at a minimum figure for expenditure for the year ending in April 1535.¹ Twenty-four of them cover the year after the last surviving account, the earliest being dated 4 April 1534 and the last 2 May 1535.² They prove that during this year Cromwell paid at least £32407 for purposes of state. There is, of course, no way of discovering what proportion of these warrants has been preserved, and the actual sums involved may have been much larger. However, it is not likely that many are lost. Twenty-four warrants for one year, many of them authorising the payment of a large number of items,³ and adding up to the total quoted, would appear to leave a relatively small margin

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1. The warrants to Cromwell are preserved in three bundles: P.R.O. E 101/421/5 (calendared in L.P. v.825,1052,1237,1314,1346,1392,1590,1646,1668,1671); ibid. 421/6 (33 items not calendared in L.P.); and ibid. 421/9 (L.P. vi.6,130,131,149,170,220,229,283,326). There are also a number of loose ones: P.R.O. E 101/421/1 (L.P. v.341), B.M. Tit.B.i, ff.449-50 (L.P. ix.217), and some bound with the state papers at the P.R.O. (L.P. v.1119,1215,1370,1645; vi.1057,1367,1508; vii.137,1557,1564; viii.653; x.598; Add.1013).
 2. P.R.O. E 101/421/6, nos. (in chronological order) 22,52,37,34,38,36,39,35,40,41,47,42,43,45,50,46,44,49,48,51,32,33; and L.P. vii.1557; viii.653.
 3. P.R.O. E 101/421/6, no.50 contains 14 items, no.45 twelve, nos.38 and 49 eleven, nos. 51 and 32 ten, etc.

for further and unknown expenditure. Still, it is as well to bear in mind that we have here the lowest possible figure for the year. Only fourteen warrants survive for the year covered by account D, and they account for a total expenditure of only £10310.¹

Another table may now prove useful, though the figures have already been given:

	Receipts	Payments
April 1532 - April 1533 (A + B)	£46222	£45846
April 1533 - April 1534 (D)	£38504	£37232
April 1534 - April 1535 (warrants)	-	£32407

These figures indicate that there may have been a steady decrease in the amount of money handled by Cromwell, which would not be surprising in view of the fact that during these years Cromwell was gathering more and more of the government of the country into his own hands and so, presumably, had less and less time to act as a treasurer. From April 1534 he was chief secretary, and it is a good illustration of his abilities and energy that even then he managed to attend to such comparatively minor details of administration as a personal treasurership involved. Admittedly the actual handling of the money might be done by his servants, such men as Williamson,

1. L.P. vi.326,1057,1058,1367,1508; vii.137; P.R.O. E 101/421/6, nos. 23,25,24,26,27,29,30,28.

Cavendish, and Body who had his "letter of attorney...to receive all sums of money due to the King's highness" in Cromwell's name,¹ but as long as Cromwell was accountable for the money he was a treasurer in fact and not only in name. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the differences year by year, which are not excessively large, may have been caused only by the normal fluctuation of income and expenditure, or by the incompleteness of the sources on which we have to rely. Allowing for a reasonable margin of error we may say that Cromwell's annual receipts in these three years were round about £40000, with the payments amounting to little less. The figures show that not much remained in Cromwell's hands at the end of each year.

These sums compare well with the business done by the other two great financial departments, the exchequer and the chamber. Exchequer expenditure for the years ending at Michaelmas 1532, 1533, and 1534 was £38935, £37789, and £37106 respectively.² The exchequer, therefore, disbursed each year much the same amount as did Cromwell. However, exchequer payments included assignments of £19394 to the royal household and £1175 to the great wardrobe, that is to say, some £20000 went to other spending departments. The remainder was largely

1. L.P. ix.234. William Body was the man who rendered accounts A and D and was therefore probably in charge of this money under Cromwell.

2. F.Dietz, Eng.Gov.Fin., p.216.

made up of regular payments, such as the salaries of exchequer officials and other officers of the crown, or annuities granted by patent. The only items which varied at all were the assignments on exchequer revenue made by the king as rewards to collectors of customs or minor servants and officials about the court.¹ Cromwell had no such regular or "ordinary" expenditure, as it was called. As we shall see, his payments concerned only extraordinary expenditure which had to be authorised by special royal warrant.²

The treasurer of the chamber, too, had a large amount of "ordinary" payments to make in weekly, monthly, and quarterly wages, and in pensions and annuities. In May 1537 Sir Brian Tuke estimated these payments as £40000, and they are likely, in the nature of things, to have been fairly constant.³ His total expenditure in the year ending Michaelmas 1530, that is before Cromwell's rise to importance as treasurer, was £55270;⁴

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1. These facts and figures are derived from the annual "Declarations of the State of the Treasury" which are complete for the years 1530-40, except for the year ending at Michaelmas 1535. The documents are, in chronological order: P.R.O. E 405/199; ibid. 200; B.M. Add.MS 33376; P.R.O. E 405/201; ibid. 202; E 164/69; E 405/203; ibid. 204; ibid. 205.
 2. In February 1534 the treasurer of the chamber asked that "for thinges ordinary I may haue for paymentes an ordinary warrant, And that for thinges extraordinary I may alwaies haue special warantes (B.M. Tit.B.iv., f.117v).
 3. P.R.O. SP 60/4, f.78 (L.P. xii.I.1297): "and myn ordinary paymentes besides casual warrantes be almost xl M li' by yere."
 4. L.P. v., p.321. It is true that the expenditure of the treasurer of the chamber had been much greater earlier on.

it will be seen that his "extraordinary" or "casual" payments did not compare with Cromwell's. From about 1531 to at least the early part of 1536 Cromwell was a very important financial official who administered considerable sums and paid the greater part of the unrecurring, the day-to-day, expenditure of the government. We must turn to the question from what sources he derived money "to the king's use", and also what were the chief purposes on which he spent it.

Dr. Dietz has noted that in 1532 Cromwell "began to act as a special treasurer for new revenues"¹, a remark which prompted Professor Neale to demand a more detailed discussion of the administrative significance of this phenomenon, in particular because he thought that Cromwell must have been encroaching on the chamber.² How far that was the case will be seen later; there can, at any rate, be no doubt from what has already been said that a considerable problem of administration was hidden behind Dr. Dietz's remark. In one way it definitely misleads, for Dietz was wrong, we think, in laying the stress on the supposed novelty of the revenues

Sir Henry Wyat averaged over £1,000.000 in 1522-4, but that was during a period of foreign war and the expenditure in question was actually on the war (P.R.O. E 36/221). The same goes for Sir John Heron's expenditure in 1509-18 (£1,581.503), also a period of wars (B.M. Add.MS 21481). His enormous payments in 1502-5 (£338740) were in great part capital investments (P.R.O. E 101/413/2).

1. D. Dietz, Eng. Gov. Fin., p.103.

2. J.E. Neale, in E.H.R., xxxviii(1923), p.280.

administered by Cromwell. Account B gives these sources of income: suppressed lands, restitution of temporalities, money due by obligation, chains molten, money due without specialties or bonds (from the jewel-house), vacation of bishoprics and abbeys, the "mount" of the late archbishop of Canterbury (Warham), "perfermes and fee ffermes", first fifth of the money granted by the last convocation (1531), from the hanaper, from the king's coffers, money lately prested (lent out) by the king, and forfeited lands and goods. Account C repeats some of these and adds fines for the appropriation of houses to the item headed restitution of temporalities in B, £100 for conduct money given to the king by the merchant adventurers for "waiters",¹ fines for the knights, and money for "certain provisions" for the king.

These sources show plainly that little was involved that could be called new revenue. Cromwell drew money from land revenues, being appointed receiver-general of the lands of the suppressed monasteries used to found Wolsey's colleges (suppressed lands),² and being in charge of the lands of Rice ap Griffiths (attainted lands).³ This may have been new money

1. "Waiter - an armed vessel employed as a convoy", N.E.D. (1928), vol.x, pt.ii, p.8c.

2. L.P. v.701.

3. Ibid. 724. Para.7 is in Cromwell's hand, and the commissioners mentioned in para.9 include his confidential servant William Brabazon.

inasmuch as the crown had not previously received¹, but it was not a new kind of revenue. It ought by rights to have gone into the chamber under the terms of the act which directed all the revenue of forfeited lands, old and new, into that treasury.¹ The money derived from vacant sees and in fines for the restitution of temporalities was supposed to be accounted for before the general surveyors;² the act, however, is silent on the question whether it ought to have been paid into the chamber, as it is also on the subject of subsidies, and we can only say that such extraordinary and unrepeatable revenues are almost certain to have been handled by the chamber before Cromwell appeared on the scene.³ Then they were acquired by him, and he is found controlling the revenues of the vacant sees of York and Chester.⁴ Further there were sums due to him as master of the jewels ("chains molten" indicates not so much a revenue as a capital expenditure), sums derived from debts to the king (obligations and prebends) which would also normally have been dealt with by the treasurer of the chamber,⁵ a number of small and incidental sources of income which need not detain us, hanaper money which Cromwell might be expected

1. 14 & 15 Henry VIII c.15 (Stat.Realm, iii.229).

2. Cf. above, p.164.

3. Cf. AP.Newton in E.H.R., xxxii(1917), pp.363f. Tuke indicated that he got something from vacancies (L.P. xiv.II.13).

4. L.P. v.95,237,277.

5. Cromwell never handled all the royal debts, and Tuke continued to concern himself with a good many.

to expend as clerk of the hanaper oven though it belonged to the revenue of the treasurer of the chamber,¹ and the interesting item of money granted by the spirituality.

This last point needs some discussion. The money in question must have been derived from the fine for the prae-
munire imposed on convocation in 1531, but as that amounted to £118000 for both provinces the £242 accounted for in B can have been only a small part of the "first fifth". Dr. Dietz maintained that the whole of the fine was paid to Cromwell.² However, the original grant stated that the money was to go to the treasurer of the chamber,³ and the exchequer was informed likewise.⁴ What is more, this condition was carried out. Tuke referred to this revenue as due to be paid to him in a letter in which he deplored the remission of the last payments in exchange for the new income from first fruits and tenths.⁵ "The kinges highnes remytteth to the clergie of the province of Caunterbury xl M li' of the ij last paymentes,

1. As the hanaper accounts show, the surplus continued to go to the treasurer of the chamber (above, p.85). The £300 of hanaper money mentioned in account B are clearly the "profit of the office in Thomas Hall's time" which Cromwell had received from the underclerk (L.P. v.1730), and represent a unique case of hanaper money going to Cromwell.
2. F.Dietz, Eng.Gov.Fin., p.227.
3. P.R.O. E 135/8/37.
4. P.R.O. E 159/310, Communia, Trinity term, Recorda, m.22.
5. B.M. Tit.B.i, f.286 (L.P. vii.1490).

besides a some to the province of yorke, And of these ij last paymentes on was due at mychelmas last; for levye wherof comyssions be oute, collectours appointed, and the money euery day nowe payable to the particuler collectours; and to the general collectours after cristenmas; and to the treasurer of the chambre by our lady day in lent next... I have used gone after cristenmas to receyue som parte, and so contynually as it can be had." From this description it is most unlikely that Cromwell ever received a large part of this fine, and the £242 which he did receive was possibly the part of the fine resting on clergy with whom he had a special connection, as for instance those of vacant sees.

It must also be noticed that Cromwell revived Henry VII's expedient of enforcing fines for knighthood. This source yielded £390 in account C; a schedule annexed to A and reciting sums of money due but not yet collected includes this point: "ffynes for knyghtes Sessid by the said Thomas Cromwell Esquire to the kinges vse and nat paid, as it apperith by the obligacions therof examynynd," and the considerable figure of £2180 is mentioned.¹ Cromwell's correspondence contains a good deal on this subject in 1533 and 1534.² People

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1. P.R.O. SP 1/72, f.157 (cf. App.A II). The total outstanding was £18031 - some such factor might be behind the discrepancy between accounts B and C.
 2. L.P. vi.425,468,481,514,521,575,607,1160,1178,1260,1360,1390,1659; vii.80,123,833,1305,1662. Cf. also Hall, Chronicle, p.795, to the effect that Cromwell improved the

wrote to him asking to be excused; they claimed that they had been assessed too high, or pleaded similar excuses on the behalf of friends and servants. Even the princess Mary joined the chorus.¹ Among the papers which apparently came into Cromwell's custody before October 1531 there was one described as a copy of "the King's letter to write to knights",² and among the Remembrances of 1533 occurs the note "to make a search through the Book of Knights for the names of them who shall be enclosed in the King's letters".³ The machinery for enforcing fines of knighthood seems to have been well developed. As late as May 1535 Henry wrote to the sheriff of Oxford and ordered him to see to it that the knights mentioned in the list enclosed either appeared before Cromwell ("principal secretary") to compound for their knighthood or sent up their fines.⁴ The numbers involved were large: in 1533, 1010 persons were returned as suitable to be made knights, and 425 had already made out obligations for payments to discharge them of the order of knighthood.⁵ This method of extorting money was certainly not new - it had helped to bring about the fall of Empson and Dudley - and it had always been, and was likely to be now, most unpopular. Its revival by Cromwell is significant, for it is one more sign that Cromwell's accession to

occasion of Anne Boleyn's marriage at Easter 1533 by raising large sums on "that sessyng of fines" for knighthood.

1. L.P. vi.550. 2. L.P. vii.923(vii). 3. L.P. vi.1056(i).
 4. L.P. Add.988. 5. Ibid. 877.

power was involving the government in a partial return to the policy of Henry VII. Once more money was needed, for Wolsey had done nothing to keep the coffers filled,¹ and for the time being the new minister, in his capacity as treasurer, was trying to use old and proven methods. The sums obtained, however, were hardly large enough to justify the risk of alienating the gentry and middle class at a time when their support in parliament became essential.

It would not, however, be correct to think of Cromwell's treasurership as chiefly concerned with the collection of money. All the sources which we have so far discussed add up to less than half the money which Cromwell actually received. By far the biggest item in the accounts which are our guides in this problem is money derived from the royal coffers, that is, from reserves built up in the Tower and possibly in other royal palaces. Such money accounts for £11034 of the total receipts of B (£20567), and for no less than £10991 in C (total: £12496). The subject of how "the king's coffers" were filled and administered is a dark one. It is likely that surpluses in such departments as the treasury of the chamber were not kept there but were deposited in special and highly informal treasuries, called by that

1. F.Dietz, Eng.Gov.Fin., p.102.

name.¹ For our present purpose it is enough to say that such depositories existed, and that they must have contained quite considerable reserves. Cromwell's expenditure was, therefore, largely of capital, and the true significance of his treasurership must not be sought in the collection of revenue. It is of interest and some importance to notice that he was actually receiving some money which might otherwise have gone into the chamber, though at this time and merely by virtue of his being a treasurer Cromwell affected the income of the treasurer of the chamber only a little. He showed a distinct tendency to acquire any source of revenue, repetitive or occurring only once, which had no traditional channel by which to reach the government. But as he so largely relied on capital reserves this cannot have been his chief interest in his personal treasurership. What mattered to him was clearly the need of having sufficient money to meet the expenditure which fell to his share. To that expenditure we must now turn.

The money was spent on a number of purposes. Account B lists ten groups of payments, with an eleventh unprovided with a marginal heading, of which these account for the largest sums: buildings at the Tower, costs and rewards to ambassadors,

1. Cf. below, p.281, n.1. Dietz again only hints at this subject (Eng.Gov.Fin., pp.142f.). Cf. Professor Neale's review (E.H.R., xxxviii, p.280) for a suggestion that research needs to be made into it.

and others, loans, and in particular £13584 sent north for employment against the Scots. It includes such sums as 8d. for "carriage" and 14s. 4d. for paper and ink, but these are the only expenses which can be called, in the phrase of the time, "necessary", or current office expenditure. £1100 paid into the king's coffers would be of greater interest if it did not appear that it was received in bulk, being revenues of the vacant see of Canterbury and the late archbishop's "mount", so that this is not a case of surplus being deposited in the coffers. However, another £1000 was paid into the coffers after the first part of the account had been made up.¹ There is the usual item for the king's tomb which runs through the whole of Cromwell's connection with the royal finances, and £55 was spent on silks and velvets. Account C adds some interesting points: buildings at Westminster, the king's ships, £300 to Cornelys Hayes, the goldsmith, and £3591 to creditors of the wardrobe. Twenty-four shillings was paid for paper, parchment, ink, and wax. Cromwell clearly did not control a large regular office. No wages were paid to clerks, and internal expenses were confined to money spent on writing

1. There are a few other examples of Cromwell paying sums into the king's coffers (L.P. v.577,825,1040,1052,1119), but they are all of an early date, before Cromwell rose to importance. None of these warrants and receipts call him master of the jewels, all but two being of a date earlier than his appointment. After he became a treasurer in the full sense of the word he hardly ever paid money into the coffers.

materials. The treasurer of the jewels naturally had dealings with the king's goldsmith, but that was only a small part of the total payments. Other items resulted from his connection with the royal household. But Cromwell's main duty lay in looking after the incidental and unrecurring expenditure of the government, as for instance the diets of the king's ambassadors or rewards given to foreign ambassadors, and also in providing for exceptional payments, the consequence of acts of high policy. It was he who mainly supplied Sir George Lawson, treasurer of Berwick and in charge of the money sent north for the defence of the borders. By the end of 1532 Lawson had received £4534 from Cromwell,¹ and throughout 1533 he was always writing for more money.² Lawson's accounts show that between 14 September 1532 and 17 June 1533 he received £23368 of which £20033 was supplied by Cromwell,³ large figures but not so large as the somewhat exaggerated report of £30000 which Cromwell was supposed to have sent north by 11 January 1533.⁴ Cromwell was also responsible for financing the war in Ireland after Fitzgerald's revolt in 1534. Warrants show that between July 1534 and August 1535 he paid out

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1. L.P. v.1670(2). The warrants are ibid. 1590, 1671. He was also getting large sums through the abbot of St. Mary's, York, by the king's warrant (L.P. vi.86), but the abbot seems to have been controlled by Cromwell who was appealed to for a warrant for payment to Lawson (ibid. 1162) and who sent money through the abbot (ibid. 217).
 2. L.P. vi.25, 29, 51, 107, 124, 185, 269, 343, 553, 1162.
 3. P.R.O. SP 2/D, f.185 (L.P. vi.664).
 4. Ven.Cal. iv.842.

£21522 for this purpose, not counting rewards given to Irish officials whose loyalty was thought open to purchase. Nearly all this money went to William Brabazon, vice-treasurer of Ireland and treasurer at war there, and once one of Cromwell's household servants.¹

Altogether, the warrants are most important evidence for the purposes on which the money passing through Cromwell's hands was spent, and they serve to confirm and augment the testimony of the accounts. There is not one "dormant" warrant among them; that is to say, Cromwell was not made responsible for regularly recurring payments. The purposes for which he paid are numerous and varied, from such small items as £33 for South Wales iron mines² or ten marks for alms³ to the thousands of pounds spent on military affairs in Ireland and the Scottish marches. Diets and post money to ambassadors are one large group of payments, and it is possibly of some significance that the ambassadors paid by the master of the jewels were particularly those who went to Germany and the Lutheran princes,

1. P.R.O. E 101/421/6, nos. 33, 35, 36, 39, 41, 43; L.P. viii. 653; ix. 217. In May 1535 Brabazon's accounts show a receipt of £34628 from England (L.P. viii. 788). He may not have had all this from Cromwell; another of his accounts (L.P. xi. 934, October 1536), which covers probably only the year ending Michaelmas 1536, shows that Cromwell was responsible for £13718 out of a total of £35692. The largest single contributor was the treasurer of first fruits, who however did not exist during the period of the first account.
2. L.P. v. 1215.
3. Ibid. 1346.

that is those who were pursuing what was more specifically Cromwell's own policy.¹ Rewards given by the king both to foreign ambassadors and to his own servants account for another considerable number of entries.² Frequent payments were made to William Gonson, surveyor of the king's ships, for the navy; from October 1533 to December 1534 Gonson gave twenty receipts for a total of £4195.³ Cromwell also supplied the household of Katharine of Aragon,⁴ advanced large sums to the cofferer of the household,⁵ paid the creditors of the great wardrobe,⁶ and paid the salaries of the king's legal officers, the judges and king's serjeants.⁷

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1. E.g., Thomas Legh (L.P. v.1646; vii.137; P.R.O. E 101/421/6, no.38); Heath and Paget (L.P. vii.137); Christopher Mount (L.P. ix.217; P.R.O. E 101/421/6, no.27); Cavendish (ibid., no.49); Foxe, bishop of Hereford (L.P. ix.217). However, Cromwell also paid other ambassadors, especially later when he was in complete control of the government: Hackett (with the emperor), Rocheford and Gardiner in France, and Lord William Howard in Scotland (P.R.O. E 101/421/6, nos.27,32, 38; L.P. ix.217).
 2. A few examples will show their catholic range: John de Lenope, senator of Luback (L.P. vii.1557), "one that brought bowstaves" from the king of France (L.P. viii.653), Robert groom of the chamber to the duke of Norfolk (P.R.O. E 101/421/6, no.24), John Alleyn, master of the rolls in Ireland (ibid., no.27), Thomas Orgall, for "writinges concerning our causes" (ibid., no.30), the orator of the count palatine (ibid., no.28), for bringing pirates from Grimsby to the Tower (ibid., no.22), the ambassadors from Hamburg and Luback with their "families" (ibid., no.47), Thomas Derby and Thomas Wriothesley, clerks of the signet (ibid., no.42).
 3. B.M. Otho E.ix, f.54 (L.P. vii.1564).
 4. P.R.O. E 101/421/6, nos. 37,48,49; L.P. vii.1557; ix.217.
 5. P.R.O. E 201/421/6, no.26.
 6. Ibid., nos.25,50.
 7. Ibid., nos.34,48; L.P. vii.1557; x.598.

Enough has been said, though the detail is but a small part of what might be produced from the warrants, to show that an office which handled considerable sums of money, received an income from both new sources and the royal reserves, and covered such a varied and important section of the government's expenditure, was a financial department of the first order. Not content with "devising fresh sources of revenue",¹ and with doubling the income of the crown,² Cromwell personally acted for at least four years as a treasurer and paymaster. It is difficult to say to what extent he continued to do so after the evidence of accounts and warrants gives out, but the very absence of the latter in particular is significant. On the whole it seems that he gave up direct action when his general duties, as secretary and lord privy seal, became too large to allow him to carry out the same amount of detailed work at a lower level. In this connection it is of great importance that the last clear evidence of his treasurership is of April 1536.³ It was certainly not later than this date that he surrendered his patent of the mastership of the jewels, the office then being granted jointly to him and John Williams.⁴ Cromwell still drew part of his salary, but he ceased to carry out the duties of the office which had given him the visible

1. H.A.L. Fisher, Pol. Hist., v.447.

2. F. Dietz, Eng. Gov. Fin., p.140.

3. Above, p.175.

4. Above, pp.63f.

status of a treasurer. Cromwell continued to exercise a close and detailed control over the finances of the country, but there is every reason to suppose that the absence of any evidence after 1536 reflects the true position: he was no longer active as a treasurer actually handling the king's money. There are indications that during the crisis of the pilgrimage of grace he once more occupied himself with the detailed work of providing money for the armies sent against the rebels, but there, too, he seems to have left the actual collection, conveying, and disbursement to other financial officials.¹ The lord privy seal originated and controlled all measures, but he did not personally administer them.

Not that his personal treasurership was merely a question of administration under the control of someone else. From such evidence as survives it seems reasonable to suppose that his payments were normally authorised or covered by a warrant under the signet and sign manual. There may have been occasions on which Cromwell paid money either by the king's verbal instructions or completely on his own authority, without afterwards getting a written command to cover himself, but in the nature of things such transactions have left no trace. It is on the whole unlikely that Cromwell should have acted in this

1. L.P. xi.624,638,640,658,660-1,724,768-70,791,801,822,829,834,842,911,958,965,1106,1124,1163; xii.I.683; Add.1130.

way; it could be dangerous when things went wrong, and it was unnecessary, for as we shall see he could always obtain the requisite warrants. These documents would be more helpful in solving the question of Cromwell's authority as treasurer if they were not completely formal. Their phrasing is no guide to the importance of the person addressed,¹ though if one accepted them at their face value one would have to think of Cromwell doing no more than pay when ordered.

However, things were far otherwise. That Cromwell as often as not paid money on his own initiative and for purposes of which he alone was the judge is proved by the evidence that he frequently obtained warrants for payments already made. "Item, to cause Warrantes to be drawn for suche money as is newly laid out by me for the king," runs a typical note in one of his lists of "Remembrances",² and there are many similar memoranda between February 1533 and April 1534.³ Perhaps the most revealing entry reads: "To know what things that I do lack warrant for, and to cause a warrant to be made thereof to sign."⁴ Independance of action disguised as obedience to orders could hardly go further. Sometimes he would apparently

1. By far the majority address him as master of the jewels; many combine this office with another, such as councillor or chief secretary. There are also some addressing him in the latter character only.

2. B.M. Tit.B.i, f.427v (L.P. vii.48[1]).

3. L.P. vi.150, 284, 1370; vii.48, 257, 583.

4. L.P. vi.1056.

draft his own warrants,¹ though no doubt that part of the work was usually left to a clerk. Little can be deduced from the dates of warrants. On 6 July 1533 Cromwell was authorised to pay £2000 to the cofferer of the household,² and the actual transaction is recorded as having taken place on 18 July;³ but whether the first date represents the actual date of issue or a case of backdating cannot be said for certain. On 6 January 1533 Sir George Lawson acknowledged to Cromwell the receipt of £2034.13.4,⁴ a sum for which the warrant is dated 28 December 1532.⁵ Again, the absence of any certainty about the true date of issue makes the case inconclusive. There is no other example to which even so unsatisfactory a test can be applied. It will be necessary to confine ourselves to the guarded statement that Cromwell certainly paid many sums for which he obtained warrants later, a fact which shows him to have been more than simply a subordinate paymaster; while at other times he may have paid on warrants in hand. On the whole it is reasonable to suppose that he pursued the latter course more often at the beginning of his career, before he fully established his supremacy in the government. The first surviving warrant to him strongly suggests that the recipients came to Cromwell with

1. P.R.O. SP 1/78, ff.243-4 (L.P. vi.1057).

2. P.R.O. E 101/421/6, no.26.

3. Ibid., no.(3).

4. L.P. vi.25.

5. L.P. v.1671.

the warrant in their hands.¹ At any rate, it must not be concluded that Cromwell was merely a subordinate agent because the warrants addressed to him followed established form and were phrased in words of command.

Thus during the period of his personal treasurership Cromwell made himself the central official on the spending side of the financial administration. He was not greatly employed, or perhaps interested, in the collection of revenue in his own hands. In any case, the fact that he never created a properly organised office but was content to rely on the small staff of the jewel-house, who were employed solely in matters connected with the king's jewels and plate, and on his own household made it impossible for him to concern himself with that task. He left it to the exchequer and chamber machineries to bring in the revenues, himself collecting but a few and those such as needed no great department to administer. His main concern as a treasurer was the payment of extraordinary and casual expenses, in other words, payments that were the direct result of, and closely connected with,

1. P.R.O. E 101/421/1 (L.P. v.341). Cf. App.A(III). This warrant of 18 July 1532 is addressed to Cromwell simply as "our trusty and welbiloued seruaunt", though he had by then been master of the jewels for three months. It may be significant that the money in question had nothing to do with the master of the jewels, but as there is no reason to think that Cromwell kept apart the money which came to him in his different capacities nothing can be made of this administratively.

the higher spheres of government activity. He wished to be able to employ ambassadors, to build the king's palaces, and to provide for the safety of the realm by land and sea, without going to other officials for the necessary money. By the reforms of Henry VII, such money was normally provided and administered by the treasurer of the chamber. However, the chamber was essentially the most intimate part of the royal household, and its peculiar position in the administration of the realm was compatible only with a degree of personal government by the king to which Henry VIII did not rise. Its treasurer was too much the king's officer, too little a tool of Cromwell's making or for Cromwell's use, and the minister therefore took into his own hands the administration of large sums of money. True, Cromwell started his career in office with a purely financial post, and it might therefore be thought that the administration of money had come first and the influence on policy later. But Cromwell was a member of the council for over a year before he became a treasurer, and at no time did he allow his duties as a treasurer to distract him from the more important task of helping to shape the king's policy. For him, administration and policy went hand in hand, and he saw in his treasurership mainly a means of making his control of both more direct, more effective, and more efficient.

III. Cromwell and the Chamber.

The changes which Henry VII made in the financial machinery, and which were confirmed by parliament in the early years of Henry VIII,¹ have been described in an article which takes the subject down to 1529.² They resulted in the establishment of the chamber as the leading financial agency, more important because more flexible than the exchequer. Its main strength lay in its close association with king and government; the treasurer of the chamber accounted either to the king himself or to the king's personal servants, the general surveyors, and was not subject to the cumbersome system of checks and safeguards which made the exchequer unsuited to the demands of the modern state. More and more business was, therefore, passed on to the chamber. Its revenues, which fundamentally consisted of certain specified royal lands, came to include lay and clerical subsidies,³ and such extraordinary income as Wolsey's loans.⁴ Its expenditure spread to cover all the immediate needs of the government, the payment of fees, diets, and rewards to the king's servants and officers and to foreign ambassadors, the upkeep of the defences of the kingdom, and

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1. Statutes 6 Henry VIII c.24, 7 Henry VIII c.7, 14 & 15 Henry VIII c.15.
 2. AP. Newton, "The King's Chamber under the early Tudors," *E.H.R.*, xxxii(1917), pp.348ff.
 3. *L.P.* xv.600; vii.1490.
 4. *P.R.O.* E 36/221, account of Sir Henry Wyat, treasurer of the chamber, for 14 Henry VIII.

the like.¹ The chamber handled very large sums, much larger than those passing through any other department. Between Michaelmas 1502 and Michaelmas 1505 the treasurer of the chamber received £361469 and expended £338740,² and a similar turnover of about £120000 a year is indicated by the sum of £1,581503 spent between May 1509 and April 1518.³ In fact, there appears to have been a slight but steady increase in the business of the treasurer of the chamber during the first half of Henry VIII's reign.

From April 1528 to his death in October 1545, the office of treasurer of the chamber was held by Sir Brian Tuke, a leading civil servant of the time, who combined its duties with those of the French secretary and, until 1539, of the clerk of parliament.⁴ Unfortunately the material in which his administration can be studied is not so satisfactory as that for his predecessors, though it is rather more lively. We possess two of his books of payments, one for October 1528 to May 1531, and the other for February 1538 to June 1541,⁵

1. Details are given by A.P. Newton, loc.cit., pp.364ff.

2. P.R.O. E 101/413/2(iii).

3. B.M. Add.MS 21481, f.288.

4. The salient points of Tuke's career are given by A.F. Pollard in D.N.B., xix.1222a-1223a. He is there mistakenly called treasurer of the household instead of the chamber. For the fact that he ceased to be clerk of parliament in 1539, cf. hanaper account P.R.O. E 101/223/6.

5. P.R.O. E 101/420/11 and B.M. Arundel MS 97. Both are fully calendared in L.P.

and some scattered partial accounts, acquittances, and warrants, as well as a considerable number of letters written by him from which information about the working of the office and about its finances can be obtained. From these sources a tolerably clear picture can be made, though it is as well to remember that in the absence of any complete accounts of receipts many conclusions must be slightly tentative.

The first thing which emerges from Tuke's accounts of his payments is that they decreased quite startlingly in the ten years between 1529 and 1539. While £55270 was spent by him in the full year ending at Michaelmas 1530, only about £33000 was spent in a similar period ending in 1539, and about £40000 a year later.¹ A decline of business from thirty to forty percent in ten years means a serious decline in the importance of the office, the more so as the general expenditure of the government had considerably increased.² Similar evidence can be found in a fragment of an account for the last year of the treasurership of the chamber in its old form, before it

1. The first figure is given in L.P. v, p.321. For the later years the accounts are missing for September (monthly) and Michaelmas (quarterly and half-yearly) totals, but the figures for the three-quarters of a year ending on 30 June are £24450 and £30406 respectively. When proportionately upgraded they give the totals in the text. That such upgrading is permissible is shown by the fact that the expenditure for the three-quarters of a year ending on 30 June 1530 was £42163, near enough three quarters of the sum spent in the whole year.

2. F.Dietz, Eng.Gov.Fin., pp.140ff.

was merged with the treasurership of the newly established court of general surveyors. In the three months of July, August, and September 1541 Tuke received £6838 and spent £6716.¹ If these sums may be taken as representative of an ordinary quarter, totals in the neighbourhood of only £25000 are arrived at, a far cry indeed from the six-figure totals of the days of Sir John Heron and Sir Henry Wyat. Things became even worse under Tuke's successors. In the thirteen months ending in March 1547 Sir William Cavendish received £7896 and paid £5377,² and in December 1548 he told the commissioners appointed to investigate the office of the treasurer of the chamber that his yearly income for the two years past had been £4737, that the office was in debt to the tune of £14000 but that £28991 was owing to it, and that his normal payments exclusive of extraordinary warrants amounted to £25200 a year.³ As a result a certain improvement seems to have taken place next year, though expenditure still exceeded income,⁴ but the office, like the rest of the financial administration of the country, was clearly in a bad way, and it causes no surprise to find it reduced to its original function of pure household duties by the exchequer reforms of Mary's

1. B.M. Royal MS 7.F.xiv, f.77.

2. Trevelyan Papers, ii.5.

3. Ibid., pp.11f.

4. Ibid., pp.13,34: receipts (1 October 1548 - 30 September 1549) - £16868; payments for the same period - £18036.

reign.¹ The collapse of the system was no doubt due to those causes which threw the whole of the royal finances into confusion after Cromwell's fall: increased expenditure, lack of vision and ability, and increasing corruption. However, the decline of the chamber began during the years of Cromwell's supremacy.

Tuke's letters to Cromwell present a picture of constant difficulties. He was always appealing for funds. "Sir," he wrote on 19 December 1534, "I assure you as I wol answer at

1. Though this is not the place to follow the history of the treasurer of the chamber to its end, a brief indication of what happened to the office under Mary and Elizabeth must be given. The Declared Accounts in the Pipe Office give a sufficiently clear picture. The first of them (P.R.O. E 351/541, mm.1ff.) recites a writ of privy seal, dated 14 December 1557, ordering the exchequer to pay to the chamber £3000 for the payment of wages to all sorts of minor household and court officials. The treasurer spent only £3032 that year, clearly therefore on purposes listed in the privy seal. The account of Elizabeth's reign covers two years (*ibid.*, mm.7ff.), with receipts of £15827 made up from revenue paid in by the exchequer, court of wards, the duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall, the hanaper, and the treasurer of the household. The payments (£15130) are classified as follows: alms, rewards ordinary, fees and wages, annuities by warrants dormant, "postinge chardges" by warrant of the queen or privy council, rewards, making ready of the queen's houses, gardens, messengers, and payments by the treasurer as master of the posts. With the exception of payments authorised by warrant these correspond to Tuke's "ordinary" expenses, and the exception is a very small one. The state of things remained the same throughout the reign. The office had been fully organised, its income being derived from fixed allocations from certain sources, and its payments being confined chiefly to wages in the household and recurrent annuities. It no longer served even partially as a spending department for the day-to-day expenditure of the government. (Cf. also F.Dietz, The Exchequer in Elizabeth's Reign, p.65).

my poril that towardes iij M li' that I noded must pay this cristenmas for wages and for rewardes for newyores giftes, besides all other ordynary paymentes now due, amounting to asmoche, I have not in my handes 1 li'... As I have don more than ons, I must endanger my self for my furniture... I thought to have besought you to lende me M li' til marche, And yet I must have made shyft for M li' or ij besides."¹ And again, on 28 March 1537: "I shal not have of money assigned to my receipt xx M li' by yere, and myn ordinary paymentes besides casual warrantes be almost xl M li' by yere."² On 18 July 1537: "My Lorde, I shal not nede to aduertise your Lordship howe sklenderly I at this tyme am and of long season am like to be furnished of the kinges money."³ In letter after letter he appealed for the Fifteenth and Tenth granted in 1534, which had always "come from the tellers of the receipt to the trea-

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1. P.R.O. SP 1/87, f.133 (L.P. vii.1556).
 2. P.R.O. SP 60/4, f.78 (L.P. xii.I.1297). £40000 was an over-estimate; we have seen that his total expenditure by this time hardly reached that figure. Tuke was given to budgeting too carefully. On 4 August 1539 he wrote: "August wages almost iij C li', and then in the nek mychelmas wages litel lak of xxiiij C li'. This, my lorde, is besides al other warrantes, and besides ambassadours diettes and al other myn ordinaries" (P.R.O. SP 1/153, f.9; L.P. xiv.II.13). In fact he paid £311 in wages that August (B.M. Arundel MS 97, ff. 86-87v). At Michaelmas he paid £808 in quarter wages (ibid., ff.91v-93v); the half-year's wages are lost but may be estimated from the items preserved for March and September 1538 and for March 1539 at about £360-370.
 3. P.R.O. SP 1/123, f.10 (L.P. xii.II.276).

corer of the chambre".¹ The trouble was that he was not getting his accustomed revenues, and in August 1539 he compiled a long list of complaints and difficulties in order to acquaint Cromwell with the true position.² He had received nothing from the exchequer for a year, and assignments before that time had always been earmarked by Cromwell for some specific purpose;³ his income from the hanaper - "whiche was wont to be to me a good shoteanker in suche vacacion tymes" - had suffered the same fate; he had large extra expenditure for fortifications and the like; and he had lost a number of good sources of income: the assignments to the household ("chaunged from desperate paymentes to the best that I had") now went directly from the exchequer to the cofferer of the household, "al the eschequer money cometh nowe to other handes", purchased lands contributed to the court of augmentations, forfeited lands to the treasurer of first fruits and tenths, and

1. Ibid. It is clear, therefore, that subsidies were collected by the exchequer but expended through the chamber, a point of some interest in administration. Cf. also P.R.O. SP 1/128, f.54 (L.P. xiii.I.47): "There nedeth no grete disputacion whither this xvth shulde be paid to myn office, seing that first it is the veray ordre and course It shuldre be bo, And secondly, It is necessary." Cf. further L.P. xiii.I.309, 1288.

2. P.R.O. SP 1/153, ff.9-10 (L.P. xiv.II.13).

3. Exchequer assignments to the chamber, given in the "Declarations of the State of the Treasury", are a mixed lot from which no useful statistics can be obtained. These are the figures for the period 1529-40, except for the year 1534-5 which is missing: £464, £880, £3796, £4554, £2595, £1342, £689, £439, £1005, £113.

money from vacant sees and abbeyes was no longer coming to the chamber. A good deal of money had at one time been obtained from debts owing to the king, but there was not much more to be had from that source;¹ he had explained in an earlier letter that "the grete dettes that be leviabie be for the most either paid or stalled to smal yerely paymontes, and the new dettes, sens I was officer, be but vpon wardes and lyuereys, payable by smal somes; whiche though they come in wel do neuertholas amounte to no notable somes. The grete dettes arose vpon lones of money and licences wherof fewe or none have passed sens I was officer. And I have cut them short that wer afore, ffor I have answerd and levyed this x yer that I have ben the kinges officer ferre above x M marc' by yere of his graces dettes, whiche is C M marc'; and I am sure, to the emperour, to the frenche king, to the frenche quene deceaced, and my lorde of Suffolk, to the staple, to my lorde of Northumberlande, the lorde Audelay, & other, there is ferre above C M li' of dettes discharged in my tyme by warant, for the whiche the kinges highnes is otherwise recompenced or agrede with. And many reuenues that I was wont to receyue be gon, som in to other courtes, som otherwise by gift or exchange of

1. Between 17 December 1536 and 10 November 1537 Tuke received a minimum of £1036 from "stalled" debts, as a file of receipts shows (P.R.O. E 101/422/6); for the year ending at Michaelmas 1542, his income from ^{debts} was £2348 (ibid. 423/5).

Landes."¹

That was the burden of his song: there was not enough money coming in to defray the payments charged against his office, though he would not mind if his expenses were cut down along with his income,² and the reason for this state of affairs was that much of his revenue had disappeared, either because it could not be repeated, like the debts he had recovered, or because it had been squandered, like the lands which the king had given away, or because it had gone to other treasurers. This last is to us the most interesting and the most important reason. More plainly than anything else it shows the fate of the treasurership of the chamber. Between 1485 and 1529 this office had acquired ever larger sources of revenue, gathering in both new and old, but in the period of Cromwell's supremacy it was deprived of many of these in the course of a number of administrative reforms which are associated with the setting up of the new financial departments, and which were the immediate result of the extension of the king's income which Cromwell carried out at the expense of the church.³ Certain signs of such a policy had been apparent

1. P.R.O. SP 1/133, f.245 (L.P. xiii.I.128f).

2. P.R.O. SP 1/128, f.54 (L.P. xiii.I.47): "Being I always best contented with lest receipted, So my paymentes be cut of accordingly," and P.R.O. SP 1/129, f.28 (L.P. xiii.I.249): "I am in no doubt but that your Lordship by your grete wisdom wol take ordre, So as I be charged as I shal receyue."

3. Professor Newton claimed that the period between 1487 and 1553 was "divided naturally into two portions by the great

in Cromwell's personal treasurer'ship, when some revenues that either had or ought to have gone to the chamber were diverted from it. During the years that followed the spoliation of the church Cromwell also concerned himself with the problem of financial administration as distinct from finance. Among other measures he also attended to the treasurer'ship of the chamber which emerged from his treatment shorn of many of its extraordinary revenues and deprived of its commanding position in the financial system.

In this Cromwell went against the policy of Henry VII and Wolsey, both of whom had been content to rely on the chamber machinery, even for the administration of the money spent in costly wars.¹ We have already seen that, as master of the jewels, Cromwell had taken on a good proportion of the extraordinary expenditure of the government which had until then been handled by the chamber. He did not by any means acquire all of it; if anything, the items of payments by the treasurer of the chamber are more numerous and varied in 1538-41 than in 1528-31, even though the total spent is smaller. Cromwell had also cut a little way into chamber revenues. We have tried

financial measures of Henry VIII in 1529" (E.H.R., xxxii, p.350). I am at a loss to understand what measures are here referred to. There certainly was a departure from earlier policy resulting in far-reaching administrative changes, but that did not come until the new revenues were assigned to the crown in 1534-5 and had nothing to do with Henry himself.

1. For Wolsey's policy cf. A.F.Pollard, Wolsey, pp.129f.

to explain this by arguing that he needed a financial agency more immediately under his own control, in order to be free from money difficulties in the execution of his policy.

That, however, is not enough to account for the great administrative changes and innovations in the field of finance that took place in the 1530's. Of these changes the decline of the chamber was one and the setting up of new departments another. The two, however, went hand in hand; nor did the chamber escape the implications of a policy which made for organised departments rather than informal arrangements within the household.

The rise of the treasurer of the chamber was due to his being a household officer subject to the king's control and personal authority only. Henry VII repeated the process, so common in medieval administration, of using a household office for purposes of national government, thus enabling himself to govern more efficiently. In a way, he was reviving rather than inventing, for chamber finance had been a distinctive feature of the reigns of Edward II and Edward III.¹ The Tudor chamber system, however, was built up not in order to secure the king's personal government against opposition, but to increase efficiency; it was a purely administrative development without political significance. When the king's

1. Tout, Chapters, ii.207,323ff.; iv.238ff.

immediate supervision was withdrawn, being replaced by a more formalised control of issues and audits, when moreover business increased so enormously that the intimate and informal relationship of king and treasurer became increasingly difficult,¹ the chamber showed signs of following the common medieval trend of household offices, that is, to develop into an extra-curial department of state. The treasurer of the chamber never actually "went out of court", but the reason for this was that his career was deliberately cut short and national finance was handed back to the old national machinery, the exchequer.

The first signs of a new and more definite status for the office were given in the statutes of the beginning of Henry VIII's reign. The preamble of 6 Henry VIII c.24 stated that the practice of Henry VII's time, when the receivers of crown property paid their money directly into the chamber and accounted by word of mouth to the king or his servants, lacked exchequer approval and might therefore lead to trouble for these evaders of exchequer control.² The act, therefore, appointed John Heron by name to be treasurer of the king's chamber, making him accountable to the king only, and also appointed two general surveyors of the king's lands with an

1. Cf. A.P. Newton, in E.H.R., xxxii(1917), pp.368f.

2. Stat.Realm., iii.145.

establishment of clerk, messenger, and usher, as a department of audit.¹ The interpretation of the statute was committed to all or four of the following: the chancellor, the archbishop of York, the lord treasurer, lord privy seal, steward of the household, chamberlain of the household, king's secretary, master of the rolls, and the two chief justices. This act, and those confirming or slightly amending it in the course of the reign,² put the position of the chamber on a legal basis where it had so far rested on the king's will only, but by defining the act necessarily circumscribed and set bounds to further development. This was not intended and was not the immediate effect; it has already been noticed that the business of the chamber increased considerably during the first half of the reign, and the treasurer continued to acquire new and irregular revenues as, for instance, Wolsey's forced loans. However, on the one hand, his duties and powers had been put on record, and on the other, the ultimate control over him had been deputed to a committee of the council by a young king eager to escape the drudgery of government. The beginning had been made of developing the chamber into an organised department of state.

During Wolsey's rule no effective reform of the machinery

1. *Ibid.*, pp.149f.

2. 7 Henry VIII c.7, 14 & 15 Henry VIII c.15.

was undertaken. In the experienced hands of John Heron the chamber ran itself, until the king apparently realised that he was no longer exercising sufficient control over the government, and a paper was drawn up, for or by Wolsey, concerning reforms in a number of departments.¹ The system of accounting before the king had been allowed to grow irregular, and all the chief financial officials of the crown were now instructed to account in person at stated times. At the same time the opportunity was taken of further defining some of Heron's duties. He was ordered to pay fixed sums, £10000 for "corteyne his gracie extraordinarie expensis" and £6000 towards buildings, and he was formally given a field of expenditure which he had anyway been in the habit of covering.² It matters little whether the detailed instructions concerning accounts and the like were ever carried out; they envisaged great centralisation, and even the chancellor and judges were expected to report quarterly on the administration of justice and the state of the realm. What is important is this further evidence of a desire to develop the chamber into an organised administrative machine instead of an informal agency depending on the

1. B.M. Tit.B.i, ff.188-90 (L.P. iii.576, there dated December 1519).

2. Ibid.: "Item, the kyngis grace hath also appoynted that all Rewardis for Ambassadours, and wagis for postis, and other necessarie expensis aswell for fortificacions of the kyngis frontiers and others the kyngis oute warde causis shalbe paid by the handis of Sir Iohn Heron...".

personal control of the king, and capable of indefinite and undefined changes and expansion.

This development had, therefore, certainly begun by the time that Tuke took over the treasurership of the chamber, but it had clearly not gone very far as yet. The treasurer was by then accounting, not to the king, but to the general surveyors, but he was still in the main a household officer entrusted with extraordinary duties by the king himself. It is not until 1534 that we get the first sign of Cromwell taking an interest in the organisation of the chamber, in the form of a minute addressed to him by Tuke. It is headed "Remembrance to Mr Cromwel", and deals with two of Tuke's troubles, his audit and his warrants.¹ It begins as follows:

"Sir, the effect of my humble petition and desire of the kinges highnes is this. Ye knowe that al the kinges officers and mynystres, intromedeling with any receiptes or paymentes for his highnes, haue an ordinary way and meane to be charged and discharged at the lest ons in the yere, except the treasurer of the kinges chambre who by acte of perliament is specially and only exempt that he shal not accompte in the kinges eschequer ne bifore any other person but bfore the kinges highnes or suche as his grace shal appoynt.

"This accompte bifore the kinges highnes hathe bothe in

1. B.M. Tit.B.iv, ff.117-8 (L.P. vii.254, there dated February 1534).

sir Thomas Lovelles tyme, sir Iohn Herons tyme, and other, ben
 made by bookes of their receiptes and paymentes dailly entord
 and made, and somtyme wekely somtyme quarterly or euery moneth
 signed with the kinges hande withoute any other accompt or re-
 kenyng; til nowe of late that sir Henry wyat, loving that of-
 fice, sued a comyssion to sir Iohn Dauncy to prove and cast
 his bokes, whiche was perfourmed and remayn or debet therupon
 conveyed, whiche was a visage or president of seconde accompto,
 rekenyng, or declaracion, besides the said bokes signed. And
 [it] may be demaunded of me or my successours, occupying that
 office hereafter, specia[llly] seing that ^{the} wordes of the said
 acte do not expresse whither the said bokes shal[be] taken for
 a sufficient accompte bifore the kinges highnes, or whither by
 the same acte his grace besides those bokes may appointe other
 to take a further accompte of that office.

"fforwhiche cause my most humble poursute and desire is
 to knowe herin the kinges most gracious pleasure, So that if
 his highnes be mynded to haue a further declaracion then by
 the said bokes bifore his maieste onely, It may stonde with
 his high pleasure to geue comyssion vnto suche a person as
 can do and may attende to the same, to peruse examyn viewe
 and cast vp my bokes..."

Tuke went on to point out that to leave such a second
 account standing over for many years would lead to trouble

as evidence may so easily disappear.¹ Having stated his problem, he submitted his proposition which clearly showed that what he wanted was a more exact and regular procedure designed to protect him against the consequences of any action taken. He wanted his office to be organised as a department of the civil service. "And for the tyme to come, my most humble poursute is that the said person so auctorised by commyssion may monethly peruse examyn and viewe my said bokes, and therupon set his name to the same for a more manyfest declaracion when I shal present my bokes to be signed by the kinges highnes."

However, this was not enough. "The thinges be so grete in receiptes and paymentes as ferre excede any meane mans charge to supporte or beare, if he shulde haue no discharge til the vewing or signature of his bokes", which may be attended with delays, and he therefore asked that "for thinges ordinary I may haue for paymentes an ordinary warrant, And that for thinges extraordinary I may alwais haue special warantes" or some other valid discharge, "ffor if I shulde make paymentes by commaundment and afterwarde sue my self for perticuler

1. "...When thinges be oute of memory; strowes billes and remembrances broken perished or gon; the parties ded; or the treasurer percase hym self, or his clerkes that coude before haue answerd to it, ded or gon...". He quoted the example of a suit in chancery concerning things done by Sir John Heron which could only be cleared up because, he, Tuke, happened to possess Heron's books, and happened to notice the relevant entry.

warant, I myzt be vndone in a day, lakking any warant when I sue for it. And there shulde be no day but I shulde molest the kinges highnes to signe my warantes; And I shulde entre into a common sute for euery mannes money, bring my self into mystrust whiche of al men shulde not make and sue myn own warantes, nor neuer man did in that office or any other.¹ And besides that, it myzt be said my warant wer no warant when I make it and spede it my self; for It myzt be said, though I made a false warant, the kinges highnes, trusting me, did signe it withoute further examinacion, whiche if his grace wolde do I wer as good haue neither warant nor boke signed when al is put to myn oun resporte. And then shulde my warantes nede asmoche comptrolment as my boke."

These were all sound enough reasons for his request, and what it all amounts^t is that the peculiar position of the treasurer of the chamber was disappearing. By act of parliament he was accountable to the king only, but a precedent had been set by Wyat of an additional, more formal audit; the king was no longer so conscientious as his father had been in checking the accounts or having them checked;² and consequently a careful official like Tuke preferred to play safe

1. A dig at Cromwell? At any rate, he made his own warrants (above, pp.197f.).

2. B.M. Tit.B.iv, f.118: "my bokes whiche I had redy at cristenmas to be signed, and was put of by reason that the kinges highnes appointed them first to be seen, whiche is not yet done."

even though that meant submitting to a regular audit by appointed commissioners, and no irregular payments without special warrants.¹ The latter demand did away with the original intention of making the treasurer of the chamber a kind of money-spending right hand of the government, acting more often on verbal commands than on written orders, and undoubtedly this attitude on Tuke's part supplied an additional reason why Cromwell thought it necessary to gain personal control of large sums of money, rather than employ the chamber machinery. For himself he could and did sue warrants after

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1. Tuke's insistence on special warrants meant a good deal of work for others. As he told Lord Lisle: "I pay no thing to ambassadours or their seruauntes for diettes, postage, or other thing, but as I have from tyme to tyme special warant ...if that wer not requisite, neither the kinges grace nor his honourable counsaill wolde take the payn at so sodeyn and hasty depeches as they be to make and signe warantes to me, being somtyme xl myle of or more or les." (B.M. Tit.B.i, f.169v; L.P. x.136). There are other indications of his bureaucratic mind, a term not intended to be derogatory. Thus he assured Cromwell that the organisation within his office was more thorough under him than it had ever been: "Your lordship shal have herd what ordres I do vse, whiche never treasurers of the chamber dyd, bitwene my clerkes and me. Your lordship shal fynde that it is not veray easy either for me or them to deceyue the kinges highnes, or for them to deceyue me (P.R.O. SP 1/127, f.117; L.P. xii.II. 1250). He found it difficult to get receiptes for all his payments, for these were a recent innovation and "many gentilmen aboute the kinges highnes...bringing me their warantes vtterly refuse to subscribe or geve acquitance, Affermynge that the possession of the warant is my discharge" (ibid.). In another letter (P.R.O. SP 1/137, ff.65-6; L.P. xiii.II.499) he explained why he wanted payees of annuities on patents to obtain a dormant writ of liberate, a procedure which he admitted was novel. But then, he says, it is an innovation for patents to be made payable by the treasurer of the chamber who, not being a court of record, afterwards

the payments had been made, but Tuke refused to do this and gave reasons which had to be admitted as valid. The departmentalisation of Tuke's office is beyond doubt, and it is clear that Tuke's own attitude and practice favoured it. The question which concerns us is whether the process was affected by Cromwell's ministry, whether Cromwell helped or hindered it. Can we discover him pursuing any definite policy with regard to the chamber?

The first thing that happened was that on 25 April 1534 Tuke was fully discharged of all his payments in the past, as he had asked to be in his minute to Cromwell.¹ The patent which declared this pardon was taken from a signed bill, filed as a warrant for the great seal, which is in Tuke's own hand.² It may be surmised that after his "remembrance" he was asked by Cromwell to submit a formal petition in terms suitable to himself, and that a patent was made out accordingly. While

had nothing to show for it: "It was sufficient to the treasurer of the chambre to knowe the kinges pleasure by mowthe, or in his absence by a lottre, warant, message, or token. And al this endured but at the kinges most gracious pleasure, and at the same pleasure wer revocable. Nowe they be for the most parte during life And many by patent... If I shal pay by vertue of lottres patentos I must have som thing to shewe for my self. The lettres patentos the partie dothe kepe for his suretie, And I may no more pay by the sight of his lettres patentos than I may by the onely sight of his warant. Wherfor, rather then I wolde drive the partie to sue the kinges warant, I am contented only with a liberte whiche he may have for ij s' vj d', or dormant for vj s' viij d' if it be during life."

1. L.P. vii.589(4).

2. P.R.O. C 82/683, no.9.

Tuke himself must, therefore, be held responsible for the wording of the grant, it is clear that the king's minister, to whom he had appealed, agreed with it and approved it as a matter of policy.

The patent provided both for past payments and for future lack of warrants. A lengthy introduction elaborated Tuke's difficulties along the lines of his "remembrance", and it was then stated that "we...wol and by thies presentes declare that the said bokes of paymentes signid with out hand...shalbe sufficient warraunt and discharge for al and singuler somes and paymentes mencionid in the same to haue bene by him paid... and so to be alowid and takyn at al tymes hereafter," and the difficulty of paymentes made without warrant and before the books were signed ("before the ende of the moneth or of the tyme that we shall eftsones signe the said bokes") was dealt with by allowing the entry of such payments in the books as a valid discharge if they were entered before the audit of the period to which they belonged. There followed a proviso, in case any wrong dealings or mistakes were discovered: "Pro-
vided alwaies that if it can be at any tyme provid that any entores be made in any of the said bokes of paymentes for the tyme passed...or for the tyme to come, during the season that the said sir Brian Tuke shal excercise the said office, and the same somes not paid accordingly, or that any somes in the

same bokes be vntually somed or casto vp, Then the said sir Brian Tuke to be answerable therunto as reason is." This may be common form, or a result of Tuke's conscientiousness, or an insertion demanded by Cromwell who may ^{have} wished to preserve a certain amount of control. The terms of the pardon were very wide, and in view of the fact that the body of the document speaks trustingly of Tuke's approved fidelity and his oath of office, we incline to think that Cromwell was behind this piece of caution.

So far Tuke had acted on his own initiative though with the approval of Cromwell and the government, but in 1535 his affairs became the subject of direct government action. The statute of 27 Henry VIII c.62 made permanent the office of general surveyors of crown lands as established by the act of 1523. The position of the treasurer of the chamber was described by statutes which ostensibly referred to the general surveyors; as far as the law was concerned he was their specific treasurer, and his revenues were defined in the schedules attached to acts dealing with them. The making permanent of their office was, therefore, another step in the organisation of the treasurer's office, a fact which is underlined by the very interesting proviso in the act that purchased lands and exchanged lands were to be exempted from its terms. This put a stop to any acquisition of fresh sources of income by the

chamber. Purchased lands were assigned in the same session to the newly established court of augmentations,¹ a fact of which Tuke complained when he recited his losses in 1539.² The court of augmentations and its revenues were closely linked with Cromwell's general policy, and Cromwell, as we shall see, took the leading part in its foundation. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose that he was responsible for taking these possibilities of further revenues away from the chamber.

The case for this supposition can be strengthened. It had apparently been intended to renew the act for the general surveyors in 1531, at a time when Cromwell was not yet the head of the government. The draft which survives differs in only a few particulars from the 1535 statute.³ The existence of the general surveyors was to be continued until the end of the next parliament, "And after the laste daye of the said next parliament duryng his gracy's pleasure", and the proviso about purchased lands was absent. This draft was used in drawing up the enacted statute, for the phrase concerning the prolongation of the office is underlined in the way which Cromwell commonly employed when he wished to cancel a passage. There is a vast deal of evidence for the fact that Cromwell

1. 27 Henry VIII c.27, sec.6.

2. L.P. xiv.II.13.

3. P.R.O. SP 2/L, ff.112-4 (L.P. v.721[9]).

was, of all the ministers of the crown, the one most active in the preparation of legislation - so much evidence, indeed, that there are sound grounds for seeing his hand in every part of it; there is also no doubt that he was the man most interested in financial matters. It is therefore quite likely that the corrections in the 1531 draft are by him; at any rate, in 1535 he was so fully in control of the government that no important act of parliament concerning the administration could possibly have been drafted without reference to him. The changes from 1531 were the two significant points which we have discovered in the statute; the office was made permanent, and it was deprived of the possibility of further revenues. Surely we may now see Cromwell's hand in these changes and may say that he sponsored the measure which further circumscribed the treasurership of the chamber.

Cromwell's policy is now becoming a little clearer. He wished to encourage the existing tendency of the office to become a well-defined department. It was to be part of a general organisation of revenue administration, having therein its task and place assigned. The treasurer of the chamber was to lose the freedom of a loosely defined office and his exceptional position in the administration by being subordinated to a properly established department of state headed by the general surveyors. This line of development led

straight to its consummation in an act passed after Cromwell's fall which established a court of general surveyors.¹ The treasurer of the chamber for the time being was, always to be the treasurer of the court. The officer concerned always described himself thereafter by both his titles.² Although Cromwell did not live to see the setting up of this court, it is reasonable to claim that he must have foreseen and intended it. For one thing, the policy of new revenue courts was one that started during his ministry and can moreover, as we shall see, be brought home to him. For another, his treatment of the general surveyors and chamber machinery, as shown by the act of 1535 as well as by his general relations with Tuke and his revenues, had in effect arrived at the same end without the formality of an established court. The court of the general surveyors must, therefore, be included among Cromwell's reforms of the financial administration. The full significance of this fact cannot be worked out until we have considered the other new revenue courts; for the moment it will suffice to say that the court of the general surveyors, or something very like it, was Cromwell's answer to the problem of the undepartmentalised chamber.

While the revenues of the chamber were, therefore, fixed

1. 33 Henry VIII c.39.

2. B.M. Stowe MS 554, f.11, the first account of the new court.

and limited, there was no intention of extruding the treasurer from the payment of extraordinary government expenditure. It had always been the practice of the government to use any available treasury for the purpose of paying expenses, and Cromwell's reforms, while attempting to define spheres of action in the collection of revenue, never interfered with this established principle. Thus, for instance, the duchy of Lancaster paid pensions to the marquess of Dorset and the king's master cook, and was commanded to pay a reward of £200 to the speaker of the commons, in addition to payments which would naturally fall to its share, as the fees of its officers and annuities to the stewards of duchy lands.¹ Similarly the treasurer of the chamber paid - to give two widely differing examples - annuities to the earl of Angus² and to Thomas Paston of the privy chamber,³ while the exchequer paid another group of annuities and pensions.⁴ The money in all government or royal treasuries (the terms are, strictly speaking, interchangeable) was available for any assignment on it, and choice was presumably government by immediate convenience. When Lord Lisle was granted an annuity his agent was in great doubt where it would

1. Cf. the surviving accounts for the years 1529-39, B.R.O. DL 28/7/1-7.

2. B.M. Arundel MS 97, ff.2v,6v,34,62,88,102v,116v,121.

3. *Ibid.*, ff.120,133.

4. E.g., P.R.O. E 405/199, where the tellers' payments are given in detail.

be paid.¹ We have seen that as master of the jewels Cromwell paid many items previously in the charge of the treasurer of the chamber; whether the latter continued to pay for similar purposes at the same time cannot be established for certain in the absence of accounts for the critical period, but later accounts show him again engaged on the same sort of business, though being rivalled by the treasurer of first fruits and tenths,² and there is thus every reason to suppose that Cromwell's treasurership did not withdraw all extraordinary government expenditure from the chamber.

Tuke continued to pay many of the government's expenses, but he did this now under a new and closer control. Cromwell supervised him, as he supervised all departments of the administration. As early as April 1533 the ambassador with the emperor applied to Cromwell when he thought that Tuke was being dilatory in paying his diots.³ Bonner, in 1539, wrote to the king for the speedy issue of a warrant as Tuke would not pay without one, and a few days later Cromwell ordered Tuke to make out letters of bank to Bonner's servant.⁴ Com-

1. P.R.O. SP 3/4, f.94 (L.P. xiii.II.434): "I wold know wher and in what plasse it were most ffor your proffytt to be payde. They saythe that the treseror of the chamber is often without mony, and the Joyell howsse, augmentacions, and fyrst frywttes is as ill, anf the checker warsse; and to be payde at Calays by the treseror or the resceyuer is warst of all." In the end Lisle was paid by augmentacions (L.P. xiii.II.1069, 1112).

2. Below, pp. f.

3. L.P. vi.372.

4. L.P. xiv.I.620, 709.

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administration seems to have made recourse to Tuke unnecessary. When, for instance, he was asked for a warrant to Tuke, to hand over the "cesses" which were to pay for the draining of Leenoe marsh, it appears that he directed the warrant to himself.¹

Cromwell's control over the treasurer of the chamber was made particularly clear when trouble occurred in the department. In 1537 Cornelius Hayes, the king's goldsmith, maintaining that he had been cheated out of £100, entered a complaint to the lords of the council.² The accused clerks of the treasurer of the chamber defended themselves in a deposition delivered to the lord privy seal, who had therefore taken charge of the matter.³ Tuke took his clerks' part and stated their case and his in a letter to Cromwell;⁴ it is not known how the matter ended. Here again we have an example of the way in which Cromwell personally supervised the chamber. On another occasion he demanded from Tuke a detailed list of the wages paid through his office, which the treasurer forwarded with an apology for using only his clerks' books and his own memory, he then being in the country.⁵

Cromwell's main control was over the expenditure of the treasurer of the chamber, though we have seen that he could

the kinges highnes, And that I shulde certefie you to morowe
erly" (P.R.O. SP 1/84, f.234; L.P. vii.863). Cf. also L.P.
xi.240, App.3.

1. L.P. vi.843, 1057. 2. L.P. Add.1283.
3. L.P. xii.II.180. 4. Ibid. 1250.
5. P.R.O. SP 1/137, f.176 (L.P. xiii.II.587).

also withhold or pass part of Tuke's income, such as the much disputed fifteenth and tenth.¹ Several cases of Cromwell being approached for warrants directed to Tuke have already been mentioned; we may add that even Sir William Fitzwilliam, treasurer of the household and lord admiral, did this when he was about to leave for Calais on a commission of investigation.² Both Cromwell's remembrances and his correspondence contain quite a few references to warrants to be made out to Tuke, or orders to him for payment.³ These show that Cromwell used the treasurer of the chamber as a spending department under his own control. The clearest evidence for this is provided by Tuke's accounts for 1538-41.⁴ There the authority for payments made is always quoted, and the fact emerges that the large majority were either authorised by the king or by Cromwell. Those stated to be authorised by royal warrant were almost all regularly recurring payments, as for instance for the king's buildings, the annuity of the earl of Angus,⁵ wages

1. Above, pp.206f.

2. L.P. ix.4, where he asks for Cromwell's letters to Tuke. The actual warrant issued, however, seems to have been a regular royal warrant: "...haue receyved the kinges Letteris and therwith his graces warraunt to Sir Bryan Tuke addressed, for the Dyettes of me and part of my Colleges in this our Iourney to Calays..." (P.R.O. SP 1/95, f.52; L.P. ix.50).

3. E.g., L.P. vi.995, 1056(ii), 1194; ix.232, 498(3); x.376, 1124; xi.398; xii.I.73; xiii.II.221.

4. B.M. Arundel MS 97.

5. In May 1534 Tuke stated that he had so far paid this annuity by special warrants issued separately for each payment. He

and victuals for the king's ships, household deficits, the garrison at Berwick, the council in the marches of Wales, regular wages and annuities in the household, diets to certain ambassadors. Frequently the warrant for such a payment is described as "dormant", that is to say, it was made out for a series of recurring disbursements. Other payments are mostly given, up to June 1539, as "by the king's commandment, certified by my lord privy seal's letters", and after that date almost invariably as by Cromwell's letter only. In a document which generally gives the impression of careful accuracy such a clear-cut change is likely to represent an actual change of practice. We may conclude that about June 1539 Cromwell ceased to employ a formula which pretended that he was merely communicating the king's orders. However that may have been, it is certain that all these payments were made on his authority and initiative. Analysis shows that they were by far the larger number, and that they were concerned with a variety of purposes which leaves out few things that a government might have to pay for. Most of them were made only once; in contrast to those authorised by ordinary royal warrant they were not regular or recurring. It will be seen, therefore, that in the last years of his supremacy Cromwell issued personal

wanted to know what was to be done about it. It seems that Cromwell ordered the issue of a dormant warrant (L.P. vii. 713).

orders for payment to the treasurer of the chamber which were treated with the respect usually reserved for royal warrants under the signet and sign manual.

Once Cromwell, therefore, had fully established his supremacy, the treasurer of the chamber became practically as much the minister's immediate treasurer as he had been the king's in the days before Cromwell took over. There was, however, a difference. The relationship had ceased to be personal, and the chamber had been given organised form and a bureaucratic outline. The treasurer of the chamber was no longer the most important financial officer of the government but had become head of one department among several, one cog in a machine which was constantly growing more complicated. The internal organisation of his office had progressed far towards departmentalisation, and much of this development was due to the treasurer's own initiative. Externally, too, there were signs of a tighter organisation, and here the moving spirit had been Cromwell's. Cromwell had cut down and circumscribed the revenues which were going to the chamber, and had put a stop to any further expansion on its part. He had deprived it of its unique position in the financial organisation, first by himself doing much of the work hitherto left to the treasurer of the chamber, and afterwards by setting up rival treasurers. On the other hand, he made no attempt

to define the field of expenditure left to the chamber. The money collected there was still freely at the disposal of the government, at Cromwell's disposal, and was used as freely for any purpose that needed covering. At the same time, Cromwell' had established a complete control over all money going out from the chamber. The treasurer of the chamber had become a purely executive official, administering certain revenues which were expended by the orders of the king's chief minister. Because Cromwell's reforms reduced his income and cut short his rise to primacy among the financial ministries, it is to them that we must refer the subsequent rapid decline of the office. Cromwell was therefore responsible for the fact that the treasurer of the chamber did not become a permanent feature of English financial administration.

IV. Cromwell's New Machinery.

An act of 1534 established the system by which the first fruits and tenths were to be paid to the king.¹ Its terms are the more interesting because their administrative details were only partially carried out. They show that it was intended to utilize existing machinery. The value of first fruits was to be assessed by commissioners also empowered to take compositions for them and to accept payments. Of these commissioners, the chancellor and the master of the rolls were always to be two, and it is not surprising to find that the financial officer of the chancery, the clerk of the hanaper, was to keep and account for all the money and obligations derived from compositions made before them. Should the king appoint additional commissioners, the proceeds of their labours were to go to the treasurer of the chamber. Tenths, to be paid every Christmas from 1535 onwards, were to be assessed by commissioners appointed by the chancellor, while their collection was entrusted to the archbishops and bishops who were to pay the money every year by April 1st to the treasurer of the chamber, or - a significant reservation, this - to such person as the king might appoint for the purpose.

It was clearly thought that the new revenue could be

1. 26 Henry VIII c.3 (Stat.Realm, iii.493ff.).

handled by established departments, and there was fundamentally no reason for doubting this. The sums involved were as yet unknown or, at best, known vaguely, but when they came to be assessed and were found to amount to about £40000 a year it must still have seemed that hanaper and chamber could deal with them.¹ The real difficulty of organisation, the problem of assessing and collecting, was settled in the act along lines that were to prove workable and put no additional strain on the treasuries used. However, the scheme was really rather clumsy, with two different agencies for the receipt and account of the money, and first fruits to be divided between two separate treasuries if additional commissioners were appointed. There is no reason to doubt that Cromwell was instrumental in the making of an act which dealt with his own additions to the revenue, the less so as he certainly corrected at least one draft of it.² Nevertheless, a most important change was made in the projected machinery before it was put into practice, and it will be seen that this change, too, was Cromwell's work.

On 7 May 1535, before the first payment fell due, John

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1. Cf. the estimate given in L.P. x.1257(xii).
 2. L.P. vii.1380(2). One might conceivably be able to discover a good deal about his influence from these corrections, but unfortunately it had proved quite impossible to trace the document at the P.R.O. The reference given in the "Key" to L.P. leads nowhere, and one has to admit that the draft appears to have vanished uncatalogued.

Gostwick was appointed treasurer and general receiver, and also, commissioner, of first fruits and tenths, in accordance with the statute of 26 Henry VIII.¹ He was actually in office by 21 March.² Advantage was thus being taken of the loophole offered by the act when it reserved to the king the right to appoint some other person in the place of the treasurer of the chamber. In addition to his basic duties Gostwick was also to take charge of other sources of revenue: the issues of lands acquired by the king, particularly those of attainted persons (Wolsey and Rice ap Griffiths) and of suppressed abbeys; the profits of vacant sees and monasteries; and fines for exports, for the escape of prisoners from ecclesiastical prisons, and for the restitution of temporalities. He was also to receive from Cromwell certain bonds of the king's debts and to see to their collection. For these duties he was to have an annuity of £100.³

It is at once apparent that all his income, except the new revenue of first fruits and tenths, was money that Cromwell had himself been administering for the previous three

1. L.P. viii.802(20).

2. Ibid. 422.

3. In March 1535 John Husee, Lord Lisle's agent, reported Gostwick's annuity to be £300. His information proved to be prophetically correct. In August 1536 Gostwick was granted an additional £200, the original sum having been found insufficient to meet the expenses of his office (L.P. xi.385[12]). It seems therefore likely that he was drawing £300 p.a. for a year and a half before he was authorised to do so by patent.

years. This indicates that the absence of any accounts of Cromwell's after 1534 reflects the fact that he was no longer receiving a well defined revenue. Gostwick's own accounts confirm and add to this impression.¹ He classifies his income as first fruits, tenths, clerical subsidy, receipts from vacant sees, the bishop of Lincoln's fine for letting "collectors convicted" escape from prison, and fines assessed by Cromwell for the making of knights. There is also an item of various sums received from Cromwell and others for immediate and specified employment. Very largely, then, Gostwick was to take over the revenue which had served Cromwell in his capacity as treasurer.

Who was John Gostwick? There seem to have been two men of that name, brothers or cousins, for one John Gostwick wrote to Wolsey in about 1525, thanking him for his kindness to John Gostwick, his "germanus".² It is, however, fairly clear that one man of that name was being employed by Wolsey in various administrative and financial services from about 1517 onwards.³ He was described as Wolsey's servant, or his old and trusty servant,⁴ and in July 1527 as his controller.⁵ He was present at the foundation of the Ipswich college, and with Cromwell and

1. B.M. Lansd. MS 156, ff. 146-9.

2. L.P. iv. 2321. The writer of this letter described Cromwell as his own patron.

3. L.P. ii. 3841, p. 1517.

4. L.P. iii. 1021, 1451, p. 1409; iv. 2131.

5. Ibid. 3216, 6586(2).

others of Wolsey's servants received the manor of Ravenston for Wolsey's use.¹ He was a native of Willington, Bedfordshire, is found repeatedly on the Bedfordshire commission of the peace, and may have sat for that county in the Reformation parliament.² In 1525 he was appointed auditor of certain royal property in Yorkshire, and he is once described as king's auditor.³ In 1529 he addressed Cromwell as "his trusty and loving friend".⁴ All this is very much of one piece and is likely to refer to one man, an experienced and well trained financial official of the Wolsey school, associated in the past with Cromwell and transferred from Wolsey's service to Cromwell's in due course.

In 1534 Cromwell was employing Gostwick in various matters, mostly of a financial nature. He handed William Elys the letter requesting his resignation as baron of the exchequer; with Richard Cromwell, he took an inventory of Lord Dacre's plate; and he handled money under Cromwell.⁵ Even after his appointment as treasurer of first fruits and tenths he remained in Cromwell's service. In 1535 he was left in London to look after Cromwell's affairs and had to seek Cromwell's permission to go home to Willington; even in 1538 he

1. Ibid. 4461, 5024.

2. Ibid. 5132; L.P. v.909(9), 1694; vii, 56; xii.II.453.

3. L.P. iii.3214(18); v.166(26).

4. L.P. iv, App.233.

5. L.P. vii.34, 663, 1011, 1353, 1364, 1496.

is still found thanking Cromwell for such licence.¹ His official relations with Cromwell are illustrated by a letter from Cromwell in October 1535.² This is in effect a warrant discharging Gostwick of certain duties and ordering him to take certain steps. He was authorised to call before him some of the king's debtors whose debts had grown "desperate", in order to make as favourable a settlement with them as he could manage. "And this Subscribed with my hande shalbe vnto you, your heires, exocutours, & deputies sufficient discharge at all tymes hereafter." For all the detailed control which he exercised, Cromwell had the good administrator's gift of trusting subordinate officials with a certain freedom of action.

Thus, rather than commit the new revenue to chamber and hanaper, Cromwell appointed a servant of his own, an experienced civil servant of Wolsey's training, and also entrusted him with the money which he himself used to receive as master of the jewels. It is therefore of the greatest interest to find that Gostwick's payments, under the Cromwell régime, included all manner of things that were previously found in Cromwell's own payments. An account of the year 1540 enumerates, among others, the following items:³ the justices and serjeants;

1. L.P. ix.65,279,301; xiii.II.222.

2. B.M. Tit.B.iv, ff.114-5 (L.P. ix.647); printed by Merriman, i.433.

3. P.R.O. SP 1/159, ff.260-4 (L.P. xv.642).

Cornelius Hayes, the goldsmith; Fowler at Calais; Gonson for ships, and for conveying Anne of Cloves; the king's works; the king's tomb; rewards to ambassadors and others; Sadler's diets in Scotland; Wotton's diets in Cloves; suppliers of the great wardrobe. In July 1535 Cromwell noted among his remembrances the fact that he would cause Gostwick to pay certain diets to ambassadors, rewards to Irish officials, and sums for buildings at Calais and Dover.¹ There survive the dockets of four warrants paid by Gostwick and waiting to be signed;² they also include a varied number of payments similar to those already given. It would be tedious to list the payments which Gostwick made by Cromwell's orders; examples of the kind indicated can be found throughout the years 1535-40.³ When it is remembered that in 1535 Cromwell began to be too busy to attend in detail to the business of a treasurer, and that he apparently ceased to act as one by about April 1536,⁴ his intention with regard to Gostwick's office becomes plain. Gostwick was to take over the income and expenditure hitherto handled by Cromwell himself, and was to be Cromwell's personal treasurer. We may suspect that Cromwell was responsible for the insertion into the act of 1534 of that reservation which

1. L.P. viii.1077.

2. L.P. xi.381,516.

3. E.g., L.P. viii.1109,1110,1148; ix.65,125,151,252,279,341,451,558,836; x.28,1052; xi.1163,1448; xii.I.1079; II.256,260,577; xiv.II.53.

4. Above, pp.175,195.

afterwards enabled him to secure Gostwick's appointment. It is probable that he hoped from the first to have full control of the new revenue. His clerkship of the hanaper would have given him control of a part, but that was obviously an unsatisfactory arrangement. Much the best solution was that adopted in the end: a separate treasurer for all first fruits and tenths who was immediately under his control.

Considerable light is thrown on this aspect of the office by an examination of its organisation. The treasurer of first fruits and tenths did not have a properly organised department at all. He had his clerks and servants whom he paid,¹ but he presided over a treasury which was fed by agencies outside his control. First fruits were assessed by commissioners who produced, in the Valor Ecclesiasticus, a tax return of lasting value. Compositions were made before independent officers as occasion arose. These officers were at first the chancellor and the master of the rolls, that is, Audeley and Cromwell. Gostwick's accounts show that these two alone were engaged in taking compositions in the first year of the new revenue: (1535).² The year after, a certain John Hales was added to their number, no doubt the same Hales who was appointed clerk of first fruits and tenths, with powers

1. L.P. xi.385(12).

2. B.H. Lansd.MS 156, ff.146-9.

to valuate and take compositions, on 3 February 1537.¹ Except that Christopher Hales took Cromwell's place as master of the rolls, these men continued to supply the treasurer's income in first fruits. Not only money but also obligations concerning first fruits were delivered to Gostwick. In July 1535 he appealed to Cromwell for someone "to sue the processes of suche obligacions and specialties as be commytted to my charge", the clerk of the king's attorney having departed without letting him know how things stood, "so that I am not hable to aunswere nether to the Kinges grace nor your Maistership concernyng thesame".² Though, therefore, he normally relied on the attorney-general in the collection of his debts, he later reported himself active in daily calling on debtors in London for first fruits and other debts, adding that he himself

1. L.P. xii.I.539(5). He would thus seem to have exercised the office before he was properly installed, but as a matter of fact his appointment had been under discussion for some time. In February 1536 an entry in Cromwell's memoranda spoke of "an office to be made for the taking of bonds for the first fruits" (L.P. x.254). In August that year Audeley refused to seal Hales's patent because it would take away his own authority concerning first fruits (L.P. xi.296). His appeal to Cromwell seems to have succeeded in getting the terms of the patent changed, for Audeley continued to accept compositions for first fruits for another two years (1537-8). His letter hints that the business was profitable to the commissioners. This John Hales is not identified by L.P. with the John Hales who was baron of the exchequer and one of the king's general surveyors (L.P. xiii.II,p.162n., and index), and Audeley's way of speaking of him supports this. He was perhaps the well known John Hales of Coventry, later clerk of the hanaper, but a new man in 1537.

2. P.R.O. SP 1/94, ff.223-4 (L.P. viii.1123).

had committed some to ward for non-payment.¹ There was nothing in his patent to permit such high-handed action, and the chances are that he was overstepping the limit of his authority while relying on Cromwell to support him.

The procedure for tenths was different. Their collection went by dioceses and was under the control of the bishops who paid the money to Gostwick, as the account quoted shows. However, as the treasurer of first fruits and tenths did not preside over a court of record he could not keep rolls, issue process, control the bishops, or call them to account. Consequently all the administrative business concerning tenths was done in the exchequer. In 1535 the new bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Shaxton, wanted to be discharged in the exchequer for the revenues of the bishopric of the previous half year.² In 1536 complaints were addressed to Cromwell that the books for the tenth out of the exchequer were full of mistakes.³ Accounts for tenths were rendered into the exchequer and enrolled on the king's remembrancer's memoranda roll. Though the bishops did the work, the knowledge of what needed doing resided, not in their own diocesan organisation, but in the exchequer. In January 1540 a privy seal addressed to the treasurer and barons of the exchequer declared that in the absence

1. L.P. xiii.II.222.
3. L.P. x.423,435.

2. L.P. viii.766.

of the bishop of London, Bonner then being on an embassy, the dean and chapter of St. Paul's were to collect the tenth, pay it to Gostwick, and account for it in the exchequer; the king's remembrancer was to direct "sedules sealed vnder our seale of our said Eschequire" to the dean and chapter, "conteynyng all such Somes of Money whyth lettres suffiyent whythin the same, whereby the sayd Dean and Chapter may be sufficiently lernid and Instructed to collect, gather, and receue the sayd Annuell rent and pencion".¹ When things went wrong Gostwick could not act directly. On 1 December 1539 he complained in the exchequer court that the abbot of Bury St. Edmunds, responsible for the collection of the tenth in Norwich diocese, had retained the money and failed to render his account into the exchequer, "in Contemptum & decepcionem eiusdem domini Regis ac contra Leges suas; vnde predictus Iohannis Gostwyk petit Auisamentum Curie in premissis".² It was not until 29 November 1540 that Sir John Baker, chancellor of the newly established court of first fruits and tenths, came into the exchequer and collected the records which had till then been kept by the king's remembrancer.³

The question which naturally arises is: why was the business organisation of the treasurer left in so rudimentary a

1. P.R.O. E 159/318, m.26.

2. Ibid., Communia, Michaelmas Term, Recorda, m.35.

3. Ibid. 319, Communia, Michaelmas Term, Recorda, m.24.

state? Why did he carry on for six years under a system which made him dependant on other departments for everything except the accumulation and paying out of the money? There is an answer to be found in his accounts. In 1540 he rendered what he himself described as his "first accompt after the Court was established in the saide yeare 26^o", covering the period from 1 January 1535 to Christmas 1540.¹ For all the years before the actual court was set up Gostwick had rendered no official accounts. We know that no such accounts survive; we may take Gostwick's word for it that none ever existed. Yet he must have kept some form of check on his receipts and payments, for he was able to draw up in 1540 a detailed balance for those six years. Such unofficial accounts were rendered to Cromwell who several times required Gostwick to declare the state of his treasury. Thus in answer to a request "to knowe what money remayneth Aswell in the Mynt, in Robert Lordes handes, & myne", Gostwick wrote that he knew nothing of the mint for which Stephen Vaughan would answer,² but that there was some

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1. B.M. Lansd. MS 156, ff. 146-9. This is a copy made in 1609, which may account for the mistake made in the heading. It was the office of treasurer, of course, and not the court of first fruits and tenths which was established in the 26th of Henry VIII. On the other hand it is possible that Gostwick himself antedated the use of the term "court", now that the office had actually become one.
 2. It may be noted in passing that the mint, like all other financial departments, was kept under close control by Cromwell, though there is no sign of any active or reforming interest in it. One example of his power over it is the

£6470 in cash in the hands of the Jewel-house officials, of Robert Lord his servant, and of himself.¹ At other times he sent proper accounts to Cromwell, as for instance a statement of the receipt of the tenth for two years, or a brief declaration of what remained in his clerks' hands.² Though no account was made to the king until 1540, Gostwick was not uncontrolled, being directly responsible to Cromwell who kept the considerable income of the treasurer of first fruits and tenths as much in his own hand as he had kept the income of the master of the jewels. It was for this reason that no organised department was set up for first fruits and tenths. To have done that would have meant giving more independence to the treasurer than Cromwell was willing to grant. It would have made him more like the treasurer of the chamber whose comparative independence had originally induced Cromwell to undertake a personal treasurership of the king's money. Cromwell's intention in setting up Gostwick's office was to continue this treasurership by delegation, for he wished still to have large sums at his disposal for the irregular and incidental expenses of the government.

The sums involved can be worked out with some accuracy.

Appointment of Vaughan, his friend and servant, as its undertreasurer. Gostwick's words make one suspect that Vaughan was put in as Cromwell's personal agent.

1. P.R.O. SP 1/112, ff.68-79 (L.P. xi.1220).
2. L.P. xii.II.576; xiii.II.222.

In June 1536 Gostwick drew up an estimate of his income, probably as much for Cromwell's benefit as his own, in which he quoted the round figures of £30000 for "the Annuall Rent or Tenth of the Spiritualtie Due to be payde in Aprill next comyng", and of £10000 for "the furst fructes by estymacion, Due and to be due at the feest of Thannunciacion of our Lady". At the same time he expected to collect £12592 from debts and other sources.¹ The actual receipts for the years 1535-40 totalled £406103, an average of over £60000 a year, but of this £130711 was irregular income derived from Cromwell and others, and earmarked for special purposes; it was money for which Gostwick acted as paymaster rather than treasurer. The totals given for first fruits (£90069) and tenths (£156251) show that the estimate of 1536 erred on the conservative side for the former and hoped for too much from the latter. Together the two yielded the expected average of £40000. First fruits, in the nature of things, varied considerably; tenths started at £32018 and decreased steadily to £18412, a consequence of the dissolution of the monasteries.² Cromwell thus continued to be in nearly immediate control over sums comparable

1. P.R.O. SP 1/104, ff.295v-97 (L.P. x.1257).

2. B.M. Lansd. MS 156, ff.146-9. Gostwick's last account, from Christmas 1544 to the day of his death on 15 April 1545, shows a quarter's receipts of £29940 (P.R.O. E 336/27), but it would be wrong to multiply by four in order to arrive at a year's income: first fruits and tenths were both due to be paid in the period of the account.

to those he had himself handled as master of the jewels, with the difference that Gostwick's income was revenue in the true sense while Cromwell had drawn on reserves of capital.

To round off this question of Gostwick's income, it may be added that it derived mainly from two sources, for in addition to first fruits and tenths he also administered the clerical subsidies. The latter had thus been withdrawn from the chamber. As we have seen,¹ they were never administered by Cromwell, and the £130711 which Gostwick received from Cromwell and others, by the king's express commandment, can have come from any source at any time during the six years. There is no justification for identifying that money with the 1531 fine for the praemunire.² The extent to which Hostwick acted as a privileged paymaster is illustrated by the fact that not only plate but even cash was passed over to him by the court of augmentations.³ Wherever possible Cromwell used him to cover expenses, and he therefore saw to it that he was well supplied with money.

We have seen that Gostwick was responsible directly to Cromwell, and that he normally paid out money on Cromwell's orders. In addition, Cromwell himself often interfered in matters concerning first fruits and tenths. Particularly

1. Above, pp.186f.

2. As does Dr. Dietz (Eng.Gov.Fin., p.227).

3. P.R.O. GD 15/9.

while he was master of the rolls his correspondence included a good deal on this point. The bishop of Bath sent him a "book of the taxes" of his diocese, though Cromwell passed it on to Audeley.¹ His agents reported activities in the taking of composition for first fruits.² Some trouble was experienced over the first fruits of Latimer and Hilsey after their election to the sees of Worcester and Rochester, and the correspondence which ensued shows how directly Cromwell controlled these matters. Gostwick wrote that the two elects had sent for him, saying that by Cromwell's orders they were to compound with him for first fruits; as he knew nothing about it he wanted direct orders. A few days later Cromwell's receiver, Polsted, reported that he had accepted Latimer's own bond because the bishop had been unable to find sureties; the business was complicated by the absence of reliable accounts of the profits of "their promotion", and all the details were communicated to Cromwell. Hilsey wrote to know what he was supposed to be doing, since Gostwick had no instructions to take his sureties, and Polsted did not know how much they were to amount to; this letter illustrates the way in which officers of the crown were mixed up with Cromwell's household officials in the government of the country. Soon after, Polsted acknowledged receipts of his instructions about Hilsey, and

1. L.P. ix.383,450.

2. L.P. viii.248; x.363.

Cromwell himself settled Latimer's problem in a letter written probably to the receiver of the profits of the vacant see of Worcester.¹ Even after he had ceased to be himself responsible for the taking of compositions, Cromwell might still personally order an ex-prior to pay arrears to Gostwick, or to come up and show cause why he should not,² and the fact that bishop Rowland Lee had sent the tenth of his diocese might be communicated to him.³

All these facts indicate a measure of control which confirms our view of Gostwick as Cromwell's personal treasurer in affairs of state. On the other hand, Gostwick himself has left it on record that he occasionally managed to escape this control. In a summary of his financial position, drawn up at the time of Cromwell's fall, he wrote: "May it please your moost Excellent Maiestie to be aduertised That I, your moost humble seruaunt Iohn Gostwyk, haue in my handes Whiche I Trea-sured from tyme to tyme, vnknowne vnto Therl of Essex, Whiche if I had declared vnto hym He wolde haue Caused me to Disburse by commaundement, without warraunt, as heretofore I haue don - x M li'."⁴ This is proof that he usually made payments by Cromwell's order only, though he will frequently have obtained

1. L.P. ix.203,272-3,342,359-60,372,470.

2. L.P. Add.1341.

3. L.P. xv.562.

4. B.M. Royal MSS, App.89, f.127. The document can be dated by another (ibid., f.128) which says that the £10000 was in Gostwick's hand on 8 July (1540).

a warrant later,¹ but the more important statement is that he managed to withhold £10000, or about two and a half percent of his income in the years 1535-40, from Cromwell. It is on the whole a difficult thing to believe; one cannot really see what Gostwick hoped to gain by doing this in the years when Cromwell was safely in power. Only two explanations for this money will satisfy the known conditions of Gostwick's complete dependence on Cromwell, and of Cromwell's supremacy right into 1540. Either Gostwick had been deceiving the lord privy seal, the money having been destined for his own pocket, and he was now trying to anticipate the discovery of his peculation which the inevitable investigation of Cromwell's affairs might bring about, or alternatively he was trying to curry favour by attacking the fallen minister, and the money was simply what he would normally have had in hand at that particular moment. This second interpretation is to some extent supported by the fact that after revealing the existence of the surplus Gostwick immediately named expenses to be charged against it; he would in any case have had to keep some money for these payments. On the whole, we incline to the view that Gostwick

1. Sometimes he asked for one (L.P. ix.65,125,451). Cromwell's notes include entries for Gostwick's warrants to be signed (L.P. ix.836; xii.I.1079); and drafts of such warrants drawn up in Cromwell's office survive (L.P. xi.381,516). Later he seems to have had payments authorised by warrants signed by Cromwell and not the king (L.P. xiv.I.1269). In July 1540 £15828 had been paid by Cromwell's order without a warrant having so far been obtained (B.M. Royal MSS; App.89, f.127).

was defaming Cromwell's administration so that he might play the just steward. The method was the more suitable because of the general charges of overweening influence made against Cromwell, and because he was indeed in the habit of authorising payments for which warrants would be produced later. In that case Cromwell probably knew all about the £10000. However, the possibility that Gostwick was speaking the truth should not be ignored entirely, and we may believe that no single man could be sure of controlling so many departments so completely and consistently as Cromwell attempted to do.

In 1540 the position of the treasurer of first fruits and tenths underwent a radical change. By the act of 32 Henry VIII c.45¹ a new financial department was set up, to be known as the court of first fruits and tenths. It was to be a court of record with full control over the collection of its revenues. All business concerning tenths that had hitherto been done in the exchequer - the accounts and certificates rendered there by the bishops - was to be transferred to the new court. Its head, by the name of chancellor, was given powers to take compositions for first fruits, either in person or by deputy. The other officers of the court were to be a treasurer, attorney, two auditors, a clerk, a messenger, and an usher, and process in it was to be "as in the duchy chamber of Lancaster".

1. Stat.Realm, iii.798ff.

The procedure of the duchy chamber, distinguished by simplicity and efficiency, was used as a model for all the new revenue courts set up in this period. The duchy represented a considerable advance on the methods employed in the exchequer and common law courts; as a conciliar court it acted by bill and answer in English, and as a financial department it employed a species of declared account.¹ The court of first fruits and tithes was therefore a thoroughly up-to-date establishment, the last word in administrative efficiency.

Was this court planned by Cromwell, or was it set up as a consequence of his fall? The bill originated in the house of lords where it was introduced on 15 July 1540, five weeks after Cromwell's arrest and a clear three months after the beginning of the session.² We cannot find the slightest trace that such a project was in Cromwell's mind, while the erection of the court of wards, in the same session, was foreshadowed in his remembrances.³ Without evidence that Cromwell had a hand in the measure, and remembering that his previous use of the treasurer of first fruits would have become impossible under

1. On the council of the duchy of Lancaster, cf. R. Somerville in Trans. R. Hist. Soc., 1941, pp. 159ff.

2. L.J. i. 156b.

3. L.P. xv. 438(1). The bill setting up this court was introduced during Cromwell's supremacy, on 3 June (L.J. i. 141a), though owing to its retention by the commons for six weeks, at a time when the business of Cromwell's attainder and the Cleves divorce presumably took precedence, it was not finally passed until 23 July (ibid., p. 160b).

it, we cannot connect Cromwell with the establishment of the court of first fruits and tenths. On the contrary, it seems likely that the bill was not drafted until after his fall. The removal of the controlling mind must have left the administration in considerable confusion. Suddenly there was a treasurer without responsibility to any immediate superior and no longer fitting into the scheme of things; the best solution of the difficulty was to add him to that scheme, that is to say, to make him the head of a properly organised department.¹ It would not take long to draft an act which arranged for no new business to be done, and which for its administrative detail had such models as the courts of augmentations and of wards. It could easily be ready within four weeks. Once introduced, the bill was rushed through both houses in six days, being concluded on 21 July.² Nevertheless the court does not seem to have started work until November; on the 29th of that month its chancellor, Sir John Baker, replaced as attorney-general only three weeks earlier,³

1. Should some special significance be ascribed to the words in the preamble of the act which stated that the court should be set up "for the more suerty and establishment" of the first fruits and tenths "and to thintent that the Kinges Majestie...shalbe the better served in obteyning the premisses, and also from hensfurth be truely & justly answerid contentid and paide yerely..."? It is possible to suspect here a reference to Cromwell's personal and high-handed control of the department.

2. L.J. i.159b.

3. L.P. xvi.305(18).

collected the relevant records from the exchequer,¹ while Gostwick rendered his first account, which included everything since his appointment in 1535, at Christmas 1540.² This again suggests that the court was set up in a hurry, being conceived in an emergency and embodied in legislation before the actual administrative changes could be organised.

We have here an example of something that we shall meet again: an administrative feature crystallising immediately after Cromwell's fall. After all, Cromwell's rule was of a highly personal character, and he could make the machinery work well and efficiently by the force and closeness of his personal supervision. The natural result of having no single all-powerful minister was the emergence of a number of departmental heads, presiding over organisations which Cromwell had fashioned for them, though his strong rule had sometimes prevented these organisations from achieving their full form. This was particularly so in the department of the first fruits and tenths because Cromwell had meant from the first to use it as his personal treasury in the business of government. All he required for it was, therefore, a treasurer immediately and solely responsible to himself.

While such was his policy for the administration of the

1. P.R.O. E 159/318, Communia, Michaelmas Term, Recorda, m.35.
2. B.M. Lansd.MS 156, ff.146-9.

first great addition he made to the king's revenue, an entirely different plan had to be followed when it came to the dissolution of the monasteries and the annexation of their property to the crown. All that was needed in the former case was a treasurer who would administer money obtained for him by others. The original assessment could be made by commissioners appointed for the occasion, compositions for first fruits could be entrusted to existing officials, the collection of the tenth could go through the hands of the bishops. The problems set by the dissolution of the monasteries, on the other hand, were manifold. The houses had to be suppressed, or their surrender had to be accepted; surveys and valuations had to be taken; the monks had to be disposed of; the lands had to be administered; their revenues to be collected, expended, and accounted for; their disposal by grant, lease, or sale had to be controlled; there was the litigation which always attaches itself to property. Such tasks could not very well be put upon any existing department. Quite apart from their magnitude, there was no one department qualified to deal with such varied duties. What was called for was a combination of the administrative abilities of a political office like the secretaryship, the experience and powers of the general surveyors in administering the king's lands, the financial organisation of - let us say - the treasurer of the chamber, and the equity jurisdiction of

the chancery. The nearest thing in existence was the council of the duchy of Lancaster, though the new department would have a much heavier task.

The problem was solved by the act of 27 Henry VIII c.27 which set up the court of the augmentations of the king's revenue, the duchy providing the model. The court was to have charge of all dissolved religious houses and their property, except those that the king would preserve incorporated. It was also to take over the administration of all lands purchased by the crown, a task which had hitherto been in the hands of the general surveyors and the treasurer of the chamber.¹ The king's revenues were being augmented not only from monastic property, and all such augmentations were therefore logically made the sphere of one department. The court was to consist of a council of chancellor, treasurer, attorney, and solicitor, with ten auditors, seventeen particular receivers, a clerk, usher, and messenger. The very use of the title of chancellor indicates the model, and the duchy organisation, with its receiver-general and particular receivers, its legal officers and auditors, was closely followed. In 1539 another act² assigned to the court all monasteries dissolved and surrendered

1. Cf. above, p.207. Purchased lands were not within the province of the general surveyors by the terms of the acts which gave them their powers at law, but they had dealt with them as of all departments the one best qualified to do so.

2. 31 Henry VIII c.13.

since the wholesale measure of 1536, except those that had come to the king by attainder,¹ and confirmed all exchanges and purchases of land made in the king's name since 4 February 1536, that is since the beginning of the session which passed the original act.

We can point to but little direct evidence that Cromwell was personally responsible for the setting up of this court. He was responsible, beyond a doubt, for carrying out the attack on the monasteries, and he was at the time (1536) the all-powerful minister. In the case of first fruits and tenths, he not only secured the increment to the royal revenue but also personally saw to its administration, and the parallel is clear. While it may be doubtful how far the policy of those years was his or Henry's, it is quite certain that the administration and detailed government of the country were in his hands alone. His correspondence testifies to that in ample manner. If there was a single brain behind the administrative innovation embodied in the court of augmentations, it must have been his. A scheme so carefully worked out suggests one individual schemer; the plan requires a planner.

However, our case for assuming Cromwell's influence in the matter, an influence generally accepted though never so

1. In 1537 Norfolk wrote to Cromwell for confirmation of the report that the receivers of the court were not to meddle with the lands acquired by the recent attainders (L.P. xii. II.53).

far proven or even investigated, does not rest solely on these general considerations. It is not our present task to tell the story of the court of augmentations, but it will be necessary to come to grips with some of its organisational detail. A study of the act quickly convinces one that the court was meant to be an independent unit, fully capable of dealing with all business concerning the dissolved monasteries. One would therefore suppose that the dissolution itself was supervised by the court, and indeed the commissioners charged with it received their instructions from the court and reported to it. Yet it can be shown that Cromwell personally had a hand in it. To prove all this it will be necessary to digress.

By a proviso attached to the act establishing the court, all houses within the county palatine of Lancaster and those founded by the dukes of Lancaster were to be dealt with by the council of the duchy, instead of the court of augmentations. (In the fact that the two were considered equally capable of handling monastic property we may see additional proof that the later was consciously modelled on the earlier). The chancellor of the duchy was instructed in his duties in letters of warrant of which a draft is extant. This was written by a duchy clerk but corrected in a hand which may well be that of Richard Riche, chancellor of the augmentations; perhaps the court, who would know best what needed doing, supervised the

drafting.¹ Apparently, however, the duchy council felt rather overwhelmed by the sudden access of new business and found themselves faced by a number of problems. These were embodied in a memorandum and submitted for an answer to John Onley, the king's attorney in the court of augmentations.² It emerges from these questions and answers that the commissioners took their orders from the court on all points of detail, such as the allotment of pensions or the payment of monastic debts. The correct procedure for determining what religious houses were to be dissolved was this: the king indicated them with his own hand "in the bryeff certyfycat", and the chancellor of the court then issued the necessary instructions to the local commissioners. Onley told the enquirer from the duchy that "they vse to put A Discreccion to the Commyssioners in all suche Causez & other lyke to be vsed, ordered, & done, As to them Apon thexecucion therof shall seme mooste conuenyent for the awoydyng of Claymour of the people". He thought that "it wyll the easyer be allowed when it is done than when it is putt in questyon"!³ The very fact that the commissioners were given

1. P.R.O. DL 41/12/10. Ibid., no.11 shows that a document definitely drawn up in the duchy office was written by the same clerk.

2. Ibid., nos.11-12. These documents are undated but from internal evidence are earlier than the next one quoted.

3. Lest it be thought that this is another example of the ruthlessness with which the dissolution was carried out, it must be said that the rest of the document leaves no doubt that Onley was thinking of errors on the side of mercy.

a free hand by the court shows who controlled them. Yet the commission appointing them was Cromwell's work. It was drawn up by Thomas Wriothesley, clerk of the signet and Cromwell's chief clerk, and was corrected by Cromwell himself.¹ We may claim that here we have proof positive of Cromwell's hand in the establishment of the court of augmentations. As visitor-general he had supervised the visitation which preceded the dissolution, and once the act was passed he saw to the appointment of the commissioners who were to put it into practice. There seems no ground for raising a doubt - a doubt so far never entertained - that he also saw to the organisation of the department which controlled them, and which was in fact responsible for carrying out his own policy.

We cannot leave the story of the negotiations between the duchy and the court unfinished; it throws a good deal of light on contemporary administration in general, though it is only of incidental importance in a discussion of Cromwell's administration. On 5 July 1536 a meeting was held at Westminster between the chancellor, attorney, receiver-general, auditors, and clerk of the duchy on the one side, and the chancellor, treasurer, and attorney of augmentations on the other.² It

1. P.R.O. E 36/116, ff.50-53 (L.P. x.721[4]). Wriothesley headed it "The Mynute of the Commyssion", and that minute here meant draft is clear from the fact that Cromwell corrected it.

2. P.R.O. DL 5/6, ff.204v-5.

was agreed that the duchy should deal with all religious houses in the county palatine, but should leave all other monasteries, even those founded by the dukes of Lancaster, to augmentations. Practical considerations no doubt decided here: the duchy could not very well send commissioners all over England, into places where commissioners of the court were already active. This would also have been unduly wasteful and confusing. The duchy was to have complete authority in the county palatine, while the court would declare to the auditors of the duchy the value of all duchy foundations dissolved, and would hand their records over to them. A number of minor points were also agreed on, among them some originally on the questionnaire submitted to Onley but then "not moved ne Answered As yett". This agreement was given official sanction by being embodied in a sign manual warrant to the chancellor of the duchy, outlining his revised duties in the dissolution of the monasteries.¹

Cromwell's influence was also seen in the appointment of officers to the court. The act granted no powers of patronage, even as regarded receivers or auditors, to the chancellor of the court, and all appointments were to be made by the king. It is obvious that royal appointments in 1536 would, to say the

1. P.R.O. DL 12/7, no.39. The warrant is dated 11 July 1537, which may have been a mistake for 1536.

least, be influenced by Cromwell's wishes. Cromwell was then at the height of his power, without a rival either in the government of the country or in influence with the king. If offices were to be filled, Cromwell was certainly the man to fill them. The chancellorship went to Richard Riche, the solicitor-general.¹ Riche was a lawyer of great ability and skill, with considerable ambition and no scruples.² It is significant that he began to rise in the royal service about the time when Cromwell was securing his own supremacy. Riche obtained a clerkship at the common pleas and king's bench in March 1532, and was made attorney-general for Wales and Chester in May that year.³ In October he was doing some of the king's legal business,⁴ and a year later he became solicitor-general.⁵ In April 1535 he was appointed one of the surveyors of liveries, an office of some importance in the financial organisation, for which preferment he gave Cromwell \$40 and his prayers.⁶ He owed his rise to services rendered, particularly to the well known part he played in the tragedies of More and Fisher when

1. He was sworn of the office on 19 April 1536, a bare fortnight after the dissolution of the parliament which had established the court (D.N.B., xvi.1010).

2. Cf. his life by A.F. Pollard in D.N.B., xvi.1009ff.

3. L.P. v.909(32), 1065(21). The clerkship was a sinecure; the work was done by one John Cooke who wished to buy the office in April 1534 (L.P. vii.394), but had to be content with a joint appointment made in February 1536 (L.P. x.392[32]).

4. L.P. v.1445, 1466, 1470.

5. L.P. vi.1383(8).

6. L.P. viii.490, 632(34).

he acted for Cromwell, or at any rate in the interests of Cromwell's policy, though the evidence does not permit any assertion that he was simply Cromwell's tool. His relations with Cromwell were those of a friend and subordinate. He was too careful to arrogate a position to himself which he did not hold, but could claim to be something more than a servant.¹ By 1536 he had become a leading legal and administrative official of the crown, occupying a fairly important position in the government presided over by Cromwell. His elevation to the presidency of the new court, an office which would call for considerable administrative, legal, and financial abilities, was thus the culminating point, for the time being, of a steady advance under Cromwell's aegis, and must have been due to Cromwell.

The treasurership of the court went to Thomas Pope, described in a letter to Lord Lisle as a servant of lord chancellor Audeley.² However, he was introduced to Audeley by Cromwell,³ and himself declared that all he ever had had come from Cromwell.⁴ Pope was a tried civil servant with experience of both legal and financial matters, who had been keeper

1. Ibid. 456, 563. One of Riche's more unpleasant traits was a feigned humility (cf., e.g., L.P. xiii.I.1465, though the calendar does not indicate the full extent of his pretended modesty). Though not particularly noted for his piety, he almost always headed his letters with the word "Ihus".

2. L.P. x.573.

3. L.P. xv.351.

4. L.P. xiii.II.106(ii).

of the change and money in the Tower of London, and one of the clerks of the star chamber since late in 1534.¹ He resigned the treasurership before 17 March 1540,² being succeeded by Edward North who had been clerk of parliament until 1539 when he made way for one of Cromwell's own secretaries, Thomas Soulemont. This suggests that North's appointment, too, may have been due to Cromwell who may have promised him promotion if he resigned an office to which Cromwell wished to appoint a personal servant.

Cromwell's influence is as noticeable in the appointment of the other two chief officers of the court, the attorney and the solicitor. The former, John Onley, was reporting to Cromwell, then at Calais, on legal affairs in London, and seems to have been able to call together the king's legal counsel.³ A report of a riot in which members of the influential Fitzwilliam family were attacked was addressed to him,⁴ and he had an act passed in parliament in his favour.⁵ Despite his obscurity he appears therefore to have been a lawyer of some standing whom the lord chancellor could describe as his friend,⁶ and he certainly had been in intimate contact with Cromwell early on in the latter's career. When he died, about December

1. L.P. vii.1498(12),1601(33).

2. L.P. xv.351.

3. L.P. v.1455. This was in 1532; he cannot be traced any further back.

4. L.P. vii.1120.

5. L.P. x.1087(11).

6. L.P. xii.II.1160.

1537, and the office - ostensibly in the king's gift - fell vacant, favour and preferment were sought of Cromwell as a matter of course, convincing proof of our statement that at this time royal patronage meant Cromwell's patronage. Sir Francis Bryan requested the office for a Mr. Molinex,¹ but Audoley suggested that the solicitor of the court be promoted and that his office be filled^{by} John Lucas, a lawyer of the Temple.² The solicitor, Robert Southwell, obtained his promotion. He was a member of a Norfolk family, connected with the family of the duke of Norfolk, but even more closely with that of Cromwell.³ His brother Richard acted as tutor to Cromwell's son Gregory. Robert was in Cromwell's service in 1535,⁴ and was close enough to him a year later to be given some notes of his brother's for communication to Cromwell.⁵ His successor in the solicitorship, however, was not Audoley's protégé Lucas, but a certain Walter Henley or Hondle who was a commissioner for the suppression of the monasteries in several counties⁶ but is otherwise obscure. Shortly after taking up his new office he wrote to Cromwell, asking for instructions.⁷ Altogether, the appointments in the court of augmentations confirm that it was Cromwell who organised the

1. Ibid. 1177.

2. Ibid. 1160.

3. For Robert Southwell, cf. D.N.B., xviii.701b.

4. L.P. viii.539.

5. L.P. x.507.

6. Ibid. 721(6).

7. L.P. xiii.I.195.

new department.

Thus the court was Cromwell's work, though he will have had advice and help from others. The relatively haphazard methods employed for the administration of first fruits and tenths were out of the question when great landed property was concerned, with all the burdens and disputes attendant upon it, with the troubles inherent in questions of titles and the disposal of lands by lease, sale, or grant.¹ The monks had departed, but behind them they had left duties and obligations which the government was determined to meet. There were leases to be carried over, and debts to be paid.² The dissolution itself involved the sending out, instructing, and controlling of commissioners, the collecting of lead, gold, and precious stones, the surveying and registering of lands, and

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1. "The same Courte shall haue auctoritie and pow[er] to] here & determyne all Matiers betwen parties onywise touching ony Lordshipp, Landes, tenementes, &c, now beyng or that hereafre shalbe within the Surveie and Gouvernance of thesame." (P.R.O. E 163/11/49. This document is a roll containing a number of projected reforms in the court of augmentations, not in that of the general surveyors as is erroneously stated on the modern covering membrane. Most of the points mentioned were, however, embodied in the part of the act of 33 Henry VIII c.39 which referred to augmentations. The reforms may have been planned by Cromwell, but they were carried into effect after his fall; in the absence of any evidence of his influence the point cannot be usefully discussed).
 2. "The said Commyssioners shall take the notes of all leases made, and the same to be examyned, So that it may be knowen howe long the seid leases shall contynue or indur... Item, the said Commyssioners...to pay all true dettes of euery house, being vnder the value of xx li'." (P.R.O. DL 5/6, f.204v).

a hundred and one other tasks. The monks had to be pensioned off or had to be sent to collect their "capacities", their licences to become secular clergymen, though the actual issuing of these was done in the chancery.¹ The questionnaire drawn up by the duchy of Lancaster provides some examples of the difficulties encountered by the commissioners.² The questions raised included these: what is to be done with monks who wish to continued in religion when there are no houses of their own order left near? How much of their personal belongings, as for instance bedding, are monks allowed to take with them? Are slate and tiles to be removed from roofs, or only lead? Are bells to be removed from steeples, and who will take charge of the lead and bells? "Who Shalbe Admytted to serue the Cures of such churches As belonge to the seid Houses Whorof is no priest inducted but at Wyll?" What living or pension is to be given to the late "governors", and are they to be inducted to benefices before the king has decided further? What is to be done with monks and lay almoners who are too weak or old to be moved?

No single man was fitted to deal with so many diverse problems. Cromwell's solution of the difficulty was the establishment of a conciliar court, a department organised on the

1. P.R.O. E 36/116, ff.50-3.

2. P.R.O. DL 41/12/11.

lines of both an administrative council and a court of law. The age knew little difference between the two, as the history of star chamber and privy council shows plainly enough. It was an advanced form of administration, and its application to the new royal revenues must be ascribed to Cromwell. The court of augmentations was the first of the new courts; it marked a definite departure from the policy exemplified by the rise of the general surveyors and treasurer of the chamber, and echoed in Cromwell's mastership of the jewels and Gostwick's treasurership of first fruits and tenths. This earlier policy used special, undepartmentalised officials, under the immediate control of king or minister. The new court represented a considerable advance towards a bureaucratic organisation, able to continue its work whatever changes might occur in the government.

Yet while the court was capable of standing on its own feet, and was in fact designed to do so, nothing was further from Cromwell's mind than to let it slip away from his personal control. He kept in touch with the commissioners who were suppressing houses, even though they received their instructions from Riche. One of them reported on the surveys he had made, sent a statement about them to Cromwell, and asked whether a letter from Riche and Onley, ordering his return to Catesby in Northamptonshire, was sufficient warrant for him to

do so without confirmation from Cromwell.¹ Even the duke of Norfolk, active in the north after the pilgrimage of grace, received instructions on the suppression from the court of augmentations, but he told Cromwell all about his activities.² Cromwell's influence over the court was presumed by a country gentleman who asked him to have Riche order the commissioners to spare "his" priory, of which he had been seised for nearly two years.³ Although the routine work of the court was normally done by the chancellor and council,⁴ Cromwell interfered on frequent occasions. He does not seem to have ordered Pope to make payments without warrant, but he backed warrants with personal letters which speeded payments up quite noticeably. Thus Cromwell informed Pope that he was to pay Lord Lisle's annuity of £200, while Pope on other occasions acknowledged the receipt of such letters and reported that he had paid a

1. L.P. x.1215. The same man, George Gyffard, reported similar business in another letter in which he also spoke of the king's anger at his daring to report favourably on some religious houses (ibid. 1166). He recommends another house to Cromwell, trusting in his "indifference" (fairness). This letter draws a nice distinction between the attitudes of king and minister to the monasteries.

2. L.P. xii.I.478.

3. L.P. x.1038.

4. A good deal can be learned about the working of the council from a large number of documents - receipts, orders to pay, minutes, etc. - which once undoubtedly belonged to Pope, after that to Riche, and were transmitted through him to the Manchester Papers, now deposited at the P.R.O. (GD 15/1-114). One interesting point is that almost all business seems to have been done in full session, many of the documents bearing the signatures of all the officers except the treasurer to whom they were addressed.

sum due on the king's warrant.¹

One reason why the treasurer of the court came in closer contact with Cromwell's more personal financial organisation was that he handed specie, jewels, and relics over to Gostwick.² In this connection Cromwell wrote him a letter which proves his own activities in the matter:³ "Fforasmuche as my frende Iohn ffreman hath by the Kinges hieghnes commaundement, at my mediation, delyuered" certain plate to Gostwick - followed by a sharpish rebuke because Pope had refused to let Freeman have a written acquittance. The lord privy seal kept an eye even on such small details of the financial administration. "I doo somewhat marvail that you gyve him not a discharge, And Therefore thought me to Recuyre you that ye shal, as it apporteyneth, deliuer vnto the said ffreman an acquitaunce thereof." Cromwell was not above carrying relics himself from the court of augmentations to the king. There is a note, in Riche's hand, on the face of a warrant which ordered Pope to hand over a piece of the Holy Cross from Stratford to Thomas Henneage:⁴ "Be it remembered that the relik above rememberid, named to be a pece of the holy crosse, was delyuered to the kynges magosty at Hamptun Court, the ixth day of Iune Anno xxix Regni Sui, by the handes of my lord Privay Seale, as my lord Chancellour &

1. L.P. xiv.II.282; xii.II.274.

2. E.g., P.R.O. GD 15/28-9.

3. Ibid. 100. This letter was overlooked by Morriman, though it is mentioned in H.M.C., 8th Report, App.II, p.16.

4. P.R.O. GD 15/28.

Master Chancelour of the Augmentacion can wytnez." A more important example of Cromwell's interference in the affairs of the court was the commission which he had made out to himself and Riche, authorising them to sell such of the king's lands as had come to him by act of parliament or surrender, to the clear yearly value of £6000.¹ Cromwell was careful to see to it that the control of the king's lands, and therefore the king's revenues, did not escape from his hands.

There is, moreover, evidence that the system did not work so perfectly as its clear-cut appearance might suggest. Although the court of augmentations had been set up in order to deal with the suppressed and surrendered monasteries, it was not fully master in its own house. After the smaller monasteries had been disposed of under the act of 1536, the voluntary or forced surrender of the remaining houses became cause of dispute between various officials. The commissioners sent out by the king's vicegerent appear to have been independent of the court of augmentations and responsible to Cromwell alone, so that agents of his interfered in the court's sphere of action. A letter from Riche to Cromwell, written on 26 July

1. L.P. xiv.II.780(36). This commission was dated 14 December 1539, but even in the year ending at Michaelmas 1539 the two men had been selling monastic lands by virtue of a special commission, to the value of £80222, as Pope's accounts show (P.R.O. E 323/1, part II, m.13d). In March 1540 Cromwell also obtained a commission, together with Sir John Daunce and Richard Pollard, the general surveyors, to sell lands under their charge (L.P. xv.436[38]).

1538, shows the difficulties encountered by a department which had to deal with an all-powerful minister prepared to do even routine work.¹ The point at issue was the surrender of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, "the Survey of the possessions wherof," wrote Riche, "apperteynith to myn office & to suche as ben officeres in the Court of Augmentacions". But he did not wish to "neglect or be remyse in doyng my dewty", and therefore asked Cromwell to let him know whether he "shall cause any of the officeres of the Court of Augmentacions to make Survey or not; or els, whether suche as your lordship do apoynt for the disolucion of the howsez shall doo the same". Sometimes, apparently, two separate surveys had been made, and - what was worse - "your lordship knowith right well ther ben sondry Surveys Certified by suche that hath dissoluid howsez, upon the whiche yt ys not possible to procede to grauntynge of any lease vnto suche tyme as a new survey were made". He reminded Cromwell that "your lordship diuerse tymes hath said to me that your officeres shold nnt medyll with the survey of the possessions of any howsez, but only with the surrender, dissolution, & the goodes". This theoretical division of labour left the officers of the court with the duty only of surveying the lands, that is, of establishing the facts taken into consideration when the fate of the property was decided.

1. P.R.O. SP 1/134, ff.249-50 (L.P. xiii.I.1465).

We must, therefore, apparently distinguish between three sets of officials. Firstly, there were the commissioners appointed under the act of 1536 whose commission had been drafted by Cromwell.¹ Their duties included the survey of possessions as well as the tasks resulting from the dissolution. Although Cromwell had supervised their appointment, the attorney of the court of augmentations instructed them in the details of their work and its chancellor prescribed to them what monasteries were to be dissolved.² These first commissioners were, therefore, responsible to, and controlled by, both Riche and Cromwell. However, their task ended with the dissolution of the smaller monasteries. The administration of the newly acquired property fell to the local receivers of the court of augmentations, a different set of men. When the attack on the greater monasteries began the court had no power to dissolve them, and the work was therefore entrusted to a third group of officials, commissioners specially sent down by Cromwell in his capacity as vicar-general (or possibly as vicegerent) to take the surrender. But these lands, too, once they had been acquired, were administered by the court, even before the act of 1539 regularised the position. Consequently difficulties and even friction arose between the regular local

1. P.R.O. E 36/116, ff.50-3.

2. P.R.O. DL 41/12/12, which gives Onley's replies to the enquiries from the duchy. Cf. also L.P. x.1166, 1215.

officials of the court and Cromwell's special commissioners.¹ An unsuccessful attempt was made to allot them separate duties, but Cromwell's agents continued to cut across the established departmental lines of the court of augmentations, rendering their unreliable surveys and greatly annoying Riche, though he couched his letter in almost abjectly humble terms. Cromwell had established the court, and he exercised a general, and sometimes a particular, control over it. Nevertheless, he did not consider that the existence of a separate department dealing with monastic lands completely prevented his personal activities in that direction, even though at times he made the task of the court very difficult.

1. These three groups must not be confused with the commissions which carried out the great visitation of 1535 and compiled the Valor. The same men, of course, might be on more than one commission.

V. The Financial Administration after Cromwell's Reforms.

The court of augmentations was the first of the new revenue courts, and it was followed by three others during the rest of Henry's reign. None of these was set up under Cromwell, though he had planned the court of wards. Among his notes is the entry "the establishing of a law for the Court of Wards", leaving no doubt that he was behind that reform.¹ This court provides proof how very new the whole idea of such organised departments was. There survives a memorandum "for a good Ordre to be takyn for the King our souverain lordes wardes",² which outlines certain necessary reforms to prevent further decline in the revenues of that office. The calendar assigns the document to the year 1540, but there is no evidence to support that date. The paper addresses itself to "your grace", and as the king is mentioned several times in the third person, the term suggests that Wolsey was meant.³ Whatever its date, its contents are very interesting to us. It describes the system in existence under Henry VII, when there had been a master, general receiver, auditor, and a particular receiver in every shire, for wards' lands. Certain written

1. L.P. xv.438(1).

2. P.R.O. SP 1/159, ff.47-8 (L.P. xv.503).

3. I am assured by Mr. J.Hurstfield of Queen Mary College, London, who is at present investigating the history of the court of wards, that its description of the state of the office fits much better the late 1520's than the 1530's when Paulet had introduced some order and efficiency.

records had been kept, and all wardships had been strictly controlled. Since that time, however, the system had been allowed to fall into disuse, with great consequent loss to the king. The writer therefore recommended that the officers of Henry VII's time be appointed again, and in addition to them "some able person of the Chauncery or of the Eschequer" to keep the records of wardships in some place easily accessible to the officers concerned. He also proposed a general overhauling of the sales and leases of wardships and wards' lands, so as to preserve the king's just rights. This plan did not involve any departure from established practice, and in its provision of a special clerk in the chancery or exchequer to look after wards' records it quite disregarded the possibility of setting up a department for wards which should be a self-contained court of record. However, that was the reform which Cromwell's note foreshadowed, and which parliament carried out by the act of 32 Henry VIII c.46. Despite the existence of a different plan, one that had been tried and found good by that great reformer of administration, Henry VII, Cromwell pushed through his favourite plan of a court modelled on the duchy of Lancaster. If, as seems likely, the document was drawn up before Cromwell's rise to power, it would further confirm that the idea of revenue courts was his own.

The court of first fruits and tenths, and the court of

the general surveyors were established after Cromwell's fall. However, they were based on Cromwell's "new model": departments organised in such a manner that they could do their work without dependence on any outside agency. These courts with their own seals, chancellors,¹ treasurers, auditors, and clerks, and with their local organisations of receivers of revenue, were set up for the better administration of the royal finances. The departmental heads did their respective work with the help of a fully staffed office and assisted by a council which had the powers of a conciliar court of law. The model was the duchy of Lancaster,² but the idea of using the model, and of extending it to the central public administration, was Cromwell's. We cannot tell whether he himself planned the further application of the model which his successors carried out, but we have shown that if he had done it for first fruits and tenths he would have had to break with the other side of his policy, his desire always to have some treasury under his immediate control to provide the funds necessary for the carrying out of his policy. It was greatly to his disadvantage that he was a minister and not the king. Unlike Henry VII he could not exercise unlimited control over an organisation developed from the royal household. Hence

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1. The first officers of the court of general surveyors were, however, called general surveyors.
 2. This is clearly stated for all the courts except the surveyors (27 Henry VIII c.27 sec.11; 32 Henry VIII c.45 sec.5, c.46 sec.13).

the decline of the treasurer of the chamber as the central spending department, and of the general surveyors as the informal court of audit for everything not belonging directly to the exchequer or the duchy of Lancaster. Cromwell solved the first part of his problem by first making himself a treasurer in control of large sums, derived largely from reserves and spent on extraordinary and irregular expenditure. When he could no longer carry out such detailed duties he found a convenient substitute in the treasurer of first fruits.

There are, therefore, two main lines running through Cromwell's policy for the financial administration. On the one hand, he wished to be in personal control of sufficient funds to make himself independent of any other treasurer. On the other, he wished to organise the revenue under departmental ministries. The latter, we may say, was his ideal, but circumstances prevented him from carrying it out in every sphere. When he could act without regard to his own need for spending money he developed a system which was the opposite to that employed by Henry VII. In the place of rather vague household offices responsible by word of mouth to the king, he and his successors put organisations, courts of record - in other words, departments of state. The consequent multiplication of offices required a superior authority which would control and co-ordinate them, and as long as he lived

this authority resided in Cromwell himself. Later it was found necessary to substitute something else for the authority of the one minister because no-one with the requisite ability, knowledge, and industry came to take Cromwell's place, and also perhaps because the process of bureaucratisation which he had begun was to be carried further. This substitute was provided by the reformed exchequer.

As we started this chapter with a document showing the financial organisation at the time of Cromwell's coming to power, we cannot do better than close it with one which shows the changes he had made. It is a paper in the hand of Ralph Sadler, still a clerk of Cromwell's though also a clerk of the king's, written sometime in the first half of 1537, and headed "Certain Articles touching the fortification of the Kinges Townes of Berwike, Carlill, and other his graces Castles and ffortresses in the North parties".¹ The first paragraphs deal with these points; but there follow notes on the collection of customs and subsidies which were bringing in less than expected, on the payment of a grant two years in arrears, and on a survey of subsidies, collectors of which "haue manifestly deceaued the King". What interests us are the last

1. P.R.O. SP 1/119, ff.105-8 (L.P. xii.I.1091). L.P. state that the paper contained "business to be laid before the Council". There is no evidence for such a statement in the document which we rather think was a somewhat formal notes of memoranda for Cromwell's attention.

five paragraphs which set out orders to be issued to the court of augmentations, the treasurer of first fruits and tenths, the treasurer of the chamber and general surveyors, the officers of the exchequer, and the chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. Each of them was to make a full report of the state of affairs concerning lands and the like under his control, of his income and expenditure, of the "offices, fees, annuities, or charges ordinarie" and the "extraordinarie charges" payable by him, and "what the hole remaynour to the Kinges vse will yerely amounte vnto". This last point was the real purpose of the survey, as a note at the bottom of the paper shows: "By meanes wherof the Kinges Highnes maye knowe his estate, And by meanes therof maye establishe all his affaires; And therby be putt an order howe a certain treasure yerely maye be laid vp for all necessities."¹

Here, then, is a list of financial departments which has added to the three old ones of exchequer, general surveyors, and duchy of Lancaster, the new ones of the first fruits and augmentations. Every one of these departments is described as an office, as an organisation carefully worked out and fully staffed, with officials at the centre and in the shires.

1. The subject of reserves of treasure is an obscure one. There were "the king's coffers", apparently in the charge of such household officials as Thomas Henneage (L.P. xiv. I.937; Add.1284) and Anthony Denny, both of whom received money for the king's coffers from the treasurer of augmentations (L.P. xiii.II.457; xiv.II.236; xviii.II.231), but

Each of them was considered independent in itself, being responsible for the collection of a certain part of the king's revenues. But they were all to report to one authority, to Cromwell, and their surpluses were to be pooled at the centre, under Cromwell's control, to be used for current expenditure and as reserves.

In this scheme we can see what was, in the last resort, Cromwell's policy for the financial administration. The collection of the king's money was to be so organised that certain officials were responsible for certain sections of it. Expenditure, however, was strictly controlled by the minister who would use any of the departments as he pleased. Cromwell had found an organisation consisting essentially of three departments. He had added two more, and had at the same time made deeper and more permanent the cleavages between them. He had, in other words, organised them more fully, making them more bureaucratic. Furthermore, he had restored unity to the structure by the fact of his own personal control which affected all departments. Though some were more immediately under him than others, each department was responsible to him for certain revenues and put at his disposal certain reserves of money. At the time, the most

they seem to have been, in the nature of things, under the king's control and somewhat informal in character. These treasuries assumed real importance only after Cromwell's fall.

important feature of his organisation was this keystone of his own personality. When that fell confusion reigned supreme, and the royal finances collapsed in ruins. However, the system which he had built up under himself could, and did, survive even the shock of losing the master who gave it life. The departments continued to exist, the system of departmental courts was further elaborated, and the means were ready to hand when the financial administration was again reduced to order by Winchester and Burleigh.

Chapter 4.

THE CLERICAL ORGANISATION.
-----I. The Signet and Signet Office.

On 20 July 1534, a few months after he had entered on the secretaryship, Cromwell issued orders for the regulation of the signet office.¹ These were concerned, first of all, with the clerks' attendance on the king and secretary. Two of them were to be on duty every month, beginning with Thomas Derby and William Paget on 1 August, to be followed by Thomas Wriothesley and John Godsalve in September. "According to the olde ordre and custume vsede hertofore in the said office," they were to employ themselves in despatching the king's business, and also in seeing to the furnishing of the king's hall. The fees received for the sealing of documents were to be pooled, and one of the clerks was to be appointed to receive them. Clerks not on duty were not to interfere with the work of those whose turn it was and who were to have "the advantage" of all writing to be done. All documents passing the signet were to be registered in a special book by the clerk in attendance, and at the end of the month the total thus entered was to be used in establishing the share of the sealing

1. P.R.O. DL 42/133, ff.1-1v. Cf. App. A(IV).

fees due to each clerk. The clerks were to see to it that no unauthorised person did any writing in the king's hall, and no letter was to pass the signet without being examined by one of them who was to sign his name on the document as proof of his examination. Finally, it was appointed that at the end of every month the incoming clerks were to attend on the secretary to receive their share of the fees, and that they were to take up their duties on the first day of their month.

Not all these rules were new, but whether Cromwell invented them or was merely trying to re-enact established customs, his orders indicate how he intended the organisation of the signet office to work. Looked at from this point of view, they fall into two categories. Firstly, there are those that deal with the clerks' duties. A duty roster is to be carefully adhered to, and clerks are prohibited from working for the signet during their month off duty. The reason given for this is financial: the clerks on duty are not to be cheated of the writing fees which made up the better part of their income. Perhaps the same reason was behind the order that no outsiders were to be allowed to write in the hall. It was also, however, a point of efficiency to organise the staff in such a manner that some clerks should always be available for extraordinary duties while the routine work was not neglected. A similar care for efficiency was shown by the order about the signatures of

examining clerks. Secondly, we find Cromwell concerned with the fees taken in the office. A careful distinction is made between writing and sealing fees; the former go to the clerk who did the actual writing,¹ while the latter are to be put into a common pool. The last order combines these two aspects: the taking over at the end of the month is to be combined with the paying out of each clerk's share of the sealing fees. Cromwell's direction shows that he wished to organise in the interests of efficiency, and also to protect the clerks and regularise their takings.

The signing of documents by the clerks responsible for their preparation was no new idea. It was usual by the reign of Edward IV for signet letters to be thus signed, though the signatory might be the secretary, or an underclerk, in place of the clerk himself. Also, letters to the chancery remained as a rule unsigned while those to the privy seal were signed.² By the time of Cromwell's predecessor, both classes of documents were normally signed.³ On the other hand, many documents to which the signet was affixed went without a clerk's signature. This applies in particular to the many warrants and letters under the signet and sign manual which are strewn

1. If a clerk's servant wrote the document (as is contemplated in the fifth rule), his master presumably took the fee.
2. J. Otway Ruthven, King's Secretary, pp.26f.
3. P.R.O. PS0 2/4, files for 21-23 Henry VIII; C 82/616/2, 629/6, 653/18, 666/13, 669/5, 679/4.

over the files of chancery warrants. It may be supposed that a bill signed by the king was sufficiently authorised, or perhaps it was thought impertinent for a clerk either to anticipate or to endorse a royal signature. Yet even this practice is not without exception, and a signet bill is occasionally found with the sign manual in the top left-hand corner and a clerk's signature in the bottom right-hand corner. One file of chancery warrants, for instance, contains two signet bills with the sign manual and a clerk's signature, authorising the issue of a cong  d' lire and of the royal assent to the election of an abbot.¹ In the same file there are three other documents for the same purposes which are identical with those first mentioned except that they lack the clerk's signature.² All these warrants are made out in the form proper for signet warrants, with the address on the outside and the heading "by the king". There seems no reason why John Godsalue should have signed two of them and not the other three, and in all probability there was no reason. Cromwell's order tried to make a general principle out of a normal practice, and he was very largely successful. Signet warrants, both those to the privy seal and those to other departments, were always signed after the date of Cromwell's ordinance, though it must not be supposed that there had been much irregularity before. The exceptions which have

1. Ibid. 701/8,13.

2. Ibid. 701/6,7,14.

been cited were apparently confined to documents rather different from the routine work of embodying petitions in letters under the signet.

The interesting idea of a tour of duty appears to have been new. The orders were given on 20 July; the system was to come into operation on the first of the following August. It was described, not as a general principle, but with specific reference to certain named persons, and mention was even made of the advanced age of Henry Conway which rendered it necessary to join two clerks with him, the three to be considered two for purposes of organisation. All this suggests that we have here an ad hoc enactment. Some such organisation was highly desirable, if only because signet clerks were certainly not used solely for their routine duties, the writing of warrants to the privy seal. It was as well to have some of them free from these duties and available for other tasks, such as the writing of the king's correspondence and the drafting of council and parliamentary business. Moreover, the growth, about this time, of a group of writing clerks will have made the constant attendance of all four signet clerks unnecessary.¹ But however

1. It is very difficult to deduce anything from the handwriting on signet warrants because clerical hands in both the signet and the privy seal offices varied very little. It is, however, certain that we find in our period both warrants apparently written by the clerk who signed them, and warrants written by someone else. The names under a warrant are always genuine signatures, like those on privy seals and unlike those on chancery documents.

desirable it may have been to come to some such arrangement, the order was not carried out properly. Few signet warrants survive for Cromwell's time,¹ but additional information can be obtained from the larger number of petitions presented to the king, signed by him, and used as direct warrants to the privy seal and chancery. A number of these were endorsed and dated by the signet clerk on duty who sent them off. A bundle of such petitions shows that Wriothesley was on duty during certain months when by the regulations he should not have been. He seems to have adhered to the roster in 1534 and 1535, but was, for instance, endorsing documents in June 1536, not one of his months. After that, his attendance on the signet constantly broke the rule.² The chancery files, too, indicate that the new regulations were only at first obeyed. Thus Paget was on duty in February 1535,³ and Godsalve and Wriothesley worked in March and May 1535,⁴ which accorded with the rota as laid down in July 1534. But Wriothesley appears also in October 1535, which marks a break in the system,⁵ and when we find Godsalve endorsing petitions in April, May, June, and July 1537 we must

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1. There are none for the privy seal and ten in the chancery files.
 2. P.R.O. PS0 2/4. All but four of the thirty-four documents in the file for 25-29 Henry VIII are endorsed by Wriothesley; one bears Godsalve's signature, and three are not endorsed at all.
 3. P.R.O. C 82/693/25.
 4. Ibid. 694/12, 698/11.
 5. Ibid. 703/7, 8, 9.

conclude that the duty roster had been abandoned.¹ The reason is not far to seek. With Wriothesley (as we shall see) practically doing the work of an assistant secretary of state, Derby appointed to the clerkship of the council in 1533 and active as clerk of the privy council in 1538,² and Paget away on embassies for a great part of the time under review,³ the routine work of the office had to be done by whoever happened to be available. In practice this meant, in particular, Godsalue. On the whole it would therefore seem that Cromwell's order was adhered to for a year or so and had then to be given up because the multifarious employments of signet clerks made it impossible. However, the idea of such a division of labour survived, being in itself reasonable enough, and in 1537 the clerks themselves decided to come to a permanent arrangement. By then the work which actually fell to the share of a clerk of the signet had dwindled to such an extent that it was sufficient to have only one of them on duty at a time to supervise the writing clerks. Consequently every clerk was to do only three months duty a year in attending on the signet.⁴

1. Ibid. 727/40, 46, 728/18, 23, 31.

2. Cf. A.F. Pollard in E.H.R., xxxvii, pp. 350f., and below, pp. 418ff. A successor to Derby was not appointed until he actually left London to take up the clerkship of the council of the West (L.P. xiv. II. 435[23]), while before that he had apparently managed to combine the clerkship of the signet with that of the council.

3. Cf. D.N.B., xv. 60.

4. F.M.G. Evans, Principal Secretary, p. 198.

The problem of signet registers is complicated by the fire of 1619 which destroyed most of the early signet and privy seal records.¹ Like the privy seal office, the signet office never made enrolments, but it seems to have kept warrants and dockets as early as the fifteenth century.² There survive no registers earlier than Cromwell's order, though this is no proof that none were kept. On the other hand, the phrasing of his order³ suggests the introduction of a new rule. Only documents actually sealed were to be entered; unless they were sealed they were not, of course, issued, but more important than this seems to have been the fact that some such record was necessary if the sealing fees were to be pooled for division at the end of the month. The keeping of a register was therefore considered necessary because of the division of labour and the details about fees which were laid down in other parts of the same direction, that is, it was an additional order emerging from Cromwell's other orders. For that reason we think that it very likely constituted an innovation.

Although no signet register survives for the period of Cromwell's secretaryship he himself, very early in his career, possessed a book of all documents which had passed that seal "since the signet came to my hand".⁴ It is therefore probable

1. *Ibid.*, p.199n.

2. J. Otway Ruthven, *King's Secretary*, pp.114f.

3. For which cf. App.A(IV), p.468.

4. *L.P.* vii.923(xxv).

that this part of his orders was carried out immediately. The earliest register which we possess is that of Ralph Sadler which begins on 1 April 1540.¹ The keeping of registers became essential at that date when two secretaries were appointed, each of whom was to know what passed the other's signet.² Perhaps the signet clerks began only then regularly to record the documents they sealed. All that is certain is that Cromwell wished to add the keeping of entry books to the organisation of the signet office, that he himself had among his papers a book of writings sealed with the signet, and that such registers were kept by his successors.

Something of a problem is suggested by the very book in which Cromwell's orders for the signet office are preserved.² It contains a mixture of things. The flyleaf is covered with attempts at the signature of John Godsalue, one of the clerks of the signet, and the book is nearly all in his hand. Cromwell's orders are followed by copies of grants and the like (ff.3-16v), the first two of which are headed in large letters "De indigena fienda pro extraneo et liberis" and "Aliter de indigena pro extraneo fienda". Some others are given marginal descriptions, as "Licencia", "Nonresid'", "Plea", "Presentacio". In many cases the grantee's name is given by initials only, and

1. B.M. Add.MS 35818.

2. Cf. the warrant of their appointment, L.P. xv.437.

3. P.R.O. DL 42/133.

the dating clauses are not transcribed. This section is, therefore, not a book of copies kept for record, but a precedent book. Many of the documents to which the entries can be shown to refer were issued a short time before Cromwell's orders. Thus we have the denization of Luke Hornbolt, the painter (f.4), of 22 June 1534,¹ Christopher Mount's annuity (f.12) of 26 June 1534,² and the wardship granted to Thomas Wentworth (f.12) on 13 May 1534.³ It follows that some of the entries were made at the same time as Cromwell's orders were entered, the former having perhaps been transcribed from an earlier book. When Godsalve made up his private precedent book he would naturally preface it with the latest departmental orders. The precedents are followed, after a few blank pages, by a register of documents signed by the king, with notes of delivery to various recipients and covering the period from 9 January 1541 to 30 September 1543 (ff.23ff.). This part is clearly the register of an individual signet clerk. It does not contain only documents sealed and paid for, for petitions presented to and signed by the king come within its scope and these were not sealed. While it is not, therefore, exactly the kind of register which Cromwell envisaged in his orders, it is evidence of the same desire for the keeping of records.

1. L.P. vii.922(14).

2. Ibid. 922(25). This is annotated "delyuered to Mr M'es Seruant the xjth of februarij".

3. Ibid. 761(20).

The very fact that it was kept on the leaves of a precedent book indicates that it was not Godsalve's first book of entries; we may suppose that he used these blank leaves when he had filled his earlier register.

The other orders could not by their nature leave any trace behind them. However, together with those that did they show that in organising the signet office Cromwell was particularly concerned with its efficiency and with the fair distribution of the fees collected there. His ideas bore fruit, some of them possibly at once and others later.

Another attempt was made to organise the bureaucracy during the time of Cromwell's ministry. In its 1535 session parliament passed "An Acte concernyng Clerkes of the Signet and Privie Seale".¹ Cromwell's responsibility for this act cannot be proved conclusively, but it can hardly be doubted. For one thing, the signet was his particular departmental responsibility; for another, it is easily shown that parliamentary legislation was always one of his chief concerns, although that is too large a theme to be developed here in detail. The evidence lies in many an entry in his remembrances and in the multitudinous corrections which he made in the drafts of bills, and it seems permissible to argue from a known general interest to a plausible particular one in this instance which concerned

1. 27 Henry VIII c.11 (Stat.Realm, iii.542ff.).

the secretary's proper sphere of action. The case becomes much stronger still when the terms of the act are considered.

After a preamble stating that clerks of the signet and privy seal had no wages except the profits of their labours, and that it was desirable to prevent their being cheated of these, it was enacted that from 15 April 1536 no manner of writing was to pass the great seals of England, Ireland, the duchy of Lancaster, and the principality of Wales, or by process out of the exchequer, unless it had first been examined by the king's principal secretary or a clerk of the signet. Within eight days of receiving a warrant signed by the king, the master of the wards, the general surveyors, or any other royal officer, the clerk of the signet was to make out a warrant to the keeper of the privy seal, such warrant to be subscribed by him and to be sealed with the signet. Within eight days again, the clerk of the privy seal was to make out his warrant to the lord chancellor or other officer whose province it was to carry out the instructions. The penalty for making warrants differently was to be £10, half to the king and half to the informer. Immediate warrants were permitted for exceptional cases, but fees were still to be paid to the signet and privy seal on pain of a like fine. Provisos excepted some routine or minor matters, and a scale of fees payable to the clerks of the signet and privy seal for the writing of documents

was laid down. Here again a penalty of £10 was imposed on any clerk taking higher fees. Finally, there were some more provisions, the most important of which permitted the lord chancellor to remit the fees of all three seals "as hath ben accustomed".

There are three points in particular which support our view that Cromwell was behind this act. The king's principal secretary is given a special mention, in the same tone of importance as that ancient officer of state, the lord privy seal, and who would be more likely to authorise this than the secretary himself? More important is that two of its provisions link the act with Cromwell's regulations for the signet office: the order to the clerks to sign their warrants was repeated, and the scale of fees supplemented his directions concerning the payment of signet clerks. We think that Cromwell was directly responsible for this act; that he conceived it and supervised its drafting; and that its terms reflect his mind. But if it be thought that this is too much to claim - though it is not apparent why it should be, in view of the general agreement on the point of Cromwell's supremacy in the government of England - this at least will have to be admitted: the act was in agreement with what we know of Cromwell's plans for the signet office; the signet was Cromwell's personal concern; and legislation was one of Cromwell's chief interests. It follows that we may see Cromwell behind the act, either as an

approving onlooker or - what seems much more likely - as its author.

However, there was an earlier form of the act. A draft survives, much longer and more detailed, and with some essential differences from the final shape of the act.¹ That it is a draft prepared for that particular act and that particular session is proved by the general agreement of the provisions and by the mention of the date on which it was to come into operation as 27 Henry VIII (April 1535 to April 1536), with the day and month left blank. There must have been another, later draft, for the scale of fees, which mentions the same kinds of documents as the act itself, leaves blanks where the amounts ought to be. For the same reasons as those stated above we must assume that it was drawn up with Cromwell's knowledge and preliminary approval. The fact that changes were made and the character of these changes can, on the grounds shown, have been due only to him.

The biggest difference is in the preamble. This really settles the question whether the 1535 act established a new course of "official channels" or merely gave statutory force to a customary practice. It has been known for some time that the rule by which every grant under the great seal passed from signet to privy seal to chancery was laid down at least as early

1. P.R.O. SP 1/101, ff.292-302. Listed in L.P. x.246(5).

as 1444.¹ But Cromwell's act extended this to all documents passing the privy seal on their way to other departments of state. Moreover, it has been doubtful whether the council ordinance of Henry VI had been observed and was merely being re-enacted, or whether the rule had been forgotten and was stated afresh in the statute of 1535.² The preamble of the draft makes it plain that the system of 1444 was supposed to be in working order, and that the authors of the act knew themselves to be but confirming an older practice which, however, was not being well observed. The statute was necessary, they stated, because of late many "malicious, lowde, and crafty persons" had managed to commit frauds by exploiting the non-observance of the established rule.

The draft further declared that the kings of England had heretofore established that nothing should pass their great seals or out of the exchequer by way of levying of forfeitures or payment of sheriffs' rewards without "furst beyng examyned by their principall Secretaries as personages moost nere of their moost honorable counsaill and which by dayly and con-tynnall view and sight ought best to knowe the true caractes and Signes of their moost noble handes".³ The secretary was to give the warrant signed by the king to a clerk of the signet

1. Maxwell Lyte, Great Seal, p.90.

2. F.M.G.Evans, Principal Secretary, pp.195ff.

3. P.R.O. SP 1/101, ff.292v-293.

who would keep it and write a warrant to the lord privy seal. He in his turn would examine the warrant and leave it with a clerk of the privy seal who would make out a warrant to the chancellor of England, Ireland, or the duchy, or to the treasurer and chamberlains of the exchequer. The procedure was therefore here set out at greater length, with details which prove that the secretary and lord privy seal were expected to carry out their departmental duties in person. The special reference to the secretary's standing with council¹ and king is interesting; it adds another and stronger proof of Cromwell's concern in this legislation, and it also shows that he was well aware of the two outstanding advantages which the secretaryship gave to its holder. It was as the sovereign's confidential servants and as the controllers of the (privy) council that the Tudor secretaries established their power.

The body of the draft did not differ greatly from the act as passed. It included a special provision prohibiting all unauthorised persons from making any writing by warrant of the king's sign manual and from procuring the passage of such a document. This reminds us of point five of Cromwell's orders and again links his name with the act. Chancery clerks passing a grant by immediate warrant were afterwards to obtain

1. "Moost honorable counsaill" is a phrase that must refer to the council as a body, not to counsel as a piece of advice and meaning deliberations.

the usual signet and privy seal warrants within three months. The period in which clerks of the signet and privy seal were to act after receiving their warrants was given as one month in the draft, instead of the eight days of the act. Apart from minor changes, the main alterations made during the revision of the draft touched, therefore, the angle from which the problem was viewed. The draft intended to abolish fraud and abuse, and was mainly concerned with organising a fool-proof bureaucratic system. Almost as an afterthought, and with a special brief preamble explaining how desirable it was for the clerks to get an honest living from their work and for suitors not to be overcharged, the draft appended a scale of fees. In the event this became the central point, and the act was ostensibly passed in order to assure the clerks of their salaries.

However, while this different attitude is manifest and significant, it must be admitted that in effect both draft and act did the same thing. The act of 1535 was quoted ever after not because it safeguarded the interests of the clerks of the signet and privy seal, but because it gave statutory force to the established order of making a grant under the great seal. It did this, on the face of it, in order to prevent people from evading the fees due to the clerks by taking their signed bills straight to the chancery, but the draft

makes it plain that administrative efficiency and the prevention of fraud were at least as much in the minds of the framers of the statute as the payment of fees. In all probability it was thought wiser not to confront a parliament which undoubtedly contained many who had at one time or another profited from immediate warrants with a statement that they were "malicious, lewde, and crafty persons" who, if they had not actually forged the king's sign manual, had been the cause of "manyfold other enormities [and] inconveniences". Hence the shifting of the emphasis. The alteration which reduced the time allowed to a clerk for writing his further warrant to a quarter of the time originally granted was obviously in the interests of the suitors and may have been made to placate opposition. It also, of course, advanced efficiency. Thus the two basic ideas of Cromwell's act - reform of the bureaucratic organisation, and protection of the interests of the civil service - were the same as those of Cromwell's orders to the signet office. These were the points with which he was most concerned in his dealings with the clerical side of the administration.

There is one other characteristic which these two documents have in common. They are both interested in the signet only as a stage in the process by which documents were issued under other seals.¹ They are not concerned with the signet in its

1. The same applies to the privy seal as treated in the statute; for this cf. Section II of this chapter.

independent existence. All the talk about writing and sealing fees could only apply to documents in the bureaucratic chain, for when the signet was used for authenticating the king's private correspondence no fees would, of course, fall due. The act is even more obviously concerned with the signet only as the first of the three seals under which documents had to pass. This may be due to the fact that the signet had ceased, or nearly ceased, to be used in an independent capacity. On the other hand, it may merely mean that Cromwell directed his organising activities to that part of the work of the signet office which was most obviously organisable and in need of organisation. Which of these answers is the correct one can only be established by an investigation of the signet in both capacities, during the time of Cromwell's government.

First, then, the signet as a seal of warranty to other departments of state. In theory all grants under the great seal required a signet warrant at an early stage in the proceedings; either the process was started by such a warrant, or one was made out on the basis of a petition approved and signed by the king. Such petitions are technically described as signed bills, but as that term included other documents signed by the king and used as warrants, we shall here refer to them always as signed petitions. If the theory were right — the theory, that is, of the preamble of the draft quoted

above - we should expect to find the warrants for the privy seal to consist largely of warrants under the signet, even before the act of 1535 gave statutory sanction to the procedure. We should certainly expect such warrants after 1535. However, the extant warrants for the privy seal tell a different story.¹

For the year 21 Henry VIII (1528-9) we have one file of eighty-two documents, for 22 Henry VIII one of sixty-five, for 23 Henry VIII one of twenty-one, and for the years 25-29 Henry VIII one of thirty-four. This already indicates that the records are incomplete; the years 24 Henry VIII is missing, and the others are nothing like complete. To give an example: there are among the chancery warrants 196 privy seals for the year 25 Henry VIII alone each of which should have a corresponding warrant in the privy seal files. Nevertheless, even in their fragmentary state they can tell us something. For one thing, we notice a rapid decrease in the numbers and regularity of the documents preserved by the privy seal as we approach the time of Cromwell's secretaryship. Even more suggestive is the composition of the files. Of the eighty-two documents in the first file, fifty-six are warrants under the signet. In the second file, the proportion is forty-three out of sixty-five, and in the third sixteen out of twenty-one.

1. The warrants for the reign are in P.R.O. PS0 2/4.

In general terms we may therefore say that the privy seal could expect about two thirds of its warrants to be sealed with the signet. The fourth file, which contains what remains of the period of Cromwell's secretaryship, does not provide one example of a genuine signet warrant. There are three signed bills sealed with the signet (nos. 7, 17, 18), but even they differ from others of their kind in being endorsed with the date and place of issue by a signet clerk. Otherwise the file contains only signed petitions, forwarded as warrants and endorsed with a note about their being despatched to the privy seal, with date and place. These notes are all signed by, or in the hands of, signet clerks. Before Cromwell's time the forwarding of signed petitions as warrants for the privy seal only had been so unusual that but one survives in the files analysed.¹

For the last two years of Cromwell's tenure of office no warrants are preserved at all. But with his fall and the appointment of the earl of Southampton as lord privy seal a great change comes over the files. From June 1540 onwards we find monthly bundles, usually with covering notes signed by clerks of the privy seal, of warrants under the signet, and nothing else. From that moment, therefore, the records assume the appearance which we should expect from a theoretical knowledge of the procedure.

1. File 21 Henry VIII, no. 119.

It is, of course, possible that all these facts are merely the result of the accidental preservation of some records and destruction of others. However, that would be to suppose too large a working of coincidence. It seems to us that we have here something like a true picture, a little distorted perhaps by the absence of what is lost, but yet essentially correct. It seems less incredible that there were very few signet warrants for the privy seal from 1534 to 1540, than that just those warrants should be lost when so many were preserved both before and after that period. We therefore submit that the records enable us to draw some conclusions which are most likely correct, though in view of the evidence on which they have to be based an element of doubt is bound to remain.

It appears, then, that the signet practically ceased to be used as a seal of warranty to the privy seal during Cromwell's supremacy. The signet office continued the practice, begun in the last year of Gardiner's secretaryship when Cromwell was often deputising,¹ of forwarding the signed petitions received from the secretary direct to the privy seal, and it was the rule that the signet clerk carrying out this duty should endorse the petition to that effect.² At the same time

1. Above, pp. 102f.

2. The fact that the file preserved at the privy seal office contains almost only documents dealt with by Wriothesley does seem to be due to an accident of preservation. Signed petitions which got as far as the files of chancery warrants are endorsed also by other clerks of the signet.

such carelessness prevailed about the keeping of warrants that none at all survive for the better part of the period when Cromwell was lord privy seal. And all this happened at a time when it had only recently been enacted by parliament that the traditional routine should be carefully observed. There can be only one explanation: the personality and personal government of Cromwell. In charge as he was, and in strict control, of signet and privy seal, he found it unnecessary to insist on a careful adherence to the details of the bureaucratic process. What counted, as it so often does in a government dominated by one man, were efficiency and speed, and not the letter of the law.

In view of these facts it is interesting to recall that when the act of 1535 was drafted the emphasis shifted from administrative efficiency to the interests of the clerks of the signet and privy seal. The short-circuiting of the normal procedure, which the absence of warrants indicates, did not save suitors from paying fees at every stage. That had been expressly laid down in the act,¹ and the provision was carried out, though the proof we can give dates from after Cromwell's fall. A signed petition delivered into chancery on 2 September 1540 has on its dorse a brief letter from a clerk of the signet to a clerk of the chancery, asking him "to passe this byll by

1. 27 Henry VIII c.11, sec.4.

this warraunt, recoyving the fees for our office and the privie seale for the same".¹ A man whose grant passed by direct warrant would therefore pay a lump sum into chancery, and the signet and privy seal would draw their share from there. The ostensible purpose of the act was therefore not offended by the practice of cutting down the administrative process. There was no insistence on the regular routine. Signet clerks were freely employed on other work, and temporarily the signet was rarely used in its function for authorising letters under the privy seal.

That this was due to Cromwell alone is clear from the sudden reversal of the practice after his fall. The great minister with his hand in and over nearly every department could dispense with the details of a process which was designed to prevent fraud and safeguard the interests of the civil service. His successors took no such risks, and when Cromwell fell the system for which he obtained the authority of parliament was at last put into full operation. It was not worked out after him, for it appeared fully grown immediately after his fall. Secretaries Wriothesley and Sadler could insist on the writing of warrants instead of the forwarding of petitions, and lord privy seal Southampton could have them carefully filed, only because the whole system had already been organised in theory

1. P.R.O. C 82/772/2.

by Cromwell. As in his financial administration, so in his dealings with the bureaucracy, Cromwell was moved by a double desire. He wanted organisation for others, and he wanted the fullest freedom of action for himself. With his fall the manifestations of the second desire naturally disappeared, but the organisation stood.

The privy seal office was not the only place to which warrants under the signet might be directed. Sometimes it would be by-passed. Signet warrants are found in the chancery files, but their number is small. How they reached their present whereabouts is not clear. When one is addressed to the chancellor it is, of course, obvious that the privy seal was being left out deliberately. There is one such example;¹ all the others that we find among chancery warrants are properly addressed to the lord privy seal and order him to write warrants to the great seal. Most - not all - bear the livery clause, giving the date and place of their being handed into chancery, and are therefore filed in the correct place. None exist for the period of Cromwell's tenure of the privy seal, but there are a few which he countersigned as secretary.² This

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1. P.R.O. C 82/653/18. This warrant of 22 March 1532 was signed by Derby as clerk of the signet, and by Edward Foxe "in absentia Reverendi domini Secretarij", Gardiner then being abroad. This may account for the irregularity of sending it straight to the chancellor.
 2. Ibid. 674/4 (under September 1533 but belonging to 1534); 681/26, 27; 688/5; 700/14 (of July 1534 but not signed by Cromwell); 701/1.

indicates that we ought, perhaps, to qualify a little what was said above about the virtual cessation of the signet as a seal of warranty, though the small number of the warrants surviving even outside the privy seal records leaves that conclusion essentially untouched. Probably the normal procedure was employed more frequently at the beginning of Cromwell's secretaryship, and its use decreased as his government became more personal and unchallenged. That is what one would expect, and these warrants in the chancery files for 1534-5 support such a view. Why some warrants addressed to the lord privy seal should have been delivered into chancery, we cannot tell. . No answer is to be found in their subject matter. They appear to be freaks, due perhaps to pressure of work at the privy seal office, or simply to chance. They are not confined to, nor particularly frequent during, the period of Cromwell's government.

Among warrants to the exchequer during the 1530's there is one under the signet. It is dated 7 August 1538, and is actually cast in the form of a privy seal.¹ However, it is "yeven vnder our signet" and signed by Godsalue, and is therefore a genuine signet warrant, which proves that warrants under that seal might be addressed directly to the treasurer and chamberlains of the exchequer. Its solitary state also proves

1. P.R.O. E 404/101.

how very unusual such a cutting out of the privy seal was. A somewhat different story is told by the warrants to the duchy of Lancaster. There signet warrants appear to have been not uncommon in the earlier years of the reign,¹ but none can be found after June 1532.² Under Cromwell, warrants to the duchy were, with a few exceptions, either signed petitions or privy seals; after him, the latter clearly predominated. The petitions may have gone directly from the signet office to the duchy, but only one is endorsed as being thus dispatched.³ It is therefore also possible that they went to the privy seal and were forwarded to the duchy from there, like other petitions which went to the chancery. The chancery of the duchy was one department over which Cromwell's various offices gave him no control. The great decline in the numbers of warrants "per consilium ducatus", which composed the bulk of the warrants in the earlier years of the reign, suggests that Cromwell may have used his control over the signet and privy seal in order indirectly to control the duchy. But we cannot stray to investigate a field somewhat outside the scope of the present study. Generally speaking, the files of the duchy indicate that here, in a department technically independent of him,

1. Thus there are twelve in P.R.O. DL 12/11, between 1509 and 1515.
2. P.R.O. DL 12/8/24: a draft patent of 7 June 1532, marked "per warrantum sub Signeto".
3. P.R.O. DL 12/12, loose document of 28 April 1537.

Cromwell allowed the correct routine to be followed, that is to say, he saw to it that duchy grants were authorised from the privy seal office. Direct signet warrants therefore disappeared.

A last class of warrants under the signet must be considered - warrants authorising expenditure by officials of the household. These are rather different from the normal signet warrant, inasmuch as they have the address written on the face of the document, are not signed by a clerk, and are signed by the king. We have already mentioned the warrants to Cromwell as master of the jewels;¹ similar warrants were made out to the keeper of the great wardrobe,² the great master of the household,³ the master forester of the forest of Windsor,⁴ and no doubt to others. In fact, expenditure of the king's treasure was usually authorised by warrants under the signet, though the king's signature was also required. The possession of the signet therefore gave Cromwell a further means of controlling expenditure. Unlike warrants to other departments of state which kept records, these warrants to individual officers have naturally failed to survive except by accident, and it is thus impossible to say what exactly Cromwell's practice was concer-

1. P.R.O. E 101/421/5, 9, 20.

2. Ibid. 420/1; 418/1, a bundle of twenty-two warrants to Andrew lord Windsor, keeper of the great wardrobe.

3. B.M. Aff.MS 9853, f.21v.

4. Ibid., f.24v.

ning them. We know that he obtained warrants to cover payments made by himself, and that the treasurer of the chamber insisted on them.¹ We have also seen that the treasurer of first fruits and tenths had to disburse money without warrants and complained about it after Cromwell's fall.² On the whole, it seems that these warrants, sealed and probably written by signet clerks and therefore part of the work of the signet office, were issued as freely under Cromwell as they were before and after him, except in the case of the treasurer of first fruits whom Cromwell treated very much as the personal servant that he was.

These warrants, which ordered action and not a further warrant for action, bring us to the second group of documents issued under the signet. It was the seal with which the king's correspondence was sealed. If we take the evidence for two representative years, 1534-5, we find that the king normally corresponded under the signet. There are in that period twenty-three letters which were certainly thus sealed.³ Normally, they were what might be termed proper signet letters: written by a signet clerk, with a dating clause mentioning the signet, headed with the phrase "by the king" and Henry's sig-

1. Above, pp.196ff., 217f. 2. Above, p.250.

3. L.P. vii.338, 375, 494, 526, 684, 845, 1033(2,2), 1144, 1688; viii. 25, 43, 92, 592, 594, 623, 783-4, 921; ix.527, 838, 1038, App.7. Wherever possible the letters quoted in this paragraph have been checked with the originals, as the calendar often gives no indication of the sealing.

nature, and addressed on the outside. The king's signature was sometimes added by a stamp,¹ or might be missing even in a letter which was definitely sent.² In one case, a letter to Cromwell, the signet is not mentioned but was applied and still survives.³ Letters which were not provably sealed with the signet are either drafts without the final clause, or belong to the king's diplomatic correspondence with foreign powers. Most of these latter are in Latin and written by the king's Latin secretary, Peter Vannes.⁴ These naturally had nothing to do with the signet office as far as writing went, but it is of interest that Vannes did not apparently have to get them authenticated by the king's normal seal. At least, the signet was not mentioned in their dating clause, though we do not know how they were sealed when closed. It is possible that the signet was used, and that the principal secretary applied it; on the other hand, the royal signature, written either at the top or underneath like any normal signature, may have sufficed. Proof one way or the other is unobtainable. Instructions to ambassadors went out in the form of ordinary signet letters.⁵ That says nothing for their origin. They were most frequently written, in those years, by

1. E.g., L.P. viii.25, 43, 92.

2. L.P. vii.664, 845.

3. L.P. viii.592.

4. He countersigned some of them: L.P. viii.522; ix.532.

5. E.g., L.P. ix.838, 1038. Ibid. 443 was all ready and signed by the king, but there is no dating clause.

the hand which wrote also the additional instructions sent over Cromwell's name, the hand of Wriothesley.¹ It is thus likely that letters which went as though from the king were also prepared in Cromwell's office and submitted to the king for approval and signature.²

The evidence is similar for a later year when Cromwell was more fully independent, a fact which may be reflected in the comparatively small number of letters sent out under the king's signature in 1539.³ Letters definitely given under the signet were in English and addressed to persons within the realm or to ambassadors overseas.⁴ Those not so sealed were all addressed to foreign courts, and were written either in Latin or in French.⁵ It may be concluded that the signet was used freely, if not regularly, to seal the king's personal correspondence, but that letters not written in the signet

1. E.g., L.P. ix.838 (the king's instructions to Gardiner) and 848 (Cromwell's supplementary instructions sent at the same time).
2. An interesting comparison can be made with the practice under Elizabeth. In March 1562 certain instructions were sent to Nicholas Throckmorton, resident ambassador in France. The original survives and is a proper signet letter (B.M. Add.MS 4160, ff.42-3). But there also survives a draft corrected by Cecil and endorsed by his secretary (Cal.S.P.For., 1561-2, no.926); again we see that what was clearly an official letter ostensibly emanating from the crown might originate in the secretary's office.
3. There are twenty-three in the index to L.P. xiv, compared with thirty-six in 1535 (L.P. viii and ix).
4. L.P. xiv.I.92, 280, 406, 487, 711-2, 744; II.574.
5. Ibid. I.364, 441-3, 462, 1156; II.221, 307, 387, 415.

office did not mention the signet and possibly were not sealed with it.

Cromwell's preoccupation with the signet as a seal authorising the issue of documents under another seal was not, therefore, due to its being used only in that capacity. On the contrary, we have seen that it tended to be evaded during his administration, and that it was in fact used more regularly as the king's personal seal. As such, however, it was not in need of formal organisation. Its use enabled Cromwell to control the king's correspondence, and this control was increased by the regular employment of signet clerks to draft Henry's letters which quite possibly he never saw until they were submitted ready for his signature. But in its administrative function the signet needed organising. Cromwell's orders and statute were designed to establish a rigid bureaucratic system, though in practice he paid little heed to his own measures of organisation. He disregarded the system, in the interests of speed and efficiency, and presumably because his control was tight enough to exclude the evils which under a weaker man only an ordered bureaucracy could prevent.

II. The Privy Seal.

Much of what has been said of the signet goes also for the privy seal. The act of 1535 provided for both. It was Cromwell's clear intention that the privy seal should be used, like the signet, in the strict order established by tradition and the council ordinance of 1444. As, in theory, nothing should leave the privy seal unless a warrant under the signet had been received, so - in theory - no action was to be taken by the chancellors of England, Ireland, and the duchy of Lancaster, or by the treasurer and chamberlains of the exchequer, unless they had had a warrant under the privy seal. Once again, however, it would be rash to suppose that this process was properly observed merely because it was embodied in an act of parliament.

The files of warrants to the chancery contain a varied assortment of material. There are occasional warrants under the signet, bills and fiats signed by the king, warrants from the lord treasurer, petitions countersigned by the general surveyors of the king's lands, fiats for protections signed by the deputy at Calais.¹ By far the greater part of the warrants, however, are privy seals and signed petitions, and it is with these two classes that we must here concern our-

1. One month (June 1529, P.R.O. C 82/616) can provide examples of all these: signet warrants - no.2; bills signed by the king - nos.22,24; treasurer's warrant - 1; petitions signed by the general surveyors - nos.12,13; fiats signed by the deputy at Calais - nos.7,25.

selves. If the system had been working properly we should not, of course, expect any signed petitions but only privy seals. The chances are that every such petition found among the chancery warrants constitutes an evasion of the privy seal, though it is theoretically possible that the privy seal might simply forward a petition received from the signet office. But there seems to be no reason why they should have done so. Some of the petitions ask definitely that they may be signed and used as direct warrants to the chancellor.¹ We may take it that normally signed petitions found to have been delivered into chancery were direct warrants employed to cut short the cumbersome process of warrant upon warrant which every grant was supposed to follow. A large number of such petitions over a longer period will therefore indicate a large-scale evasion of the rules, a smaller number a stricter adherence to them.

Starting with the last months of Wolsey's rule, we find that during them petitions regularly and considerably outnumbered privy seals.² In October 1529 Wolsey fell, and we suddenly find eighteen privy seals to two direct warrants.³ This proportion is kept up for a long time after that, with signed

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1. E.g., P.R.O. C 82/646/3: "that this bill signed with your most gracious hand maye be a sufficient and ymmediat war-raunt vnto your Chauncellour of England".
 2. The figures, with privy seals first, are: May 1529 - 2,18; June - 6,11; July - 3,21; August - 8,13; September - 4,10. (P.R.O. C 82/615-619).
 3. Ibid. 620.

petitions almost disappearing in some months and always in the minority. For the first year after Wolsey's fall, from November 1529 to October 1530, there are 315 privy seals and only 36 petitions.¹ Similar proportions continue for three years after, with the number of petitions slightly on the increase, but in 1534 there are only 178 privy seals compared with 111 petitions, and in 1535 the latter actually outnumber the former. In 1536, there is once more a considerable drop in the number of petitions, but for the rest of Cromwell's government they are again very numerous. A table will make this clear:

year	privy seals	petitions	P.R.O. C 82/
1531	309	27	637-650
1532	253	39	651-663
1533	201	82	664-677
1534	178	111	678-691
1535	117	139	692-705
1536	277	89	706-719
1537	216	185	720-733
1538	185	177	734-747
1539	149	243	748-761

The same tendency continued at first after Cromwell's fall, largely because of the time lag between the signing of a warrant or petition and its delivery into chancery. That this was so is shown by a number of petitions countersigned by Cromwell by virtue of his commission to seal crown lands. He was arrested on 10 June 1540, yet there are still four such petitions in the August file.² Things took nearly six months

1. Ibid. 621-34.

2. Ibid. 771/8, 20, 23, 29.

to sort themselves out, and until September petitions continued to outnumber privy seals. But in November the numbers were forty and thirteen, and in December sixty and one.¹ In the following year, the new proportion was steadily maintained.²

These figures tell their own story. During Wolsey's chancellorship the privy seal had been ignored in a somewhat highhanded fashion. Highhandedness being one of the chief accusations against him, it is not surprising to find that his successors in office were very careful to avoid it, with the result that direct warrants became the rare exception. Nevertheless, they were too obviously useful in avoiding long delays, and the caution inspired by the cardinal's fall could not last for ever. Evasions of the privy seal were again becoming more frequent when Cromwell's appointment as secretary led to a rapid revival of Wolsey's practice. In February 1535, direct warrants for the first time again outnumbered privy seals.³ In 1536, however, partly no doubt as a result of the legislation of the previous year, and partly because as lord privy seal Cromwell would treat the privy seal with less contempt, there was a temporary return to a more strict observance of the regulations. But this did not last, and during the remainder

1. Ibid. 774 and 775.

2. A few examples will show this: January 1541 - 58,0 (ibid. 776); March - 47,2 (ibid. 778); July - 41,6 (ibid. 784); November - 39,1 (ibid. 788); January 1542 - 34,0 (ibid. 790).

3. Ibid. 693: 12 privy seals and 15 petitions.

of his rule Cromwell allowed the privy seal to be evaded more and more. It became ever more usual for grants, particularly of monastic lands, to be made on a petition signed by the appropriate authorities and approved by the king's signature. Neither the signet nor the privy seal were then called upon to make out warrants.

However, Cromwell's fall created a situation somewhat similar to that of October 1529, except that business standing over from before his arrest delayed the full effects for several months. But in the end matters developed as one would expect them to: no one was now prepared to ignore the regulations in so sovereign a fashion, and consequently the civil service reasserted itself. The privy seal office managed to ensure that matters again passed through its hands in the ordinary way, just as the signet office had re-established the system once Cromwell had gone. There was, however, a difference between the routine before and after Cromwell. From 1540 onwards, the proper course of making a grant was nearly always observed with great care; the privy seal files are full of signet warrants, and the chancery files full of warrants under the privy seal. We see again that Cromwell had organised the system and had given it final shape, even though he himself had not enforced it. Worked out under him, it became manifest

on his fall.¹

Warrants to the exchequer and the duchy of Lancaster yield little of interest. The former comprise two different groups.² The large majority are chancery writs of liberate and allocate, usually on patents and obtained by the recipient of the money as a matter of course. Less regular payments, or such as were not based on some written grant, were authorised by privy seal. Among the privy seals for 25 Henry VIII we find orders for the payment of sheriffs' rewards, of the king's offerings, of the money due to the cofferer of the household for the St. George's feast of the Garter, and of rewards to household officers from goods confiscated by customers and other exchequer officials.³ This division between chancery and privy seal warrants holds good before, during, and after Cromwell's supremacy, and it is clear that he did not touch the routine of the privy seal office in this respect. Day-to-day expenditure of the government was not covered by the exchequer, so that there was no

1. These facts supply another reason why Cromwell recast the preamble of his statute of 1535. It was this practice of ignoring the ordinary channels and cutting out the work done by both the signet and privy seal offices which endangered the livelihood of the clerks. It is likely that the provision which proved of the greatest immediate importance was the one enduring that fees were paid at all stages even for direct warrants.
2. Warrants for issues for the years 21-31 Henry VIII (1529-40) are in P.R.O. E 404/97-103.
3. P.R.O. E 404/99, file 1, nos. 69; 70; 73; 68, 71, 72, 76, 77, and many others.

inducement to speed up the process of issues from it. As for the duchy, it has already been noted that under Cromwell its warrants tended to be from the central offices rather than by order of its own council, and it has been suggested that Cromwell was here trying to exercise an indirect control over a department where he had no directly controlling powers.¹ On the whole, it is noticeable in these files, too, that during his rule there was no strict adherence to the act of 1535, and privy seals are found freely mixed with signed bills.² After Cromwell's fall privy seals vastly predominated, as they did in the chancery and no doubt for the same reason. Here, too, the organisation which Cromwell had prepared by means of a statute came to full flowering only after his death had removed the man who was ready to ignore the rules even though he had perfected them himself.

One aspect, then, of Cromwell's connection with the privy seal was this: he tried to organise its outgoing business and to make sure that it always took its place in the chain which ran down to the great seal. In practice, however, he was ready enough to see these rules evaded by the use of signed petitions as direct warrants, while making sure that the clerks were paid even when no work was done. In a way, Cromwell's

1. Above, pp.310f.

2. Warrants to the duchy are in P.R.O. DL 12/6-8, 11-12. They are not arranged chronologically, and these bundles cover nearly the whole of the reign of Henry VIII.

theory is more interesting than his practice. As in other aspects of his work, the former was organisation, a safe and efficient system; the latter was a somewhat highhanded evasion of that very organisation, for the sake of immediate advantages in speed and personal ascendancy.

So far we have discussed the privy seal as a distributing centre for the orders of the government. As the act of 1535 put it, it issued warrants "to the Lorde Chauncellour of Eng-lond, Lorde Kepar of the Great Seale Chauncellour of the Duchye of Lancastre Chauncellour of the Kynges Landes of Ireland Threasourer and Chamberleyne of the Eschequier and Chamberleyne of any his Counties Palantynes or Pryncypalite of Wales".¹ We ^{now} must concern ourselves with it as a receiving centre for orders from various other departments. The act mentions writings received under the signature of the king, the master of the wards, the general surveyors, or other officers. The true extent of this function of the privy seal is apparent from the files of warrants addressed to it. For 21 Henry VIII (1529-30) these warrants survive:² fifty-five signet letters, one signed bill, one signed petition, all these being warrants from the king; seven warrants on behalf of the council; two from the general surveyors; three from the master of the wards; four from the deputy at Calais; one from the chief baron of the exchequer;

1. Stat.Realm, iii.543.

2. P.R.O. PS0 2/4, file 3.

three from the surveyors of forfeitures and casual revenues; two from the cofferer of the household. The council, general surveyors, master of the wards, and surveyors of forfeitures ordered privy seals for appearances before themselves; the deputy at Calais asked for the issue of "protections", the chief baron for an attachment, the cofferer for orders to sheriffs to pay him the assignments due to the household by acts of parliament.¹ Notes of similar orders to the privy seal can be found among the state papers.²

All the departments of state which had no seal of their own went to the privy seal to get their orders authenticated. If the treasurer of the chamber wished to recover a debt, he might get the surveyors of the king's casual revenues to sign a fiat to the privy seal summoning the debtor to appear before the treasurer.³ On the other hand, he himself might write to the lord privy seal, asking his lordship "to directe the Kinges lettres vnder his privie seale to Charles Iakeson to content and pay vnto my handes to the Kinges vse the some of xxx li' due to his grace at daies expired by obligacion, or elles that he appere befor me Immedialtly vppon the sight herof vppon payne of C li'", thus setting out the terms of the requested privy seal in his letter.⁴ In 1533 Cromwell himself asked for a

1. 1 Henry VIII c.16, amended by 14 & 15 Henry VIII c.19.

2. L.P. Add.716,854,1179 (gen.sur.); 644,875 (wards); 876 (woods)

3. P.R.O. PSO 2/4, file 3, nos.107A,110,117.

4. P.R.O. SP 1/239, f.73 (L.P. Add.945; cf. also ibid.932).

privy seal to "Iohn lyngen the Elder, Squir, to Appor personally octabis Trinitatis" before himself, and added under his signature an autograph request "that thes pryvoy Seales may be hadde with spede".¹ More surprising is a note signed by him and belonging to about the middle of 1534: "W^d to have A pryve seale dyrected to Iohn lyngen the Elder, Squir, to Appore befor Master secretarie, returnabull Crastino Animarum; Makyng mencion that At his last Apparans he obstinately departed without lycens."² The case is, at best, one of few, and as another letter shows,³ Cromwell was acting on behalf of someone else. But even so it proves that the privy seal was the normal means to employ for a summons, even for a man who as the king's principal secretary controlled another of the king's seals. This was particularly the case in the court of requests which did all its business under the privy seal, the issue of orders being authorised by signed endorsements on various documents in the particular case. The privy seals demanded by the court were so frequent, and the connection of court and seal so strong, that the senior clerk of the privy seal was appointed clerk of the court of requests.⁴

1. P.R.O. SP 1/238, f.107 (L.P. Add.835).

2. Ibid. 239, f.75 (ibid. 947).

3. L.P. vi.607, Sir Thomas Englefield to Cromwell, thanking him for having a privy seal sent on his behalf to John Lyngen. The handwriting of the two notes of Cromwell's is quite unlike that of any other document known to have come from his office; perhaps Englefield had the notes prepared and gave them to Cromwell to sign.

4. Lambard, Archeion, p.230.

The privy seals issued from the court, and therefore probably other privy seals issued for similar purposes by the orders of other departments,¹ were "informal letters" rather than writs of privy seal.² Like signet letters they are headed "by the king", are addressed on the outside, and begin with the phrase "Trusty and wellobeloved, we greet you well". The dating clause is peculiar in omitting the regnal year.

Thus the privy seal had a large sphere of activity quite unconnected with the passage of grants under the great seal. The warrants indicate that such orders from other departments continued to come in certainly up to 1533. As we have already seen, there are very few surviving warrants for the time of Cromwell's supremacy, and they are signed petitions. Nevertheless it is clear that the other side of the privy seal's duties did not disappear entirely; a fiat from the general surveyors survives for 1536.³ The scantiness of the material in the privy seal records makes it difficult to argue anything about the later 1530's, but what is very striking is that when the files of warrants again become very full and possibly complete, in June 1540, they contain nothing but warrants under

1. None have been found. In the nature of things they would normally be lost. Those surviving among the records of the court of requests are almost all orders to magistrates to render certificates; these would be returned with the answer, while orders for appearances were not returned and are not therefore to be found in the central archives.

2. Cf. Tout, Chapters, v.115.

3. L.P. Add.1179.

the signet ordering the issue of further warrants. Such unanimity, kept up for month after month, hardly looks like an accident of survival. The consequence of Cromwell's work seems to have been the disappearance of all those orders from other officers of state which gave to the privy seal its peculiar function of a bureaucratic centre, a clearing-house of incoming and outgoing departmental business.

There were reasons why such a change should begin to show in 1540. The master of wards and the general surveyors acquired their own courts in 1540 and 1542, and with them seals of their own which made reliance on the privy seal unnecessary. The second court swallowed up such other users of the privy seal as the treasurer of the chamber and the surveyors of forfeitures and casual revenues. On the other hand, these courts were later than the disappearance of departmental warrants from the privy seal files, and the council did not acquire its own seal until 1555.¹ It did not cease to employ the privy seal until it had a seal of its own. The records of the privy council show that summonses to appear before it were still made by privy seal, though the practice had its exceptions. The best part of its business was done by letters signed by the privy councillors present, and in the first year for which records survive (August 1540 - August 1541) only fourteen privy

1. A.I.Dasent, A.P.C. 1554-6, p.130.

seals are noted.¹ On the other hand, there are eleven summonses by some other means, usually an ordinary council letter.² The privy seal was never used to authenticate any other ^{acts} of the council. There was, therefore, some use of the privy seal, but it amounted to very little. Even so, it is surprising to find no warrants from the council preserved at all. Possibly orders for privy seals were given by word of mouth, but that is not a convincing explanation. The privy seal office would not be likely to act without some permanent warrant with which to protect itself in case of trouble, and the council had certainly in earlier years been in the habit of issuing written flats.

One can only conclude that such few warrants as were received were filed separately from signet bills and are lost. The same would hold for orders from other officials who must, we are compelled to think, have continued to use the privy seal before they had seals of their own. The careful preservation of signet warrants, filed monthly and endorsed by the clerk on duty, makes one suspect that there was a purpose behind such discrimination. May it not have been that the dual rôle of the privy seal was being recognised, that its work as a link in the chain of warranty was being separated from its independent work? With the latter already much reduced in amount and constantly decreasing, the main work of the office, and therefore

1. Nicolas, A.P.C., vii.5, 59(3), 84(4), 120(2), 123, 186, 187.

2. Ibid., pp.10, 24, 82(3), 84, 98, 103(3), 192.

the main concern of its organisation, must have been with the former. Therefore, signet warrants were treated with care and attention, while departmental warrants, getting fewer all the time, appear to have become things of little consequence. Although the privy seal continued for a time to receive warrants of various kinds, the general development, indicated and helped by the new courts with their seals, was towards making it no more than a stage in the chain from petition to grant under the great seal.

It might be argued that this development must have been coming for a long time, but there is enough evidence to suggest that it goes back no further than Cromwell. In 1533 there were miscellaneous warrants in the files; by 1540 they had disappeared. It was noticeable that Cromwell's act of 1535 ignored the privy seal except as a warrant to other seals. That may not have been a sign of express purpose but it showed his attitude. His personal government in all branches of the administration undermined the importance of the privy seal to individual officials. A study of his correspondence shows that he could do by personal letters a good deal that normally would have required a privy seal. Taking only one year, 1537, we find him requested by the treasurer of the chamber to help in the recovery of debts,¹ ordering an appearance before himself

1. L.P. xii.II.1048.

and the council,¹ and ordering an arrest and a release.² We have also seen that a letter of his could be treated as though it were a privy seal emanating from the court of requests.³ The lord privy seal's letters took away much of the business of the privy seal itself, and it is for this reason that we find practically no warrants except signed petitions for the time of Cromwell's supremacy. We cannot claim that no warrants of other kinds were received at all, but in view of the many surviving before and the full state of the records after his time, we cannot really ascribe the paucity of records between 1534 and 1540 to accidental causes. The new courts, too, with their individual seals, were a Cromwellian development. He had founded the first of them (that of the augmentations), and had planned the court of wards, and their independent status and independent seals must therefore have been in agreement with his ideas.

It is clear from all this that Cromwell intended to restrict the privy seal to its most routine duties, and that he very nearly achieved his aim. What little extra business remained to the seal disappeared as Cromwell's ideas continued to bear fruit under his successors. The same principle is here seen

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1. Ibid. App.41. As early as 1534, one of his correspondents offered to fetch a man due to appear before the council without the formality of a privy seal (L.P. vii.692).
 2. Merriman, ii.62 (letter 191).
 3. Above, p.148.

at work as that which organised and departmentalised the treasurer of the chamber. Cromwell apparently did not like organisations with a wide and rather indefinite scope. He wished the privy seal to be used in one particular way laid down by statute. He wished, we may suspect, to withdraw from it those administrative orders which he preferred should go through his private office organisation. The evidence is, perhaps, not full enough to allow of too definite conclusions, and there is always the possibility that the privy seal carried on much as before but left no trace of such activity. However, all that has been said indicates how unlikely that possibility is. On the whole it seems that we may stand by our conclusions: it was Cromwell's policy to circumscribe the functions of the privy seal. As a consequence of his administration the privy seal was soon reduced to a purely formal part in the process of issuing grants under the great seal. For a time it continued to be employed by other agencies - the council and, in particular, the conciliar courts. When that use had gone, and it had gone entirely by 1642, the privy seal had become superfluous. Its survival into the nineteenth century was a triumph of vested interests over administrative efficiency and common sense.

III. Cromwell's Personal Activity.

The impression has possibly now been given that the signet and privy seal were virtually dormant during Cromwell's administration, and that he did without the seals and offices of which he was head. This would be quite wrong. Cromwell paid careful attention to the organisation of the two seals in their formal aspects, and though he then proceeded largely to evade his own organisation and regulations that does not mean that the two seals and their staffs were not employed to a certain extent in their routine duties. The privy seal in particular continued to send its warrants to the chancery and other departments, side by side with the signed petitions by means of which it was evaded. Moreover, the signet was in frequent use for the sealing of the king's correspondence, not to mention warrants for expenditure, and signet clerks were kept busy in writing these and other matters; and even though the privy seal's independent activity was severely curtailed it was not extinguished. The offices did their work, and we must now turn to the part played in that work by Cromwell himself.

The draft of the act of 27 Henry VIII c.11 (for the clerks of the signet and privy seal) described in detail the way in which a grant was to be made. It left no doubt that the secretary and lord privy seal were to be personally active. The

kings of England, it was declared, had never made a grant unless it had first been examined "by their principall Secretaries as personages moost nere of their moost honorable counsaill, and which by dayly and contynuall view and sight ought best to knowe the true caracters and Signes of their moost noble handes". After the secretary's examination the bill was to be "left in the Custodye of one of the Clerkes of their Signet", who would direct his warrant to the lord privy seal. "And likewise the sayde bill of warraunty beyng examyned by the sayd lorde kepar of their pryvey Seale", a further warrant would issue.¹ This preamble pretended to be a review of past practice, and the rest of the draft was to enforce the practice in the present. It was, therefore, Cromwell's intention that the secretary and lord privy seal should attend to their departmental duties. This in itself offers a fairly strong presumption that Cromwell himself did so attend when he held the offices.

Naturally, we are not in a position to tell whether bills reaching the offices were always scrutinised by the secretary and lord privy seal; no evidence survives, or could survive. It can, however, be shown that outgoing documents were often examined by the departmental heads. Gardiner had initiated a practice of regularly countersigning warrants under the signet.

1. P.R.O. SP 1/101, ff.292v-3.

2. At any rate, this is the first secretary's countersignature to appear among the warrants for the privy seal (P.R.O. PS0 2/4, files for 22 and 23 Henry VIII) and the great seal (P.R.O. C 82/669/5, 679/4).

He did not sign them all,¹ but he made the check so usual that even when he was away on embassy some councillor would be deputed to carry out that duty. Thus on 22 March 1532 the almoner, Edward Foxe, signed a warrant "in absentia Reverendi domini Secretarij".² At the beginning of his secretaryship Cromwell continued the practice, and nearly all the few signet warrants that survive for his tenure of office bear his signature.³ More than this: he seems to have made it part of the secretary's duties to countersign privy seals which concerned his departmental sphere, the signet office. In July 1534 he signed a privy seal for the grant of an annuity to John Godsalue, clerk of the signet.⁴ There are no warrants extant after August 1535 so that we cannot tell what happened when Cromwell became lord privy seal. He continued to hold the secretaryship, but one would on the whole suspect that as his duties became ever more numerous and as he came to spend his time more and more on matters of high domestic and foreign policy he could no longer find the time to attend to such details as the signing of warrants under the signet. This

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1. E.g., P.R.O. C 82/629/6, 666/13. The latter of these was signed by the king, which may have made the secretary's signature superfluous.
 2. Ibid. 653/18.
 3. Ibid. 674/4 (this, as is pencilled on the document, belongs to 1534, not 1533 as the date pretends), 681/26-7, 688/5, 700/28, 701/1. The exception is ibid. 700/14 which is not countersigned by Cromwell.
 4. Ibid. 685/33.

seems the more likely in view of the gradual coming to the fore of Thomas Wriothesley, whose career is investigated below.¹

Another interesting fact which shows Cromwell's personal supervision of the signet office is that the warrant appointing a signet clerk would be addressed to him by name and title.²

Closely connected with his signet duties was the secretary's task of obtaining the royal signature on letters, bills, warrants, and grants. During the earlier years of his administration Cromwell carried this out himself. An agent of Lord Lisle's reported in 1535 that he had given a bill to Cromwell to be put among the other bills which were next to be signed.³ Henry was apparently in the habit of signing batches of documents at intervals, rather than attending to everything as it came in. On another occasion Lisle was informed that a bill of his should be signed "when the king doth next sign".⁴ We have it on the authority of Ralph Sadler, much of whose time was spent in trying to get papers signed by the king, that Henry disliked this office work so much that he would even defer reading through the instructions for an ambassador because he did not feel like signing them. At such times his secretaries and servants knew that it would be hard to get anything signed.⁵ A consequence of this was that many routine

1. Section IV of this chapter.

2. L.P. xiv.II.435(2).

4. L.P. xii.I.492.

3. L.P. viii.531.

5. L.P. x.76.

letters or warrants were signed with a stamp and never approached the royal presence. In the letter just quoted Sadler made a distinction between letters stamped, which he was forwarding to Cromwell, and letters to be signed, which he could not get attended to, and documents bearing a stamp instead of a written signature can be found strewn all over the volumes of state papers for the reign.

The way in which Cromwell personally handled the king's correspondence is apparent from his memoranda. A list of messengers with the letters they were to carry would be drawn up, and the letters would be both Cromwell's and the king's.¹ A similar list would be headed "warrants, letters, and bills assigned", to be followed by "letters signed with the - ", where the blank should probably be filled in with the word "stamp".² These are notes of business done; we can also produce a ready example of a paper which Cromwell himself drew up before going to the king. It contains notes of letters and warrants to be signed, of an autograph letter to be written to the king of France, and of a few other points of business which were not connected with technical secretarial duties.³ There is then no doubt that Cromwell carried out these duties, the duties of having the king's letters written, signed, sealed, and despatched. The fact that so many of the

1. L.P. ix.229.

2. Ibid. 232.

3. Ibid. 836.

king's letters were drafted and written out fair by clerks of the signet, especially Wriothesley and Dorby, shows that he employed the signet office for the purpose.

He did not always, of course, obtain the king's signature in person. Sadler, we have seen, sent him letters stamped and promised letters signed. On another occasion Sir Thomas Hennage informed Cromwell that he had obtained the king's signature on "your three bills".¹ A groom and a gentleman of the privy chamber, these would naturally be employed in tasks requiring proximity to the royal person. Whether or not Cromwell himself obtained the signature would depend, one may suppose, on whether he was with the king or not. In his earlier years in office he was more careful to stay near the king; later he would often remain in London when the king went on progress.² One would have thought, then, that at least he would be careful to keep the signet in his own hand in order to maintain strict control. But we have already seen that even before he was secretary and while acting as Gardiner's deputy he would leave the signet in the custody of a servant.³ In that particular case Sadler was probably never far from

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1. L.P. xiv.II.163. The bills were: a letter in the affair of Sir Clement West, a warrant for repairs at Woodstock, and a petition concerning the discontinuance of a serjeantship-at-law. This mixed bag typifies the kind of thing that passed under the king's signature.
 2. Cf. Cromwell's itinerary in Merriman, ii.279ff.
 3. Above, pp.102f.

Cromwell so that the personal control remained, but there is another and rather more flagrant example of the way in which the supposed principle of personal custodianship of the signet might be flouted. In July 1535 Bonner was about to leave for Germany and was expecting a letter for the duke of Holstein. Cromwell told him that Gostwick, a servant of his, it is true, but quite unconnected with the clerical bureaucracy, would deliver it to him. Gostwick did so, having got the letter from the king and sealed it with the signet which Cromwell had left with him for the purpose. He wrote to say that he would send the seal up by some substantial messenger; this turned out to be William Johnson, a member of Cromwell's private staff.¹ Such a proceeding can only be described as irregular by all the standards, and it reminds us again how personal Cromwell's rule was, and how little attention he would often pay to the approved forms and rules of procedure.

As lord privy seal, too, Cromwell attended to his departmental duties. There was no rule or practice concerning countersignatures, but it was commonly assumed that the lord privy seal was actively in charge of his office. Not only were formal warrants addressed to him by name, which need not prove anything, but informal requests for privy seals were also sent to him personally. Tuke and Cromwell both wrote notes to

1. Kerriman, h.412 (letter 110); L.P. viii.1109, 1123.

the earl of Wiltshire, asking him to issue privy seals.¹ Cromwell's act of 1535, in particular its earlier draft, had assumed personal responsibilities in the keeper of the privy seal which prove that departmental business was still supposed to occupy a good deal of that officer's time. The evidence of privy seal warrants indicates that Cromwell made no change in this. His signature appears on a few surviving warrants, though there is in every case something unusual about the document. The privy seal might be written and signed by a clerk of the signet (Godsalve), in which Cromwell's countersignature was presumably intended to cover and authorise the irregularity.² Or the clerk's name was erased and Cromwell signed over it: this privy seal granted a pardon to the bishop of Lincoln as keeper of the castle of Banbury for the escape of felons from that prison, and^{as} it was somewhat large in its terms Cromwell's personal imprimatur may have seemed desirable.³ He signed the warrant for the restitution of Bonner's temporalities on his election to the see of Hereford; we may suspect that this was the signature of the vicegerent in spirituals rather than the lord privy seal's.⁴ His signature on a privy seal to the collectors of the wool customs in London on behalf of the merchants of the Staple ought perhaps to be traced back to the

1. L.P. Add. 855, 932, 945, 947.

2. P.R.O. C 82/743/2.

3. Ibid. 748/10.

4. Ibid. 749/55.

interest he always showed in commercial matters.¹ More definite proof of his direct and personal control of the privy seal office can be found in two warrants dispatched respectively from Thruxton (Hampshire) and Donnington Castle (Berkshire) in August 1539. Cromwell was apparently travelling with the court at the time,² and while the privy seal office was, of course, fixed at Westminster,³ the seal seems to have been with its keeper on that occasion. The warrants were signed, not by a clerk of the privy seal, but by Thomas Soulemont, Cromwell's personal secretary,⁴ "in absentia," as he was careful to add, "clericorum priuati sigilli de mandato domini priuati sigilli."⁵

The evidence may be scanty but it is conclusive. Throughout his career as secretary and lord privy seal Cromwell attended to his departmental duties. However, it was quite out of the question that with so many tasks awaiting him he should have done all the departmental work of supervising the signet and privy seal offices, and he therefore chose a man to be virtually his deputy as head of the clerical organisation. That man was Thomas Wriothesley.

1. P.R.O. E 159/318, Communia, Easter term, Recorda, m.13.
2. He dated a letter from Donnington Castle on 16 August 1539 (L.P. xiv.II.83).
3. It had been so ever since about 1360 (Tout, Chapters, v. 72f.).
4. D.N.B., xviii.679b.
5. P.R.O. C 82/757/9, 13. This last privy seal was based on a signet warrant (Soulemont added: "Taverner expedit litteras Signetj"), a fact which should again make us careful not to assume too complete a cessation of that seal's routine duties.

IV. Thomas Wriothesley, Cromwell's "Undersecretary".

Wriothesley was apparently in Cromwell's service as early as February 1524 when he was not yet nineteen and just down from Cambridge.¹ Certainly, documents in his handwriting prove him to have been a clerk in Wolsey's household from about that time onwards. There are references to him in 1529 as servant to the cofferer of the household and as messenger for the king,² but nothing further can be found about him in these capacities. By May 1530 he was a clerk of the signet,³ and it was there that his official career began. He now, of course, came under the secretary, Gardiner, and may have been his servant in the technical sense. He certainly acted as messenger for him.⁴ Nevertheless it would seem that he did not lose Cromwell's favour. In January 1531 he received the grant of an annuity of £5 from the abbey of St Mary, York,⁵ a grant which was in the gift of the archbishop of York or rather, York being vacant, in the king's. The administration of vacant sees was at the time in Cromwell's hands,⁶ and it seems reasonable to suppose that Wriothesley owed this annuity to him. There are a few drafts of Cromwell's letters in Wriothesley's hand for this period. One of them concerns official business, the election of an abbot, and would perhaps prove nothing for

1. D.N.B., xxi.1063a.
 3. Ibid. 6600(11).
 5. Ibid. 80(25).

2. L.P. iv.5979,6489.
 4. L.P. v.723.
 6. Above, p.185.

the relationship of the two men,¹ but the others are private letters from Cromwell to Wolsey and could not have been drafted by Wriothesley in his official capacity as clerk of the signet.² In the latter half of 1533 Wriothesley was Cromwell's go-between with the abbot of Hyde.³ Altogether it seems likely that he continued his association with Cromwell's secretariat despite his clerkship of the signet and official service under Gardiner, though these factors will have limited the time he could spend in Cromwell's service. In any case he was absent on embassies for a good part of 1533,⁴ though he was back at the signet office by February 1534.⁵ Two months later Cromwell took over the secretaryship, and from then onwards Wriothesley remained fully employed in his service. His handwriting appears in the king's letters as well as Cromwell's, on the backs of petitions signed by the king, on the face of signet warrants, and on many another document.

He is described as clerk of the signet until at least the middle of 1537.⁶ In June that year he endorsed his last surviving signed petition sent to the privy seal,⁷ though there is a general surveyors' bill of April 1538 similarly endorsed by him.⁸ He was therefore certainly working in the signet

1. L.P. v.1340.

2. L.P. iv.6368,6571.

3. L.P. vi.928,1067.

4. D.N.B., xxi.1063a-b.

5. P.R.O. PS0 2/4, file for 25-29 Henry VIII, no.3, endorsed by Wriothesley.

6. L.P. xii.II.109,131,App.30.

7. P.R.O. PS0 2/4, file for 25-29 Henry VIII, no.30 (18 June).

8. P.R.O. C 82/736/33.

office until that time. He did not, in fact, surrender his clerkship until he became secretary, for Thomas Knight was appointed to succeed him as clerk of the signet on 14 April 1540.¹ Nevertheless, it seems that his position at the signet office did not remain the same all the time. We have seen that in 1534 he was simply one of the four clerks of the signet who took his turn with the others.² In September 1536 it was remarked that he was in Cromwell's special favour and was a good man to approach if Cromwell needed persuading.³ In 1537 it was noted that he had acquired a new importance, and Lord Lisle's agent reported him to be in a position where he could do much for suitors to Cromwell, where indeed he could "please and displease".⁴ The impression is that from being merely a favourite leading servant he had graduated into a position of some independence. By 1537 he was correcting, and therefore supervising, documents drawn up by other clerks of the signet as though he held a superior position within the office.⁵ Taking this together with the fact that he was described in June 1537 as "principal clerk of the signet under my lord privy seal" by Sir Robert Wingfield of Calais, himself a courtier and official,⁶ and that the evidence for his having

1. L.P. xv.611(17).

2. Above, p.284.

3. L.P. xi.460.

4. L.P. xii.I.492; II.555.

5. E.g., P.R.O. SP 60/4, ff.98-101 (L.P. xii.II.378[2,3]). These instructions were certainly the work of the signet office, and Wriothesley's corrections were many and material.

6. L.P. xii.II.163.

attended to the routine of the signet office gives out about the time, we feel justified in suggesting that by the middle of 1537 he had ceased to be an ordinary clerk of the signet and had acquired some preeminence among his colleagues.

Wriothesley's signature does not appear only on signet warrants, for he also signed privy seals. The first example extant belongs to early September 1536,¹ and after that date his name is found at least as often as that of any other clerk until he signed his last privy seal on 30 March 1540, probably a day or two before he took over the secretaryship.² Yet we can be quite certain that he was never appointed to a clerkship of the privy seal, for the clerks were enumerated in a grant of April 1537 where their names are given as Richard Turner, Robert Forthe, Thomas Jefferey, and John Hever.³ Though four was the normal number of clerks more might be appointed,⁴ and other men are known from the signatures on privy seals to have worked in the office. Jefferey, for instance, employed an underclerk, Reynoldes, who signed in his master's frequent absence. Undoubtedly there were several such underclerks. But it is certain that a grant of the reversion of a clerkship which gives the present holders would list all persons properly appointed to the office, so that it may be

1. P.R.O. C 82/716/3.

2. *Ibid.* 764/77.

3. *L.P.* xii.I.1103(15).

4. Maxwell Lyte, *Great Seal*, pp.32ff.

taken as proven that Wriothesley was not a clerk of the privy seal some six months after he started signing privy seals.

On the other hand, it is hardly credible that he should have been employed there as an underclerk. No underclerk signed so many warrants, that is, was so clearly on a level with the full clerks. Nor can we imagine the lord privy seal's confidential private clerk taking such an inferior position in the privy seal office. Moreover, Wriothesley was a full clerk of the signet, and by the end of the century it was certainly true that such a clerkship carried with it a higher social standing than that of the privy seal.¹ We cannot be sure whether that was so in Cromwell's time, for in the fifteenth century the positions appear to have been reversed,² but even if clerks of the signet were still considered inferior to those of the privy seal we may take it that they were much higher in the social and official scale than underclerks of the privy seal. Wriothesley was not a clerk, and could not have been an underclerk, of the privy seal, and yet he did as much work in that office as any of the full clerks there employed. Have we here simply another example of a typically Cromwellian irregularity? Clerks of the signet would occasionally sign a privy seal, perhaps because the

1. H.M.C., Hatfield MSS, vii.419. Gell to Cecil, to the effect that the clerkship of the signet was "more esteemed and more valuable" than that of the privy seal.

2. J. Otway Ruthven, King's Secretary, p.135.

proper clerks were not available at the time, but it was very rarely done.¹ If Wriothesley's work was no more than an extension of that practice, it was an irregularity on so large a scale that the explanation seems thoroughly unsatisfactory.

The answer, we suggest, is to be found in a medieval parallel. From its early beginnings the staff of the privy seal office had usually included a man who was not a clerk of the privy seal, and apparently had no hope of ever becoming one. That was the keeper's personal clerk, "an important person in a modest way", who would be employed to write for the privy seal in the keeper's absence.² Essentially that description fits Wriothesley. He was Cromwell's personal clerk and servant, and he was employed at the privy seal office only after Cromwell had taken over the keepership. His work in this office, unlike his work for the signet, was clearly the result of his relationship with Cromwell, and of Cromwell's tenure of the office of lord privy seal. Cromwell put him in the privy seal office as his personal clerk, that is, he made him his personal representative there. There can have been only one reason for employing him thus, a desire for administrative control and efficiency. Cromwell wanted someone

1.. P.R.O. C 82/662/18 (Nov.1532), Godsalue "in absentia Jeffrey"; 743/2 (Aug.1538), Godsalue's signature authenticated by Cromwell's countersignature; 765/4 (April 1540), Godsalue alone.

2. Tout, Chapters, v.78f.

he could trust to look after the privy seal office for him. He could no longer exercise day-to-day supervision over the clerks, and did not, on the other hand, want to let the department slip from his control. If we do not attach too formal a meaning to the term, we may describe Wriothesley as the lord privy seal's deputy in the privy seal office.

There was a third organisation with which Wriothesley had much to do. We have several times described him as Cromwell's confidential clerk, and that he was this is proved, for instance, by the many drafts and fair copies of Cromwell's letters which are in his hand. He did this kind of work almost up to the time of Cromwell's fall, though a distinction would here appear necessary. He wrote two surviving letters for Cromwell after he had been appointed to the principal secretaryship, but one of them was to his colleague, Sadler, and the other to Richard Pate, and both were concerned with affairs of state and diplomacy.¹ But even in January 1540 he was still drafting some of Cromwell's ordinary correspondence,² and as late as September 1539 he wrote a most unimportant and routine letter of Cromwell's asking for enquiries in a "poor man's cause".³ He was therefore on Cromwell's personal staff until he became principal secretary.

1. L.P. xv.469,662.

2. Ibid. 16,35.

3. P.R.O. Req 2/2/203, no.3.

His position on this staff is the less easily defined because Cromwell's private office is a most obscure affair. Quite clearly it did a vast amount of the work required in the government of England. Cromwell governed largely through his private correspondence, and that was written and received, endorsed, classified, and filed, by his private clerks. Their handwritings are often quite familiar, though being clerical hands they too frequently lack definite identifying features, but their names escape us. To be precise, where we know the names we cannot identify the hands, and familiar hands lack any known owners. We hear of some of them: Richard Cromwell, John Williamson, Thomas Soulemont - to list some of the leading members of his staff; Henry Polsted, Thomas Thacker, Thomas Avery, William Johnson, William Body - these are a few of less well known ones, picked at random. An interesting list of his household of the late 1530's no doubt includes his office staff; it also includes much more, and it is impossible to disentangle the one from the other.¹ We cannot reconstruct the office with its organisation, for everything appears as far too fluid, with different people doing the same or different jobs without any distinct division of labour. In this vague picture of an office doing its work with considerable efficiency and apparent absence of organisation, we can dis-

1. L.P. xiii.II.1184.

tinguish Wriothsesley as a person of importance. His name and handwriting appear so often that it seems right to call him a chief clerk there. But it must be realised that one has to go by a general impression rather than by the guidance of clear and unmistakable evidence.

We are, however, in the happy position of possessing one document which enables us to say a little more on this subject. It gives us a momentary glimpse into the way in which the clerical organisation worked under Cromwell, and it also throws some light on Wriothsesley's position. When the administration of the northern borders was reorganised after the pilgrimage of grace, a document was drawn up appointing the officers of the "westmarches fforanempst Scotland" and listing the men who were to assist the deputy warden. In one copy of this paper the names are bracketed in groups, with names written against the brackets by someone other than the clerk who wrote the document.¹ These names are: Tavernor, Huttoft, Jermyn, A. Roke, Godsolve, Derby, and "T.S.". They were undoubtedly the clerks deputed to write out the commissions of the gentlemen against whose names they were placed, those letters missive which a few days later the duke of Norfolk delivered to the commissioners.²

1. B.M. Calig.B.iii, ff.246-7. Calendared, rather insufficiently, in L.P. xii.II.249(7).

2. L.P. xii.II.248.

And a mixed lot they were. Godsalve and Derby were clerks of the signet, while Taverner and Huttoft both obtained this position some time later though they did not hold it at the time when this document was drawn up, that is about July 1537. Huttoft was appointed to succeed Derby in October 1539,¹ and Taverner's signature first appears on signet warrants in 1540.² Wood says that he was made "one of the clerks of the signet in ordinary" in 1537,³ but as no warrants survive for that period the statement cannot be either proved or disproved. There were, however, four clerks of the signet in 1537 (Wriothesley, Derby, Godsalve, and Paget), so that Taverner is more likely to have been an underclerk. In any case it is most probable that both men were trained as underclerks before being promoted to full clerkships. Both had been trained on Cromwell's private staff. Taverner had been Cromwell's "client" as early as 1533 and had worked for him ever since, mostly as a propagandist of reformed opinions.⁴ Huttoft described Cromwell at about this time as his lord and master, and wrote to Wriothesley in terms which indicate that the latter may have been his immediate superior.⁵ The other three men held no position in the official clerical bureaucracy. Jermyn was almost certainly that brother of Germyn,

1. L.P. xiv.II.435(2).

2. P.R.O. P80 2/4, file for June 1540.

3. Wood, Athenae (ed. Bliss), i.420.

4. D.N.B., xiii.394.

5. L.P. xii.II.546.

servant of bishop Rowland Lee, to whom Cromwell showed favour in 1537.¹ The favour probably consisted of Jormyn being taken into the lord privy seal's service. Anthony Roke was at one time servant to Katharine of Aragon,² but had entered Cromwell's service by the latter half of 1536 when Gostwick, in the north fighting the pilgrims, wrote urgently for his services.³ He seems to have been transferred from Cromwell's staff to Wriothesley's by the beginning of 1538,⁴ though he continued to belong to Cromwell's household.⁵ "T.S." cannot in the circumstances have meant anybody but Thomas Soulemont, apparently the king's French secretary in 1536⁶ but described as Cromwell's secretary in March 1537.⁷

We have, therefore, here an example of a certain piece of work being shared out among two clerks of the signet, two underclerks of the signet who had at any rate once been Cromwell's servants and probably still were, and three clerks from Cromwell's private staff. This proves everything that has already been said about the indiscriminate use of the signet and the private offices, but at present we are more interested in the omissions from the list. Why were two clerks of the signet included, while the other two were not? The addition of two underclerks indicates that it was intended to use the full

1. L.P. xiii.I.152.

3. Ibid. 791.

5. L.P. xiii.II.1184(iii).

7. L.P. xii.I.1096.

2. L.P. xi.1082,1436(2).

4. L.P. xiii.I.20,44,151.

6. L.P. xi.1400.

strength of the signet staff. Paget was normally employed on embassies abroad; he may have been out of the country at the time, and in any case was probably not available.¹ But no such reason would account for the omission of Wriothesley. He was not only in England but had actually drafted some of the documents concerning the government of the northern border.² There can be only one reason why he was not ordered to write out some of the commissions, as were Derby and Godsalve. He must have been in a different position from theirs and his standing must have been higher. His duties, such as the drafting of the scheme, were those of an undersecretary rather than of a clerk. May we not suppose that it was he who had apportioned the other clerks' tasks? We cannot claim with full confidence that he himself wrote the names against the brackets; there is not enough of the writing to be definite; but it is possible. At any rate, the fact that he was left out when the other clerks of the signet were put in further confirms the essential difference of his position.

The document has done one other thing to clarify the office and standing of Wriothesley. It has provided us with the names of two men, Huttoft and Roke, who were Cromwell's servants in name but treated Wriothesley as their master in fact. In Cromwell's office, too, Wriothesley occupied a

1. D.N.B., xv.60.

2. L.P. xii.II.249(2,4,5).

special position. If he came between Cromwell and his staff it means that he was in charge, under Cromwell, of Cromwell's private secretariat.

Wriothesley's position was therefore this by the latter half of 1537: he was "principal clerk of the signet", he was Cromwell's personal representative in the privy seal office, and he was the head of Cromwell private office. It was through these three secretariats that Cromwell translated his administrative orders into action. As their virtual head Wriothesley occupied a place which it would not be incorrect to describe as that of Cromwell's undersecretary, his chef de cabinet. We may conclude that Cromwell had appointed him to that position because the detailed supervision of the departments of the bureaucracy was clearly impossible to so busy a man as the lord privy seal.

In the light of this discovery, Wriothesley's appointment as principal secretary in April 1540 assumes rather a new appearance. He had, in effect, been for well over two years the immediately responsible head of the secretarial organisation. The appointment gave him a title and an income; these were by way of reward. It gave him a place in the council; it was suggested above that that was Cromwell's main purpose in making it.¹ It regularised his position, but it gave him no new

1. Above, pp.117f.

administrative powers and did not essentially alter his relationship with Cromwell. He continued, for instance, to follow Cromwell on his travels and to write some of his letters.¹ Perhaps we shall find that these previous functions of Wriothsesley's offer a new explanation why Cromwell divided the secretaryship when he relinquished it.

The division of an office which had always been held by one person is, after all, a fact which deserves a really satisfactory explanation. Neither a desire to reward two faithful servants, nor the intention of having two additional allies in the council, fully accounts for Cromwell's action. Both these motives could have been answered more easily by the grant of different offices rather than by so startling an innovation. Nor would they explain why the division became common practice, only abandoned by the Cecils who wished to govern through the secretaryship. The work may have become too much for one man, but that seems hardly likely in view of the fact that Cromwell had himself held the office together with his other posts for so many years. If it is objected that he had Wriothsesley to look after the routine duties for him, and that routine combined with the higher level of the office was indeed too much, it must be answered that even after April 1540 the division of duties continued much the same, with Wriothsesley and Sadler

1. L.P. xv.469,662.

doing little but subordinate and routine work. Perhaps Cromwell feared to raise a rival for himself. No, for a glance at his relations with the secretaries after April 1540 shows how thoroughly he kept them under his control. While Cromwell was in power there never was a rival to him in the administrative system, and hardly one on the council. Such a fear would have been unnecessary and does not, therefore, provide a sound reason for the appointment of two secretaries.

These are what might be called political explanations; perhaps we shall find a better answer if we look at the administrative aspect. Wriothesley was Cromwell's "undersecretary", while Sadler had been for many years practically the king's private secretary. He was on Cromwell's staff as late as September 1535,¹ but from the beginning of 1536 to the date of his promotion he was normally in attendance on the king and acted as intermediary between Henry and his minister.² The promotion of these two men made no difference to their spheres of action, and Sadler continued to report to Cromwell on Henry's views and instructions as he had done before.³ Very interesting is Cromwell's answer to one such letter, for it is in Wriothesley's hand;⁴ Cromwell used the secretary who was with him to write to the one who was with the king. It is, there-

1. L.P. ix.466.

2. L.P. x.76; xi.501,1124; xii.II,App.44; xiii.I.1375; II.178; xiv.I.236,579.

3. L.P. xv.468,719.

4. Ibid. 469.

fore, suggested that the intention was to have one secretary permanently in attendance on the king and the other permanently in attendance on the lord privy seal.

From an administrative point of view, this is by far the most convincing motive yet brought forward; nor is it weakened by the fact that the warrant appointing the two secretaries was definite on the point that both were to have lodging in court and were to accompany Cromwell whenever he was at court. Nothing was said about what was to happen when Cromwell was out of court, but it was for this contingency - a frequent one in practice - that the double appointment was made. The king needed a secretary, and Cromwell either had to or wished to surrender the office of principal secretary; he therefore took the step of dividing the office for sound administrative reasons. The case for this theory is strengthened by the fact that the privy council of these years was in the habit of splitting up, some of its members attending the king and some the lord privy seal;¹ it must have seemed highly desirable to have a principal secretary with each part to prepare its agenda and attend to its decisions.

Thus the position in the administration of Cromwell's "undersecretary" was regularised by the warrant of April 1540 which appointed him and Sadler joint principal secretaries.²

1. Below, pp.437f.

2. State Papers, Henry VIII, i.623.

Every word of that warrant makes it plain that the office was to remain one, to be exercised together by the two holders, and the most convincing explanation for this step is one based on administrative purposes. The two men had acquired certain experience and knowledge which they carried over into their new appointment; one remained the king's private secretary, and the other the lord privy seal's chief clerk. Once again Cromwell has shown himself to be at heart an administrator who applied to problems of government solutions which without any derogatory intention we may call bureaucratic.

Cromwell had made himself head of the secretariate by acquiring the offices of secretary and lord privy seal, not to mention his temporary control of the chancery clerks through the mastership of the rolls. Further, he carried on his government through the clerks of his own private office, his own household servants, who handled his personal correspondence by means of which he so largely administered England. He intended to regularise the use of the signet and privy seal in the chain of warranty to the great seal, and then proceeded to evade them both for the sake of administrative convenience. In order to free himself from the work of detailed supervision, he virtually appointed his chief clerk, Thomas Wriothesley, to a position which we have felt justified in describing as an under-secretaryship. The main impression derived from a study of

this aspect of Cromwell's work is one of great personal control and autocratic use of the machinery on the one hand, and on the other of a reforming and organising activity which aimed at the creation of an efficient bureaucracy.

Chapter 5.

THE COUNCIL.I. The Council before Cromwell.

In the course of our investigations we have often referred to the "government" without giving any definite meaning to that term. The truth is that no definite meaning can attach to it, at any rate not until we can be certain of the existence of the fully developed privy council. The government of England was in the hands of the king and of such men as it might please him from time to time to entrust with executive functions. However, there had grown up a body of men who, because of these functions or because their advice was habitually sought, formed something of a more permanent government. The king's council, differentiated or not, contained those people and institutions which we associate with the name of government. In a study of Cromwell's administration, his relations with the council are therefore of paramount importance. Despite the fact that we have often seen him in quite undisputed control, or only controlled by the king, despite the fact, too, that his administration was a most personal one, it is plain that we cannot ignore the other councillors of the crown, especially in their corporate capacity. Cromwell might be supreme but he was not alone. Moreover, it must be remembered that his fall

was followed by the rapid establishment of a formal inner council which was to become the most characteristic administrative institution of the sixteenth century. There are, therefore, three questions requiring attention: what happened to the council during Cromwell's supremacy; what were Cromwell's relations with the council; and can we find any trace of a growing privy council which would explain its sudden appearance in completed form two months after Cromwell's arrest.

While, then, the council is a most important problem in Cromwell's administration, none is more difficult to track down. Attempts have been made to clarify the history of the council before 1540, notably in Professor Pollard's articles,¹ but it must be admitted that the light thrown on the subject is far from strong and clear. The conclusions usually adopted may perhaps be stated in the words of one writer who assures us that the council of the earlier part of Henry's reign was not a definite body but "such team of councillors as the king was then in the habit of consulting about that sort of business", although growing habits of direct action and the "proliferation of conciliar potentiality" as well as as Wolsey's practice of excluding his enemies, tended to fix the council's composition

1. A.F. Pollard, "Council, Star Chamber, and Privy Council under the Tudors", E.H.R., xxxvii(1922), pp.337ff., 516ff.; xxxviii(1923), pp.42ff.

and functions.¹ The latest study of the council under Wolsey, based on new and rather striking evidence of council records before 1540, indicates that this fixing had progressed far by the middle 'twenties of the century.² It is true that the "Ellesmere extracts" do not appear to overthrow so many accepted notions as Mr. Dunham implies; no one has doubted the existence of a king's council which sat fairly regularly, if only for the hearing of petitions, and which by Wolsey's time had become clearly distinct from the star chamber. What we should really like to know is the work which the council performed under Wolsey, for that would be the only reliable indication of its place in the administration, and on that point the article quoted does not offer anything revolutionary. It mentions actions of scandal, seditious words, extortion, perjury, and contempt, all matters which do not imply any administrative powers in the council. However, "non-judicial matters show the extent of the council's power during the Wolsey régime". These matters turn out to be such things as the swearing-in of justices of peace, sheriffs, and new councillors, the appointment of councillors to the court of requests, and the issuing of proclamations.³ All this business is of some interest in

1. K. Pickthorn, *Henry VIII*, pp. 12ff.

2. W. H. Dunham Jr., "The Ellesmere Extracts from the 'Acta Consilii' of King Henry VIII," *E.H.R.*, lvi (1943), pp. 301ff.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 312f. Mr. Dunham has worked out the details in another article, which shows clearly that the council under Wolsey was concerned almost exclusively with judicial

administration, but it is routine; it is the kind of thing which we should have to supposed to have taken place in the council even if no evidence could be found for it. The council of Wolsey's time appears to be a long way from the privy council of 1540.

All the same, the "Ellesmore extracts" are of the greatest importance, if only because council records before 1540 are so very few. They prove the existence of a register or entry book earlier than the regular series beginning with the appointment of Paget as clerk of the privy council, but it is most significant that the extracts are dated with a clause which mentions the law term.¹ As Professor Pollard has pointed out, the privy council of the later Tudors was distinguished from its parent body by sitting all the year round and not in term time only.² The council of the "Ellesmore extracts" was therefore most certainly the old council and had not yet begun to develop the characteristics of the privy council. Some of the entries belong to the time of Cromwell's rule and indicate that the register, official or not, may have continued until the start of the extant records.³ However, the books are lost, and the history and the place of the

business and did not supervise the administration (W.H. Dunham Jr., "Wolsey's Rule of the King's Whole Council," Amer.Hist.Rev., xlix, pp.644ff.).

1. E.H.R., lviii(1943), p.302.

2. A.F.Pollard, Wolsey, p.111.

3. E.H.R., lviii(1943), p.315. Mr.Dunham gives no details.

council have to be reconstructed from other evidence. There is some; among the state papers we find an occasional record of business dealt with, and the council is mentioned often enough to allow some degree of certainty to our conclusions. Of particular importance in this connection are the reports of foreign ambassadors to England, and we can arrive at some knowledge of the place of the council in the higher spheres of deliberation, and by inference also in administration, if we consider with whom the ambassadors transacted their business.

One further complication must be mentioned. A reference to the king's council will often, on closer inspection, reveal itself as concerned not with the council which was to develop into the privy council, but with the king's legal counsellors who had become a distinct and separate group certainly by the time that the business of the divorce started when they were often consulted on legal points.¹ Care must be taken not to confuse them with the larger unit, the council as an advisory and governing organisation.

We may start, then, from the fact that there was a governing council under Wolsey, a body of fairly fixed composition which met regularly to transact business. The question is what kind of business it transacted, and how much of the actual

1. Cf., e.g., L.P. iv.5155,5177,5741.

government of the country lay in its hands. Even while he was still in power Wolsey's enemies were thinking of accusing him of packing the council and perverting justice in cases that came before it,¹ but of greater interest are the accusations levelled against him after his fall. These show that while he did not govern entirely without a council he kept effective government in his own hands. He was charged with stopping discussion when his policy was questioned, and with behaving with such arrogance that he allowed but one or two of the greater councillors to have any say at all. Also, it was alleged that he deprived the council of information and transacted foreign policy without reference to it.²

A similar picture can be derived from the reports of ambassadors. In forty-three reports, covering roughly the year 1528, the French ambassador du Bellay told constantly of negotiations with Wolsey, and now and again with the king himself, but not with the council whom he seems never to have met as such.³ Twice he was received by Wolsey in the presence of

1. Ibid., pp. 2560, 2551.

2. Ibid. 6075. The points about the council are 9, 10, 12, 15. In 1518 Thomas More told the Venetian ambassador that Wolsey transacted all business with the French ambassadors, calling the council only when the negotiations were over, so that even the king scarcely knew what went on (Ven. Cal., ii. 1072).

3. L.P. iv. App. 123-30, 135, 140, 142-4, 146-9, 153, 156, 158, 163, 165-6, 168, 175, 177, 179-80, 186-7, 190, 192, 196, 198-200, 203, 206, 212, 215-6, 219, 223-4.

other councillors, but in both cases it was the cardinal who conducted the negotiations, and the others seem to have done nothing but add weight to the proceedings.¹ The reports of the Venetian ambassadors for the years 1528-9 add further proof: all business was transacted with Wolsey to whom a new ambassador actually presented his credentials on arrival.² Yet the ambassadors were in touch with the members of the council, for in January 1529 du Bellay reported that Gardiner's mission was kept secret even from many of the councillors.³ But there was no formal and official contact with the council, and in matters of moment, particularly in foreign policy, Wolsey governed without the council.⁴

As one would expect, the picture changes somewhat with the approach of his fall. Other names come to the fore, Norfolk, Suffolk, Rocheford, Gardiner.⁵ In September du Bellay wished to introduce a special envoy not only to the king but also to some of the council, though he still thought that the man who mattered was Wolsey.⁶ Negotiations about the treaty of Cambrai were carried on in the presence of king and council,

1. Ibid., App.158,166.

2. Ven.Cal. iv.235,249,285,376,385 (the credentials),420,461,463,492.

3. L.P. iv.5209.

4. Cf. A.F.Pollard, Wolsey, p.111: "The irruption of his dominant personality into the king's entourage interrupted the growth of the privy council and reduced it for the time to political and constitutional insignificance."

5. L.P. iv.5885.

6. Ibid. 5945.

and though the council who were supposed to be clearing up some technical difficulties were almost certainly the king's legal counsel, there is much significance in du Bellay's request that the good services of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Rocheford be remembered, and more in his report that Wolsey was unlikely to come to London for a council meeting.¹ Towards the end of September it was thought important to describe Wolsey's attendance in the council, with and without the king; the council was gaining more and more influence as Wolsey's star waned.² Early in October the king asked du Bellay to wait till the council came to London from Windsor before relating his charge to them; though they met at Wolsey's house it meant something when his business could no longer be put to Wolsey alone.³ A few days later du Bellay received his answer from the council; the king had retired to Windsor leaving it behind, and both the French and the imperial ambassadors had conferred with it.⁴ The council was beginning to resemble the later privy council in that it transacted important government business with and without the king, though unlike the privy council it did not follow him wherever he went.

There was little change from this after Wolsey's fall. The ambassadors reported that all power had now gone to the

1. Ibid. 5911.

3. Ibid. 5982.

2. Ibid. 5953.

4. Ibid. 6002.

duke of Norfolk, with Suffolk to assist him, a view confirmed by Falier's report late in 1531 and shared by such a leading councillor as William Paulet.¹ Nevertheless, there was no question of Norfolk succeeding Wolsey in the sole management of affairs. Chapuys might occasionally discuss matters with him alone,² as at other times he might see only the king,³ but it was common for the king to refer to the council and for the ambassador to meet the council in formal sessions.⁴ The state of affairs is even clearer from the reports of the Venetian ambassador. He saw Norfolk very rarely, and then usually because he could not see the king or because Henry sent him to the duke.⁵ Often he saw the king alone.⁶ At other times he met the council in session: in Norfolk's absence More did the talking; another time Norfolk read him a letter from the king; then again he "spoke at great length...in the council chamber".⁷ When a special envoy arrived from the emperor he saw the king and the leading councillors, declared his charge to the king in council, and held several meetings with both.⁸ The council of the years between the supremacies of Wolsey and

1. Ibid. 6011, 6018-9, 6026, 6030; Ven. Cal. iv, p. 294; L.P. iv. 6436.

2. L.P. v. 148, 308, 805, 832, 879, 1131, 1292.

3. Ibid. 941, 1633.

4. King refers to council: ibid. 40, 105, 287, 773; Chapuys and others meet the council: ibid. 45, 216, 251, 563, 1013, 1633.

5. Ibid. 824; Ven. Cal. vi. 733, 744, 761.

6. Ibid. 563, 576, 608, 686, 726, 763, 782.

7. Ibid. 718, 726, 834.

8. L.P. v. 564.

Cromwell conducted foreign affairs as a government, though the personal activity of the king was a new and vital factor. An example of the new spirit in the members of the government is given by Chapuys who reported disagreement in the council over the proposed interview between Henry and Francis I in September 1532. The king was determined on it, but there was much opposition from the council, led by Suffolk and the earl of Oxford.¹ This was indeed a council which deserved the name of government, even though there is no doubt that the last word, and many an earlier one, lay with the king.

We now also get an occasional glimpse of a council active about administration at home. It continued to deal with those matters which the Ellesmere extracts show to have been its work even under Wolsey. Petitions were received, criminals brought before it (by the king's orders), and Cromwell was retained by the earl of Ossory to put his case to king and council.² In November 1532 Audeley, keeper of the great seal, sent Cromwell a detailed report of the appointment of sheriffs, one of the items in Mr. Dunham's list of council activities: the lords of the council, the justices, the barons of the exchequer, and the master of the rolls had assembled in the exchequer to nominate three persons for each sheriffwick, and a list had gone

1. Ibid. 1292.

2. L.P. iv. 6571, 6586; v. 360, 688, 1061.

to the king for him to prick his choice.¹ Long routine matters also engaged the council's attention. The king was reported to be discussing the divorce with his council, threatening to settle it by their advice and that of parliament.² Wolsey received a letter from one of his agents who offered to get more information in a letter from the king or the council.³ In November 1530 Chapuys reported that the king had complained to the council of something that had not been done to his liking, saying in a rage that Wolsey was a better man to govern than any of them; the implication is that important details of administration were handled by the council, though we do not know exactly what they were because Chapuys fails to tell us.⁴ When a representative of Wolsey's college in Oxford tried to obtain a writ of supersedeas from the chancery to stop proceedings against the college, he had to wait until the council withdrew their objection; the council had also discussed and determined what was to happen to the college.⁵ Most significant of all is the growing practice of referring to the inner ring of the council as the privy council. There are several examples which indicate that something of the kind was beginning to be officially recognised, though none of them prove the definite and separate existence of an organised privy

1. Ibid. 1518. A duplicate list was sent to Cromwell.

2. L.P. iv.6307.

3. Ibid. 6390.

4. Ibid. 6738.

5. Ibid. 6666, 6679.

council.¹

It needed the departure of the king to bring about the clear segregation of a governing council. When Henry went to France in the autumn of 1532 he took with him such leading councillors as the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, the marquess of Exeter, the earls of Surrey and Oxford, the bishops of Winchester, London, and Lincoln, Cromwell and Sampson (the dean of the chapel), and many others of less importance in politics.² He did not appoint a regent or lieutenant, an omission which led to difficulties in the administration of justice,³ but left behind a council consisting of the archbishop of York, the lord keeper of the great seal, the earl of Sussex, lords Darcy and Windsor, chief justice Fitzjames, Richard Wolman, Sir John Daunce, Sir Brian Tuke, Sir John Aleyn, Dr. Tregonwell, and Thomas Bodell.⁴ This mixture of great nobles and churchmen, judges, civil lawyers, and clerks was typical of the council as a whole, and the council left in London was a cross section of the parent body. Of its members, only Audley and Sussex were later to be privy councillors, which indicates that Henry took most of the "inner ring" with him.⁵ Instructions had been left for this council,⁶

1. E.g., L.P. v.1025,1029,1245,1406. Cf. Falier's report, Ven.Cal. iv, p.297.

2. L.P. v.App.33..

3. Ibid. 1430.

4. Ibid. 1421.

5. Cf. below, p.433.

6. L.P. v.1408.

but they reported regularly to the king, and some of its members corresponded with the councillors who accompanied Henry to Calais.¹ The councillors in France, on the other hand, sent news back so as to keep the council informed.² There was no thought that the council in London in itself constituted an independent government; on the contrary, nearly all the leading councillors, who had gone with the king, expected to be kept informed of what was going on during their absence.³ The council in London even had to write for special permission to open letters from Scotland.⁴ The council sat every day,⁵ an arrangement so novel that the attorney-general commented on it with a mixture of surprise and satisfaction, considering it expedient now that the king was out of the country.⁶

However, what matters is that we have here a council which in composition, function, and procedure was a smaller edition of the council which normally worked in attendance on the king. It consisted of relatively few members, saw to the administration of the whole country, met daily in the council chamber, and kept in close touch with the king. These features, we see no reason to doubt, must have been fairly typical of the normal council for which no evidence survives because, being usually with the king, it would not often report in

1. Ibid. 1408, 1421, 1427, 1430, 1444, 1450, 1473, 1542.

2. Ibid. 1531.

3. Ibid. 1430.

4. Ibid. 1450.

5. Ibid. 1473.

6. Ibid. 1444.

writing. We may well believe that in ordinary circumstances the presence of the king, or of such chief councillors as Norfolk, Gardiner, or - by this time - Cromwell, would cut down the work done by the council as a whole, but the council left behind in London shows the nature of the council that had grown up since Wolsey's fall. It was this council, its methods and potential powers foreshadowing the privy council, which under the king conducted the government of the country when Cromwell entered on his supremacy. We must now see how it fared under him.

II. The Council under Cromwell.

During the years 1533-40, when Cromwell was the king's chief minister, the work of the council is not so obscure as the absence of registers might lead one to believe. The evidence is to a certain extent fragmentary, but from notes and references stretching over the whole period it is possible to reconstruct a tolerably complete picture. Where there is evidence for certain activities at several points throughout those eight years it is permissible to assume that such activities took place during the intervals when the evidence fails us. References to the council multiply, and for 1533 the index of the Letters and Papers, with twenty items, becomes for the first time reasonably complete on this subject. The five references in the index of volume iv (1524-9) and the two in that of volume v (1531-2) do not, indeed, represent the total of mentions in the text, but they indicate the fact that the council is not mentioned often and could appear of little importance to the editors of the calendar.

We have seen that by the end of 1532 the council regularly occupied itself with the discussion and execution of both foreign and domestic policy, in a manner which suggested the work of the fully developed privy council. Under Cromwell it continued this work. Ambassadors were constantly before the council, to declare their business, to discuss points at

issue, and to receive information. Chapuys' testimony is particularly strong for the earlier part of the period because his reports were then fullest. The council informed him of the king's proposed marriage to Anne Boleyn, though his answer was so unsatisfactory that they had to refer back to the king.¹ Matters of trade were discussed frequently.² He had a long meeting with the council in May 1534 when he was informed of the passing of the act of succession and wrangled with Foxe, Tunstall, and others about the obstinacy of Katharine and Mary in refusing the oath.³ When Mary fell ill Henry ordered the council to inform the imperial ambassador.⁴ On another occasion Chapuys held a discussion with the French ambassador before the council.⁵ Nor was he the only ambassador to attend the council. The Scots did so, as well as the Lubeckers and other German envoys.⁶ In 1538 the French ambassador, Castillon, was before the council with considerable and ineffectual frequency,⁷ and his successor, Marillac, kept coming up to discuss some trouble that had arisen in connection with a French merchant.⁸ Altogether the council was kept pretty busy with matters of foreign policy.

It would, however, be wrong to suppose that ambassadors

1. L.P. vi.720,805.

2. Ibid. 975,1018,1112,1125.

3. L.P. vii.690.

4. L.P. viii.189.

5. L.P. xi.7.

6. L.P. vii.662,888; xiv.I.1092.

7. L.P. xiii.I.623,629,843,855,909.

8. L.P. xiv.I.1261,1301,1316; II.656,743,779.

invariably discussed business with the council, or that the king's foreign policy was necessarily decided there. Chapuys throws some light on Henry's attitude when he reports that he was informed by the duke of Norfolk, in a council meeting which incidentally did not include Cromwell, that the king would see him if the matters about which he had come were of importance; if they were not, the council would settle them.¹ Ambassadors sometimes saw the king alone, or with only one or two of his councillors, or they might discuss matters with Cromwell. Thus after the session in which he had fought the council over the queen's disobedience, Chapuys had a private conversation with Cromwell in which he tried to put his more intimate thoughts. Cromwell might sometimes prefer to take the lead in the council rather than conduct foreign policy on his own, as, for instance, in the negotiations with Castillon already referred to, but it was most usual for him to hold conversations with foreign ambassadors away from the council, and references to such conversations can be found in the vast majority of ambassadorial reports scattered over the years of his supremacy. The examples of council activities which we have given indicate what the practice was. While negotiations were carried on by the king or Cromwell, the more formal business as well as the lesser matters were dealt with in

1. L.P. vii.726.

council. If an ambassador was to be given the impression of a government united on major aspects of policy such as the anti-papal legislation, or if he was to be solemnly informed of certain steps taken, or if his business was of comparatively little importance (as for instance temporary difficulties in the wool trade), he would see the council. The real decisions in foreign policy were made by the king, or sometimes by Cromwell, and the important discussions in which the diplomacy of the time was carried on were held chiefly with the latter.¹

There are some indications that towards the end of his life Cromwell was allowed less freedom in conducting foreign affairs, with the result that the council came more to the fore. We have already seen that Castillon, in 1538, negotiated with the council, though it was usually Cromwell who spoke at the meetings. Interesting evidence is provided by the reports of the ambassadors of the Schmalkaldic League who visited England twice in 1539.² During their first embassy

1. By way of example we will give an analysis of the evidence for the two years of Cromwell's highest power, 1534-4. During those years Chapuys' reports are frequent and full. He saw the council hardly at all (Span. Cal. 1534-5, pp. 170, 219, 479); the king as rarely, though the matters discussed were more important (ibid., pp. 569, 599f.); Norfolk occasionally (ibid., pp. 61ff., 279, 330ff., 485); Cromwell constantly (ibid., pp. 125, 219ff., 294ff., 301, 413ff., 423ff., 432, 436ff., 454ff., 465ff., 476ff., 499ff., 534, 553ff., 590ff.). It was, moreover, in his conversations with Cromwell that Chapuys regularly discussed all the points affecting relations between England and the emperor.
2. Printed by Merriman as an appendix (i. 272ff.).

they arrived in London to find the king absent, and therefore presented themselves to Cromwell. Later the king heard their message in a formal session of the council, and further negotiations were carried on with Cromwell and a part of the council either at St. James's or at Cromwell's house. They had no further conversations with Cromwell alone. Their embassy was largely concerned with the question of an alliance between England and the League, and the report makes it clear that the king's main purpose was to prevent the conclusion of any definite agreement. The meetings were constantly put off, because Cromwell was ill or because the councillors were busy in parliament, and most of the time was spent in discussing the insufficiency of the ambassadors' powers. The use of a council committee may have been intended as a further check on Cromwell who would undoubtedly have liked to come to an agreement.

The envoys fared differently on their second visit. Then they saw Cromwell or the king or both together, but no one else. Though the question of the alliance was discussed at length, many minor points and difficulties were also brought up. However, the subject of the second embassy was not so different as to account for the difference in treatment; the real difference was that this time Henry's mind was made up and the delaying tactics of the previous visit were unnecessary.

The council was used to check Cromwell when his policy was in opposition to the king's, but by the end of 1539 he had himself realised the failure of the Lutheran alliance and was again working on the same lines as Henry.¹ Without ascribing too much importance to the part played by a few councillors in these negotiations, we may nevertheless see in it a sign that the council, which had handled a good deal of foreign policy since Wolsey's fall, was becoming more important in that field as Cromwell's fall approached.

Diplomacy was by no means the only point on the council's agenda. Affairs at Calais, for instance, were often discussed. A representative from that town was hauled before the council but could report that on the whole the deputy and his council had come off well.² There was "the greatest fume" when the king and council took up a Calais proclamation, though the trouble blew over.³ The council was present when the king, seconded by Norfolk and Cromwell, declared his regard for the deputy to the commissioners who in 1535 had investigated matters at Calais, and it was in the council that the ordinances drawn up by them were discussed.⁴ They were approved, and the debate turned on the question whether it would be wiser to embody them in an act of parliament or in a council ordinance

1. Cf. Merriman, i.256f.,264ff.

2. L.P. vii.310.

3. Ibid. 386.

4. L.P. viii.912; ix.766.

emanating from the king. In 1537 Calais cropped up again, and Lord Sandes, the captain of Guisnes, personally reported on the state of the town and its environs, first to the king and Cromwell, but afterwards to a full session of the council.¹

It will be useful to compile a list of matters known to have engaged the council's attention. The evidence is scattered throughout the state papers, and brought together here it will indicate the wide scope of the council's business. The council proposed to prohibit great assemblies of armed people, discussed the dower lands of queen Katharine, investigated the navy and sea fortifications, authorised the issue of a pamphlet justifying Henry's second marriage, discussed the general council of the church and relations with the emperor, was very busy considering a message brought back from France by a special envoy, debated and settled parliamentary business and the succession, corresponded with Reginald Pole, was informed at once when a courier arrived from the Netherlands even though the letters he brought were for the king and Cromwell and the latter was absent, itself authorised the despatch of messengers, and was called by the king to discuss letters received from Cromwell in which the latter reported diplomatic negotiations.² The varied nature of the council's

1. L.P. xii.II.802.

2. L.P. vi.720,1510,1571; vii.1; viii.666,826; x.635,1069; xii.I.125,444,1009; xii.II.1260(passim) xiv.I.236.

concerns appears clearly from the few notes of business transacted, or to be transacted, which survive. In 1533 Cromwell put down some memoranda for the council which included several decisions regarding the troubles in Ireland, a letter to Lord Dacre, "the Supplye~~mayon~~ of the Sergeauntt for the rescue", "the byll put Ageynst my lorde darcy for the kynges maner of Rowthwell and of the decaye of xxx plowes", and another petition alleging wrongful imprisonment and the embezzling of lead.¹ In 1537, lists of matters put before the council mentioned the defence of Calais, Berwick, and Carlisle; the gaining of diplomatic friendships by marrying off at least one of the royal princesses; the navy; measures to preserve the peace at home; letters to local magistrates and noblemen to make sure that they spent at least some time in their own counties; an attempt to restrict commissions of the peace to men of "worship and wisdom"; the council of the north; provisions for the king's household; the granting of a general freedom in the hope that the profits of the seal would make up for all other losses.²

These lists speak for themselves. The council was kept fully occupied about many different aspects of the government: foreign affairs, home affairs, defence, affairs of the king's dependencies overseas, the household, petitions, administrative

1. P.R.O. SP 1/76, f.137 (L.P. vi.551).

2. L.P. xii.I.815; II.177.

projects. These were matters of political or administrative importance; there must be added the cases decided or discussed before the council, and the appearances ordered of men concerned in such cases which might be political and criminal as well as civil. Even the state papers supply an impressive list, and we can only wonder what the full extent of such business would appear to have been if we possessed a complete council register.¹ Reports abound of the council's busy-ness. In April 1536 they sat every day, discussing letters from France, and in the end could not come to a decision although they sat from early morning till nine or ten at night.² Very often they were so busy with affairs of state, despite daily meetings, that they had no time to spare for suitors.³ Here again we must notice that most of the reports of daily sittings, of meetings lasting all day, of great activity on the part of the council, occur towards the end of Cromwell's rule, late in 1538 and in 1539. There is, then, no question of the council being pushed into the background, or of Cromwell trying

1. Cases before the council: L.P. vi.818,1059; ix.191,411; x.765,1101; xi.166,300,365; xii.I.152,837; II.1018,1325; xiii.I.615,735; II.6,387,1246; xiv.I.1271; II.351; xv.56,128; Add.1018,1030. Appearances before the council: L.P. vi.945; vii.480,641,694; viii.43; ix.150,369,670,760; x.1027; xi.158,226,696,1232; xii.I.80,782,1192; II.691,694,817,886,1118,1134,1208,App.41; xiii.I.307,1117; II.4,18,110; xiv.I.358,800,1114; xv.105,252(ii),406.

2. L.P. x.748,752.

3. L.P. x.789; xiii.I.91,659,1149; II.605,703; xiv.I.381.

to do without it, though the activation of the council must not lead us to suppose that they had greater power than was actually the case. We shall discuss Cromwell's relations with the council later; what we wish to discover here is the kind of council which met during his supremacy. In the scope of the matters brought before it it resembled the future privy council rather than the shadowy and ill-attended body of Wolsey's time.¹

The crisis of the pilgrimage of grace showed the council in greater independence than it achieved in normal times. It was no doubt thought advisable for Cromwell, whose rule the rebels had made one their chief points of attack, to remain rather more in the background. For some part of the time that the troubles lasted he was in London, looking after the administrative details of the fight against the pilgrims, while the king and the councillors with him conducted policy. He was never unseated, for at no time was he left uninformed of what went on, and his advice and action were in constant demand. It is, however, significant that most of the reports from the north were addressed not to the king or Cromwell but to the council. Thus Norfolk usually wrote to "my lordes" or "my

1. Henry had complained that Wolsey in the star chamber surrounded himself with more councillors than he allowed to the council attendant on the king. Prof. Pollard has spoken of the contrast between the "impressive attendance at the chancellor's court of star chamber and the scanty attendance on the king ubicunque fuerit" (Wolsey, p.110).

veray gode lordes of the kynges most honorable counsell",¹ though he might also write concurrently to Cromwell.² When Paulet and Kingston wanted money they addressed themselves to Cromwell and the council; as Cromwell was not then with the king, the council answered alone, ordering them to apply for the money to the lord privy seal in London.³ Replies to letters from the various commanders in the field and instructions to them were normally written and signed by the council as a whole.⁴ Though Cromwell was usually one of the signatories and might even, in a council letter, write in the first person singular,⁵ the significant point is that the council acted as a body and the conduct of business was not left to Cromwell alone. The occasion was an unusual one, and as has been said there were sound reasons for making it appear that Cromwell was eclipsed; moreover, the fact that the whole council signed these letters and received the reports does not prove that policy did not really continue to be in the hands of Cromwell and Henry. However, the fact remains that as early as 1536 the

1. L.P. xi.775,825,909,921,1242; xii.I.319,321,332,398,468,594,651,916.

2. Cf., e.g., L.P. xii.I.318 (Norfolk to Cromwell) and 319 (Norfolk to the council), both written on 2 February 1537. Ibid. 293: Norfolk wrote to Cromwell that there was no news except what he had written to the king in a letter which would first come to Cromwell's hand.

3. L.P. xi.803,823.

4. Ibid. 701,788,799,836; xii.I.291,332,333,505,558,636,667,846,864.

5. Ibid. 846.

council had developed to a pitch where it could meet regularly to decide very vital issues and was capable of administering its decisions. Its composition will concern us later; here it will be enough once more to remind ourselves that the council of the 1530's was an active body which dealt with many aspects of the government. Unlike Wolsey, Cromwell made no attempt to rule without a council.

III. Cromwell and the Council.

The question now arises how Cromwell reconciled his personal activity and ascendancy with the existence of a council that was busily and constantly working on matters of policy and administration. It may first be noted that all the council business which has been discovered has contained hardly a trace of financial affairs. The collection and expenditure of revenue was apparently not discussed in or controlled by the council, and here Cromwell ruled supreme. Similarly we have found no evidence that the council concerned itself with the supervision of the government secretariats. To the best of our knowledge, these two branches of the administration were left entirely to Cromwell who thus had a free hand in the two departments without which no government can work. However, if it were certain that the council really controlled all the business which came before it, we should have to modify considerably our estimate of Cromwell's supremacy. There cannot be any doubt that he was responsible to the king, and it can be (and has been) argued that Henry did not give him such absolute freedom as Wolsey had enjoyed;¹ it may be added that Cromwell does not seem to have wanted so much but was always careful to show himself the king's servant.² Was he also the

1. E.g., A.F. Pollard, Henry VIII, p.350.

2. Cf., e.g., Cranmer's letter to Henry after Cromwell's arrest (L.P. xv.770).

servant of the council? We have seen that he did not deprive it of the part it played in affairs after Wolsey's fall; we must now see whether he allowed himself to be governed by it or whether he governed it himself.

His contemporaries considered Cromwell to be the chief of the council, a title actually once bestowed on him by one of his correspondents.¹ Some letters about the victualling of Calais show that as early as December 1533 it was Cromwell who was expected to achieve results, even though it was officially pretended that matters were dealt with by the king and council.² When the mayor of Rye sent two quarrelling parties to the council he informed Lord Rocheford, the warden of the Cinque Ports; Rocheford's father, the earl of Wiltshire, opened the letter in his son's absence and showed it to the attorney-general who advised sending the parties to Cromwell.³ In like manner, in 1539, a merchant who brought some interesting news from abroad and told the council was sent on to see Cromwell.⁴ A letter from Norfolk and the council could result in a reply to Cromwell.⁵ When the earl of Southampton came to court for instructions before leaving on commission for Calais, he wrote to Cromwell asking him to be there with the rest of

1. P.R.O. E 36/122, f.63 (L.P. xii.I.685), addressed to the "[M]ost Worshyfull lorde of the prevo selle & cheffe of the kynges consell".

2. L.P. vii.4-6.

3. L.P. viii.776.

4. L.P. xiv.I.718.

5. L.P. viii.389.

of the council so that he might be despatched quickly.¹ A report could be addressed to Cromwell and others of the council.²

Foreign affairs might be discussed in council, but, as we have already seen, it was Cromwell who mattered, and the important discussions were with him alone. When the admiral of France arrived on a special embassy in 1534, no member of the council was concerned except Cromwell.³ Cromwell could organise the way in which the council would receive their information from ambassadors; on one occasion in 1536 he told Chapuys to speak with the king at length after dinner, and on leaving him to see the council and explain his charge to them "agreeably to their custom".⁴ The council, it would seem, had established a customary right to information, but we are allowed to understand that Cromwell was doing no more than bow to precedent. He did not wish to antagonise the council by ignoring it, but he knew and insisted that serious business should be transacted in the conversations with the king and himself. In council he would often do most of the talking,⁵ and ambassadors might meet the council assembled at his house.⁶ As late as April 1540, when the battle for the control of the council was well under way, Sadler communicated to Cromwell

1. L.P. xiv.I.596.

2. L.P. xv.32.

3. L.P. vii.1482.

4. L.P. x.699.

5. L.P. xiii.I.623,855,909.

6. L.P. xiv.I.926.

the king's orders, as a matter of course, that Cromwell was to arrange some business together with the council.¹ He was still its "cheffe".²

Altogether, it seems that Cromwell was often careful to associate the council with himself. In reports to the king he stressed the fact that he had not been acting on his own,³ and letters conveying orders or instructions were frequently signed by him and a few councillors.⁴ The council of Calais went so far as to speak of Cromwell's letter signed by the council,⁵ and the description is probably accurate. The appearance of an active and governing council was maintained, but all men knew who the real ruler was under the king.

Even when writing on his own Cromwell would often pretend to be merely communicating orders received from king and council. The king, he wrote to the university of Oxford in 1534, was informed of their misdeeds against the town, and he had

1. L.P. xv.468.

2. The internal troubles in the council had led one observer as early as June 1539 to doubt the usefulness of appeals to the king and Cromwell only. Husee wrote to Lord Lisle: "And wher your lordshipp wrytethe that yf you myzt come over you wold shewe the kynges grace and my lorde privy sealle that thing wherby the towne sholde ever be the better, yn my pore opyneon it sholde be good that your lordshipp signefye the kyng of it and the counsell whull all the lordes ar here." (P.R.O. SP 3/5, f.68v; L.P. xiv.I. 1144).

3. L.P. xiv.I.516, 538.

4. L.P. xii.I.639, 677, 1271; II.275; xiv.I.610.

5. L.P. xii.I.560.

been ordered to bid them restore all persons they had dispossessed. He added that the council had determined to make a final award between toun and gown. A letter from the commissary of the university to Fitzwilliam, himself a leading councillor, shows that when he and the mayor came before the council they actually saw only Cromwell and the lord chancellor;¹ the council which made the final award was in effect Cromwell himself. It was Cromwell who asked the bishop of Ely to attend the council in the following term if his health permitted, who informed the sheriff of Yorkshire of a council decision to hold an inquisition post mortem, who reported to Chapuys in the name of the king and the council, who asked the earl of Rutland to examine certain friars and report to "the kinges highnes or his counsaile", who gave instructions to Wriothesley, then on embassy in the low countries, by order of "his highnes by thassent of his hole Counsaile".² He wrote letters of summons to appear before the council,³ and men were often told to appear before him and the council, information of such orders being given in letters addressed to Cromwell personally, a fact which provides further evidence of the special position he occupied in relation to the council.⁴ In one of the two surviving letters of his to the council, written in October

1. L.P. vii.618,903.

2. L.P. vi.312; vii.383; x.59; Morrison, i.415; ii.180.

3. L.P. vi.1205,1320; xii.II.App.41.

4. L.P. vii.1590; viii.457,515,727.

1534 when he had stayed behind in London, he gave instructions for the further examination of a supposed traitor and asked for the findings to be sent to him.¹

Other people treated him as the head of the council and appealed to him if they wanted to secure or prevent council action. The mayor of York asked that suits made by some private persons to the king's council be stayed until he and his brethren could attend; the ambassador with the emperor enclosed a supplication which Cromwell was to show to the council, afterwards doing as he thought fit; Sir John Russell asked him to summon before the council some criminals against whom the local magistrates were powerless; a man subpoenaed to appear before the lord chancellor and the council in the star chamber excused himself to Cromwell on a plea of ill-health; another reminded him of his promise to bring his suit to the consideration of the council; a letter from Antwerp requested that Cromwell show certain parts of it to the council; when Calais informed Cromwell that the appointment of certain officials belonged to the bailly and freemen of the town, the order was confirmed by the king and council to whom Cromwell must have passed on the information - in fact, Lisle spoke of certifying the king by letters to the lord privy seal; in a dispute over the ownership of some confiscated property Crom-

1. L.P. vii.1271. The other is L.P. xv.910, written from the Tower after his arrest.

well was appealed to for a certificate from the council.¹ There is an interesting letter from Nicholas Shaxton, bishop of Salisbury, who in June 1538 wrote to Cromwell for assistance against the other lords of the council.² His friend, the king's almoner, had spoken with the king about Shaxton's coming to court, the reason for his absence having been a case of plague in his household. The king told him to have Shaxton come after the end of parliament; in the meantime he was to attend parliament, "except I wer. forbeden by the counsell. And therfor, my good lord, it shall nowe be openly known that I am forbeden to come at y^e parliament by the counsell, except that by this occasion they be content that I come thither now agayn... I beseeche your lordship to be A mean to the other lordes of the kynges most honorable counsell that I may knowe thir pleasures herin." There is much less suggestion here, than usual that Cromwell could do what he liked with the council, though he was still considered the right man to mediate between council and suppliant. Shaxton was of his party, a fact which detracts from the value of the evidence for his position. It will be well to remember this further pointer to a change in the relative positions of Cromwell and the council in 1539.

1. L.P. vi.904; vii.124,1034,1232; viii.863; ix.405; xiii.II.161; xv.426.

2. P.R.O. SP 1/152, f.102 (L.P. xiv.I.1157).

Nevertheless, the point which matters is that the active council of Cromwell's time was very much under the control of the king's chief minister. He was its leader, its unofficial head, even at the time of the pilgrimage of grace when, as we have seen, there was a temporary tendency for him to retire into the background. One of the messengers to the rebels was examined by them as to whom he had seen about the king, and whether Cromwell was still of the council. He replied that he had seen Norfolk, Oxford, Sussex, Fitzwilliam, Paulet, and Kingston, but that Cromwell had not been to court for some time before he left.¹ The man was probably talking for his life, but we know that Cromwell was indeed absent from the court for quite some time in the last months of 1536. However, this seems to have been largely a measure of prudence in view of the rebels' specific complaints against Cromwell,² and the real balance of power between Cromwell and the council was probably little affected. At any rate, in November 1536 Aske wrote to Darcy that Cromwell was, still or again, the "only ruler" about the king,³ and even at the height of the crisis Henry asked Cromwell to hold the envoys from the north until the two of them, together with the council, had discussed the matter.⁴ Certainly until 1539 Cromwell was undisputedly the king's chief

1. L.P. xii.I.1013.

3. Ibid. 1128.

2. L.P. xi.585,860.

4. Ibid. 985-6.

councillor, and the council did its work under his direction. He showed no desire to do without a council - in this as in other things he may have learned from Wolsey's unfortunate example - but worked through a council which he dominated.

Apart from the various ways in which his leadership of the council showed to outsiders, Cromwell controlled its business and agenda. Evidence of this survives in a few memoranda and records of meetings. Cromwell noted down, for instance, that he would have to "advertise the lords of the council that no more allowance is given to purveyors when riding out than fivepence a day for him and his horse, which is sufficient".¹ This was in 1533; two years later the tone of his notes implies a change in the relations between him and the council: "That the perfection of the laws which hath been this two years thoroughly and indifferently examined by great numbers of sage clerks of the realm may not only be published to the king's council...between this and next session, but also that all those laws which shall be thought expedient for the good order of the English church may pass by Act of Parliament, and to be used as the King's laws for ever within this realm."² In the first case he had but advised the council on a detail of administration, while by 1535 he supervised what business should come before it and was confidently anticipating its decisions.

1. L.P. vi.1609.

2. L.P. ix.725.

Another sign of how careful Cromwell was of the council's business is that apparently he kept a private record of council proceedings. On the back of a letter dated 28 May 1533 he wrote a list of matters under the heading "Remembrances to be put into my booke for thinges done in the Cownsayle".¹ This note raises the question whether an official register such as the "Ellesmere extracts" are claimed to represent was continued under Cromwell, or whether it was the absence of such a register that induced Cromwell to keep a private record.

The most obvious way of controlling the council was to prepare its agenda in detail. Few notes of that kind survive, but those that do are enough to prove that Cromwell frequently came to the council board with a number of points which he wanted discussed. From what we know of his general attitude, his wide and detailed control of all aspects of the administration, it seems legitimate to infer that the few known cases of such a prepared agenda represent a reasonably common practice, and ^{that} the council would usually find itself debating matters submitted by Cromwell. In 1537, a list of business to be treated in council in Wriothesley's hand shows its provenance; Wriothesley also wrote out a list of the council's decisions on that particular day.² It therefore seems that the

1. P.R.O. SP. 1/76, f.137 (L.P. vi.551).

2. L.P. xii.I.815-6. Sim. L.P. xii.II.177. The list in L.P. xii.I.1091 is described as council business in the calendar, but it seems more likely that the notes were meant for Cromwell's eye only (cf. above, p.280, n.1).

council's clerical work was also handled by Cromwell's own secretarial organisation. There is a note of "certain matters to be laid before the council" in September 1539 among the Hatfield MSS, but the calendar does not, unfortunately, give any indication of the business concerned or from whom the note emanated.¹

By far the best example of the manner in which the council's business was prepared and despatched is to be found in a number of papers concerned with a council meeting of 2 December 1533. It will be advisable to go in detail through the stages before, during, and after the meeting. The case is exceptional in being so well documented, but there is no reason to think that it is really unique. After all, the council's agenda must always have undergone some such preparation, perhaps usually in less formal detail, and we may well believe that this meeting provides us with a gratifyingly full view of the way in which Cromwell used the council.

The first thing that happened was that a long list was drawn up by a clerk, giving these points:²

1. All bishops to be examined individually whether they could find any support in "the law of god" for supposing that the pope had any more authority in England than any other

1. H.M.C., Hatfield MSS, 1.11.

2. P.R.O. SP 1/80, ff.171-5 (L.P. vi.1487[3]). The clerk in question was almost certainly Wriothesley, to judge from the writing.

foreign bishop.

2. The bishops to see to it that sermons were preached declaring the authority of the pope to be void and usurped.

3. Similar sermons to be preached every Sunday at the Cross of St. Paul's, the bishop of London being made responsible.

4. All bishops to be similarly instructed.

5. The nobles to instruct their households in like manner.

6. The shores and frontiers of the realm to be fortified.

7. "Som trustie persons" to be sent to Ireland, "to see that Domynyon established, and also to draw and adhere towards the king asmany of the grete Irysshe Rebelles as is possible".

8. To reform the administration of Wales so that peace may be preserved and justice done.

9. The navy to be overhauled.

10. "Ordynaunces and munycyons of warre" to be surveyed and repaired.

11. To survey and complete stores of bows, arrows, guns, gunpowder, etc.

12. To send ambassadors to various parts of Germany.

13. Ambassadors to the cities of the Hanse.

14. The same to Nuremberg and Augsburg.

15. The four orders of friars to preach as aforesaid.

16. The friars observant to do likewise.

17. The mayor, aldermen, and common council of London, as well as the corporations of other towns, to instruct their households against the pope.

18. All heads of religious houses to instruct their convents in the same way.

19. Every bishop to instruct every priest in his diocese in the same manner.

20. "To remember the merchauntes aduenturers haunting the domynyons of Braband, and to staye them."

21. To discuss the household establishment of "the prynces Dowagiers" (Katharine of Aragon).

22. To do the same for "my Lady prynces" (Elizabeth).

It is an impressive list, but its very length suggests that in many cases the council would be merely asked to endorse something, or would delegate the work to some individual minister. The first draft was revised, and the second draft is in a hand which is familiar from many Cromwellian drafts, for instance parliamentary bills.¹ It is probably the hand of a signet clerk, and as Cromwell, though not yet secretary, was at the time deputising for Gardiner,² the employment of a signet clerk would link him with the draft. There is, however,

1. P.R.O. SP 6/3, art.21 (L.P. vi.1487[21]).

2. Above, p.102.

more evidence than this doubtful point for the fact that he was concerned at any rate in the second stage of the preparations for this important council meeting.

The new draft re-arranged the items of the agenda in a more logical order, bringing points 15-17 forward to be joined on to point 4, and putting points 18 and 19 to go to follow point 5. The agenda was therefore now set out in grouped topics: propaganda at home to spread the new theory of the papal position in England, in the pulpit (1-4, 15-17) and in private (5, 18, 19); the setting in order of the realm (6-11); embassies to Germany (12-14); and some individual points (20-22). Two new items were added: (23) the spiritual and temporal peers were to write a letter to the pope, and (24) spies were to be sent into Scotland.

Cromwell went over this draft, correcting and adding to its various heads in his most characteristic manner, and those corrections were embodied in the next stage of the drafts. The bishops were to make up their minds not only about the pope's authority in England but also about his position relative to the general council of the church, a point also to be included in their preaching. The pope, it had originally been put, had no more authority in England than any other foreign bishop; Cromwell clinched this point by adding "which is nothing at all". The friars' orders were not only to be nego-

tiated with, but were also to receive "a strayt Commandement" to set forth the new ideas. If the observant friars would not agree to the order, they should "be stayed and not Suffryd to preche in No place of the Realme". The bishops were not to "teche" but to "make specyall Commandementtes" to their diocesan clergy "to preche and declare to theyr parochans in lykewyse". Points 6 and 7 were elaborated with additional detail. The envoys to the German princes and to the Hanse were to be specially instructed to "Inserche of what Inclynacyon the sayd prynces & potentatttes be of". Not only Katharine's household but Mary's also was to be settled. Where, in point 23, the scribe had spoken of "the Pope", Cromwell put "busshope" (leaving out 'of Rome'), and stated the subject of the letter which had previously been left undefined - "declaryng the wronge, Iniuries, and vsupacyons¹ vsyd agaynst the kynges highnes & this Realme". These and other corrections show how freely and fully Cromwell controlled the council's agenda. He made many of the points much more definite and detailed, proscribed the lines on which the nobles' letter was to be conceived, and generally sharpened the tone of the draft, by all which means he severely curtailed the council's liberty of action.

From this draft the actual agenda was drawn up.² It is

1. Sic.

2. B.M. Cleop.E.vi, ff.325-8 (L.P. vi.1487[1]).

in Ralph Sadler's hand, and in 1533 Sadler was still no more than Cromwell's confidential clerk. The finished product, therefore, came from Cromwell's office, even if none of the earlier drafts can definitely be proved to have done so. There are some interesting differences from the second draft, particularly three new items: proclamations were to be published containing the whole act of appeals,¹ and the king's provocation and appellation from Rome to the general council were similarly to be exhibited throughout the realm and abroad, especially in Flanders.² Points 5-11 and 17 were omitted; these concerned the setting in order of the country's defences and dependencies, and the propaganda to be spread in private households. It may be supposed that the former task was in any case being attended to by the king's ministers and needed no further discussion in council,³ while it may well have been thought too dangerous to press the second point. A council which was by no means united on the king's ecclesiastical policy might not take kindly to a suggestion that its members should advocate this policy in the privacy of their homes, and any attempt to enforce such a measure on all the nobility and municipal officials in England could only end in failure or revolt. The idea was therefore dropped, to be replaced by the more usual and practicable

1. 24 Henry VIII c.12.

2. Points 9-11 in the numbering in the MS.

3. All these items of the agenda were receiving Cromwell's attention in April 1534 (L.P. vii.420).

method of propaganda by proclamations affixed to church doors.

We cannot say for certain whether Cromwell was behind these further changes, but we must stress again the fact that the agenda was written out in his office. It may be concluded that if he was not alone responsible for its terms and heads he must at any rate have had a considerable say in them. The copy of the agenda which we possess has notes in his hand in the margin; the notes were made after the council meeting, and it is therefore clear that he kept the copy when the council rose. It does not seem likely that more than one copy was drawn up, and it is much more probable that Cromwell went to the council with this paper in hand and read it to the meeting point by point. The alternative, that enough copies were made to give one to each councillor, may be dismissed as intrinsically most improbable. Someone must have read the agenda to the council, and everything points to Cromwell.

If our reconstruction is correct, we must imagine Cromwell not only preparing the council's business but also submitting it to the board. As later testimony shows, that was the way in which Tudor secretaries of state acted in meetings of the privy council. In his account of privy council procedure, written in the early years of the seventeenth century, Sir Julius Caesar declared that one of the secretaries had always attended the meetings; he would stand at the upper end of the table, put

forward the business to be discussed, and ask the council's opinion.¹ The secretary's control of council business is also brought out in the orders for the privy council drawn up in 1550: he was to bring all letters to the council, to check the register and present it for signature, and to take charge of all writings ordered by the council.² It was Cromwell who created the principal secretaryship of Tudor times, and though he was not yet secretary in 1533 he was acting as one. In view of contemporary evidence and later practice it seems most reasonable to suppose him taking this particular copy of the agenda, probably the only copy ever made, to the council meeting, reading it out there and asking the council's mind on each successive point.

A note of the council's decisions at this meeting of 2 December 1533 also survives. It is headed "Acta in Consilio domini Regis 1j^{do} Decembris", is in a clerical script with additions by lord chancellor Audley (he wrote, for instance, the last three paragraphs), and bears one correction in Cromwell's hand.³ Audley had put the "castel of herf" as the place where the princess Elizabeth was to have her household, and Cromwell substituted "Hatffolde". This is a minor point, but it proves that Cromwell went over the record and checked its

1. B.M. Add.MS 34324, f.239.

2. B.M. Egerton MS 2603, ff.33-4.

3. B.M. Cleop.E.vi, f.329 (L.P. vi.1486).

accuracy.

The memorandum lists the points as they were numbered in the agenda itself, but in order to avoid confusion we shall here keep our own numeration. Point 1 was referred to Sampson, dean of the chapel, and Foxe, the king's almoner, "& other doctours", who were to consult the authorities and report to the council by the end of the week. Naturally, "as vnto the oother vij¹ Articles, depending vpon the saied first, the Counsaill will be advised therof vntill the retourne of the saied answer." When they received their answer Cromwell was after all entrusted with the execution of the necessary steps, as his memoranda of January 1534 show.² The three proposals for propaganda by proclamation were committed to Cromwell and Audeley "to put in executing with all spede".³ As for point 23, the letter to the pope, Foxe was ordered to draft this "according to the purport therof", that is, according to the outline added by Cromwell in the second draft; the council wished, however, to see first two letters previously sent to Rome, one under Edward I and another recently. The spies to Scotland were to be seen to by Norfolk and Cromwell, and as for the embassies to Germany, the council advised that the king of France

1. Corrected from "ix".

2. L.P. vii.48(2).

3. The scribe had put Cromwell only, adding in a separate phrase which probably represents an afterthought on the council's part, "with the lorde Chauncellour with hym". Audeley, not liking this, had crossed out the phrase and interlineated "my lord chancellour &" before "Mr Cromwell".

be first informed by means of a letter sent to the English ambassador resident. The last three points, the households of Katharine, Mary, and Elizabeth, were decided by the king who was possibly present at the meeting. Audelay merely noted that Henry had personally ordered certain councillors to attend to the business, "acordyng to suche Instruccions as shalbe devised for the same". Henry may have said so at the council board, or he may have sent word (through Cromwell?); at any rate, the matter was taken out of the council's hands. The fact that it came before the council at all suggests that Henry had little to do with the drawing up of the agenda, a suggestion which strengthens the assumption of Cromwell's sole parentage.

Altogether the council had not done much, considering what a tremendous amount was put before it. It had tendered advice, of secondary importance, on one point. A number of matters it had left to its most prominent members, and here again we may notice that Cromwell was even then, four months before his secretaryship, quite the most conspicuous. The really serious business on which it was to decide - the attitude to be adopted towards the church and any possible obstruction from that quarter - it had shelved with the feeble pretence that "the doctours" would first have to discover the facts of a controversy which had been decided eight months earlier with

the passing of the act against appeals to Rome. The council's procrastination may have been due simply to inefficiency or, more deeply, to tacit opposition; in any case, it had not shown itself to be an active governing body.

Nor was that all. The notes which Cromwell made in the margin of the agenda reveal a little more of the way in which the government was really carried on. The lords of the council had at least shown a desire to have the letter written to the pope, but even in this they had been premature. Cromwell noted that it was "not yet done ne can welbe done before the parlyament", for of course the presence of all the spiritual and temporal peers was required for signature. Point 24 had been left to Cromwell and Norfolk, and it was Cromwell who put down the details of what had to be done: "for to send letters to my lorde dacre, my lorde of Northumberland, and Syr Thomas Clyfford," the wardens of the northern marches. The council, and possibly Norfolk too, left to him the actual administration of certain steps which had been put before it in ready form, and which it had merely endorsed. The envoys to Germany, on the other hand, were not to be sent until a higher authority had spoken; that matter stood "in the kynges arbytrement". However, a few weeks later Cromwell was noting down that he would have to devise the various details of those embassies - who was to go and what his instructions were to be; again we

see who did the actual work of government.¹ Point 19 is annotated "this is all rede doon"; as the point was apparently not discussed in council Cromwell's note may have been made before the meeting. Against the last points Cromwell noted that the necessary orders had been issued.

If we have gone at considerable length into this council meeting of 2 December 1533, it has been because nothing like the same detail can be found for any other meeting during Cromwell's supremacy. The four documents available have enabled us to conclude that Cromwell supervised in detail the preparation of business for the council's consideration, that even at the start of his career he would be entrusted by the council with much of the administrative work discussed, and that he could afterwards act quite on his own, except for his dependence on the king. We have also given reasons for believing that it was he who actually submitted the council's business and thereby practically conducted its meetings. However, than is a conjecture and it does not matter very much whether it be accepted or not. Cromwell's control of the council in 1533 is manifest; we know that the council continued to meet and act throughout Cromwell's career, and if such a measure of control can be proved at the outset it may

1. L.P. vii.48(1).

be assumed to have been at least as complete in later years of greater power.

It may be well to summarise the argument as it stands at this point. When Cromwell came to power he found a council which had recovered from its eclipse under Wolsey, a council of comparatively few members which met often and handled - under the king - the business of the state. Cromwell made no essential change in this, except that he put himself at the head of the council, between it and the king, so as to rule and control it rather than do without it. The council of Cromwell's time was an active body, busy about many aspects of the government, though in fact it usually did nothing except support the policy and measures put forward by the king and Cromwell.

There is something to show that government by council was one of Cromwell's chief constitutional ideas. His practice in diligently keeping alive an active council contrasted strongly with that of Wolsey; more than this, it was under him that conciliar bodies multiplied and assumed a new importance with the establishment of a council in the West and the complete overhauling of those in the North and the marches of Wales. We must not go into the matter in detail, for a discussion of these branch councils would take us too far afield. Suffice it to say that efficiently organised councils under active

presidents, staffed by a mixture of members of the central council, local gentlemen, and trained government officials, and with permanent clerks of their own, were Cromwell's answer to the serious administrative problems set by the outlying parts of the realm.¹ There is also the well-known note in his remembrances: "To appoint the most assured and substantial gentlemen in every shire to be sworn of the King's Council...", apparently with the intention of creating a network of king's councillors for policy duties.² Though this is a different idea from the centralisation of government in the hands of small councils it shows a similar regard for government by those sworn of the council. Cromwell's thought had taken him beyond the somewhat crude conception of a lonely and personal ascendancy, and his practice towards both the central council and its branches in the marches of England shows that he wished to base his administration on small and tightly organised councils. At the same time, there was no question of surrendering his real power. The branch councils were kept under strict supervision, and the central body was always to be directed by him.

1. For these councils cf.: C.A.J.Skeel, "The Council of the West", Trans.R.Hist.Soc., 1921, esp.pp.70ff.; R.R.Roid, The King's Council in the North, pp.247ff.; C.A.J.Skeel, The Council in the Marches of Wales, pp.65ff. For Cromwell's control cf. his correspondence with these councils, spread over L.P., and notes in his memoranda for the establishment of a council in the north and the ordering of the west marches (L.P. xii.I. 1315).

2. L.P. vii.420.

IV. The Rise of the Privy Council.

When the council met on 10 August 1540 to appoint a clerk and provide for the keeping of a register,¹ the privy council had definitely arrived. It was not new then, for the entry in the record states clearly that "an ordre was taken and determined by his Maiestie by thadvice of his Highnes Pryvoy Counsaill whose names hereafter ensue". What was now was the content of that order, not the existence of the privy council, fully organised and clearly distinguished from the council in general and the other bodies which had branched off from it. It would not in any case be credible that the privy council should have burst upon the world fully grown, without any preliminary development, and its beginnings have in fact been traced back to at least the last months of 1537.² A body which can only be described as the privy council existed before Paget's appointment as clerk, and we must now concern ourselves with investigating the adolescence of this distinct and separate inner council. The difficulty is that there is little agreement on what constitutes the privy council. There is no doubt that the crown had habitually called upon a smaller number of selected councillors for advice on matters of policy, and that the whole body of men sworn of the council did not form that council which

1. Nicolas, A.P.C., vii.3.

2. A.F.Pollard, in E.H.R., xxxviii(1923), pp.43f.

met with some regularity for the carrying on of the government. What, then, is the difference between a small inner ring of the council, such as we saw at work in 1532, and the fully fledged privy council? It has been usual to avoid the difficulty by reserving the new name to the organisation which emerged into the light of documented history in 1540, but that, as we have seen, ignores the fact that the privy council most certainly existed before that date. For an understanding of Cromwell's attitude to the council an investigation of the origins of the privy council is quite essential. It cannot have taken its rise later than the time of his supremacy.

First then, what is it that differentiates the privy council from the informal inner group of councillors which must be nearly as old as the council itself? Professor Pollard has given it as his opinion that "the key to the distinction between the medieval council and the incipient privy council of Tudor times is the distinction between a council which met only at Westminster during term, and a council which met all the year round and sat with the king wherever he might be".¹ This, however, provides no clue to the distinction between the incipient and the established privy council, between the informal "inner ring" of councillors meeting with the king and the fully developed institution. The truth seems to be that the dif-

1. A.F. Pollard, Wolsey, p.111.

ference lies in one word - organisation, a somewhat intangible factor in the absence of some definite order establishing the thing organised. However, the fact of organisation is bound to show in the result, and perhaps we can find some points which will help to track it down.

We submit that there are six distinct characteristics which we must find in the council before we can call it "privy". It must attend on the king wherever he goes, it must meet frequently or nearly every day, it must be limited in personnel, its membership must be fixed, its work must be on the details of administrative business as well as on policy, and it must have at least one clerk specially and permanently appointed. To the last point we might add the keeping of a register, but it is quite possible to imagine a privy council without records and even possibly without a clerk. The history of the cabinet should make us wary before we make the keeping of records an essential point in the organisation of the privy council, and throughout the sixteenth century there were many meetings from which the clerk was excluded and for which no entry therefore survives in the registers. Nor must the other five requirements be pressed too logically and rigorously. The indubitably privy council of August 1540 did not meet every day, nor did all its members assemble on every occasion, but meetings were frequent and no councillor attended who was not in the list

of privy councillors given at the beginning of the register.¹

Of these characteristics, one has already been discussed at length. The work of the council under Cromwell was manifold, onerous, and important, though admittedly it was done under Cromwell's control. The council was not nearly so essential a part of the government as appearances would suggest, but control by one man was not incompatible with the genuine privy council. What matters here is the nature of the business transacted and not the reality of power. In this respect the council of the interval between Wolsey and Cromwell fulfilled the conditions which may be laid down for the privy council, and Cromwell's arrival made no difference in that.

To turn to the question of attendance on the king. The Eltham Ordinances of 1526 had provided for a permanent council of twenty members to give their attendance on the king's most royal person, but by allowing for the necessary absences of all the more important officers of state the order had reduced this council first to a committee of ten, then to a subcommittee of four, and finally had in despair arranged for two councillors always to be present, "except the King's grace give lycence to any of them of the contrary".² These councillors were to

1. In the last three weeks of August 1540 the privy council met fourteen times, a large gap being left after its inauguration on the 10th. The usual attendance was six councillors out of a possible nineteen, though seven came five times and nine came on one occasion (Nicolas, *A.P.C.*, vii.3-22).
2. Household Ordinances (Soc. of Ant.), pp.159f.

attend every day for the despatch of business of state and the hearing of petitions. A council attending on the king which might consist of two out of the less important councillors was clearly no privy council, and the hope expressed that if the direction was well observed "the King's highnesse shall alwayes be well furnished of an honourable presence of counsellors about his Grace, as to his high honour doth apperteayne" has the flavour of subtle irony. It must not be forgotten, too, that the word "council" was frequently used in a collective rather than corporate sense, meaning a few councillors rather than an organised council, a fact for which the many references to the king's learned council provide sufficient proof. These were the king's legal advisers as a group, not by any means a committee of the council dealing with legal business. The council in attendance on the king might therefore be either a body like the later privy council travelling about with the king, or a number of councillors who happened to be at court. In 1526 two such councillors were reckoned sufficient, though it was hoped to have a larger number usually in attendance.

At any rate, there is no evidence that the Eltham Ordinances were carried out under Wolsey.¹ We must see whether we can find a council regularly in attendance during Cromwell's rule. The privy council of 1540 attended the king's person,

1. A.F. Pollard, in E.H.R., xxvii(1922), p.359.

for it seems to have met in a different place nearly every day. We must probably imagine it travelling in the morning and meeting in the afternoon or evening, and the picture of the manner in which the government of the country was carried on is certainly odd. The evidence for what happened in the 1530's is naturally, in the absence of registers, rather less clear. During the interval before Cromwell's rise to power the king appears often to have sat in council, a fact which implies that the council attended on him regularly.¹ When the papal nuncio went to court to speak with the king he was confronted by the council instead.² On the other hand, in June 1534 the council was reported to be coming to Hampton Court, with the "gentlemen dwelling about London", in order to meet the ambassadors from Lubeck.³ That does not look so much like a council regularly in attendance on the king. It is true that the king would still attend council meetings,⁴ and that Chapuys could find the council at court,⁵ but that does not prove that the council was always there. They would normally do their work at court, in the presence on or off stage of Henry himself, but they need not necessarily have followed him about and may well have been summoned for special occasions as in the case of the Lubeck ambassadors. On an earlier

1. L.P. iv.6738; v.105,216,287,773,1013.

2. Ibid. 1633.

3. L.P. vii.888.

4. L.P. viii.826,912.

5. Ibid. 189.

occasion, a French envoy had been told that no decision could be arrived at because the king had not yet made up his mind and the council were dispersed;¹ even if this explanation was only a pretext to cover up procrastination it could not have been made if it had not still been common enough for the king to be without his council.

However, there are indications that things began to change about the beginning of 1536, or at any rate we begin to get evidence for a change of practice about that time. In April 1536 the council sat every day at Greenwich, that is at court.² The evidence becomes stronger for the following year. In April 1537 the council was with the king at Greenwich, though Cromwell was in London and his coming was awaited before news from the continent was to be discussed.³ When the king moved from Hampton Court to Esher in September 1537, he diminished all his attendants' company and ordered the lords of the council who were present with him to inform Cromwell and Audoley to do likewise on their coming to court.⁴ Obviously the council travelled with the king, though not all its members were necessarily at court. By early October, Cromwell had joined the king at Esher where Lord Sandes saw both them and the council.⁵ In January 1538 the council was again sitting at Green-

1. L.P. v, 375.

2. L.P. x. 748.

3. L.P. xii. I. 1009.

4. L.P. xii. II. 774.

5. Ibid. 802.

wich, and they were still with the king three weeks later.¹ The following year the king again conferred with the lords of the council at Waltham while Cromwell was in London.² On the other hand, it was still possible for the king at Windsor to tell some of his councillors to order others to assemble in London; this letter in itself, however, proves the constant attendance on the king of at least a substantial part of the inner council.³

There may have been a council attendant on the king, as an organised body, at an earlier time; in 1529 a man tried to retain Cromwell for the drafting of a document demanded by the "council attending the king", and a summons under the signet of September 1535 spoke of an appearance "befor vs and our counsail attendant vpon our person, whersoouer we shal chaunce to be".⁴ The first case, however, does not prove the existence of a regular council attendant and may even refer to no more than a few (legal) counsellors then in the king's entourage; the other, on the other hand, suggests that some regularity had been achieved. However, it is cast in official phraseology and must therefore be treated with some caution. The attendance of a council on the king was no doubt desired but we cannot be sure that it was also secured, and a summons before the council might, as we have already seen, result in an inter-

1. L.P. xiii.I.91,241. 2. L.P. xiv.I.236. 3. L.P. xiv.II.183.
4. L.P. Add.666; P.R.O. SP 1/96, ff.165-6 (L.P. ix.369).

view with only one or two councillors.¹ The evidence allows us only to be reasonably certain that there was a council regularly attending the king's person from 1536 onwards, a council which followed him wherever he went. There is a strong suggestion that the organisation tightened up about that time, and that there really was a difference between the practice of the first half of the decade and that of the second.

Frequency of meetings is a point that, in the absence of registers, must necessarily escape proof. Here again, a few pieces of evidence enable us to draw a tentative conclusion or two, without being able to claim that we have established a certainty. As late as November 1535 Cranmer had to deliver a copy of certain articles, which he had drawn up, to the bishops because the council was not sitting,² while in the year after we begin to get repeated references to frequent sessions. The council sit every day to discuss letters brought by the French ambassador.³ They sit daily, "so that suitors must abide their good hour".⁴ Cromwell cannot fulfil his promise to ask Audeley for a writ of attachment because council meetings have taken up all his time.⁵ The council has been sitting daily with foreign ambassadors, often from morning till night, so that no suits could be heard.⁶ In October 1538 we

1. Above, p.389.

2. L.P. ix.741.

3. L.P. x.748.

4. Ibid. 789.

5. L.P. xiii.I.91.

6. Ibid. 659. Sim., ibid. 1015, 1149.

are told that the lords sit daily in council, and a few months later that the king's council sits daily but there is no news.¹ Again there is a suggestion that the council entered on a new phase of its history about 1536, beginning at that time to meet more and more often and regularly. Very interesting are the surprised references on the part of informed observers to daily meetings in 1538-9; they clearly indicate that what was to become the normal practice of the privy council was still something new and unusual.

The early history of the clerk of the privy council has to some extent been worked out by Professor Pollard.² He came to the conclusion that we must distinguish between a senior and a junior clerkship of the council, remunerated with 40 marks and £20 respectively, the former of which grew into the clerkship of (the council in) the star chamber, while the latter developed into the clerkship of the privy council. Thomas Derby was appointed to the junior clerkship in January 1533.³ The abstract in the calendar of the document which provides proof of his appointment hides several interesting and significant facts.⁴ To begin with, it is not a patent of appointment, or even a warrant to the great seal ordering such a patent. It is a writ of privy seal ordering the chancellor to issue a

1. L.P. xiii.II.703; xiv.I.381.

2. E.H.R., xxvii(1922), pp.345ff.

3. L.P. vi.105(24).

4. The original is P.R.O. C 82/864/25, given in App.A(V).

letter patent addressed to the treasurer of the chamber, authorising the latter to pay Dorby his salary of £20 and other emoluments due to him. Tuke was to take a copy on his "boko of warrauntes" as his only basis for payment. Had Dorby possessed a patent of appointment, his salary would have been paid on production of a writ of liberate.¹ It is therefore clear that he was not appointed by letter patent. Now it is known that the senior clerk of the council, the clerk of the star chamber, was appointed by patent,² while no patent survives for Paget, the first clerk of the privy council about whose position we can have no doubt. That he never had one is strongly indicated by the fact that there are no less than three copies of the famous first entry in the privy council registers, made in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, which are endorsed as the "originale of the office of the Clarke of the Consell".³ The clerk of the privy council was therefore apparently appointed by the king by word of mouth only, with the assent of the body which he was to serve. This is fairly definite proof that Derby's clerkship belonged to that line of development which led to the clerkship of the privy council.

Secondly, it must be noted that the privy seal described

1. Cf. above, p.219, n.1.

2. Cf. Eden's patent, L.P. iv.6490(1).

3. P.R.O. SP 1/162, ff.51-56.

the office in question as that of the "Clarke of our Counsaill attending vppon our person". We have argued that a definite meaning attached to that term, though an official desire to have a council always in attendance on the king does not prove the existence of such a council as an organised body. It will be safest to use caution in this respect. Undoubtedly councillors attended the king and formed an inner circle within the larger unit, but there is nothing whatever to show that this was anything more than a loose and informal group of men who attended or failed to attend as occasion offered and as the king's choice fell. The difference between the "council attendant on our person" and the privy council lies, as we have said, in that rather intangible point of organisation; it is the difference between an informal group and a formal institution. Nevertheless, the privy council developed from the council attendant, and this privy seal proves once more that Derby was appointed, in 1533, to the clerkship of the budding privy council. It is of the greatest interest that this clerkship had apparently been vacant since 1512, for Richard Eden is mentioned as his last predecessor, and he had held the senior clerkship since that date.¹ The vacancy in the junior clerkship thus coincides with Wolsey's supremacy, and Derby's appointment at the beginning of Cromwell's rule and as the

1. Cf. L.P. iv.6490(1), and A.F.Pollard in E.H.R., xxxvii(1922), p.350, n.7.

consequence of an appeal from him to Cromwell,¹ provides an important clue to Cromwell's attitude to the council. It seems that from the first he intended to organise the informal "inner ring" into something more institutional, and that he began by reviving its clerkship.

On the other hand, it appears that the appointment held little immediate administrative significance. Derby continued to hold his clerkship of the signet, worked in the signet office, and was never for years referred to otherwise than as clerk of the signet. The only evidence of his working for the council is contained in two notes of business to be transacted which belong into the second half of 1536.² However, there was a development in his career as clerk of the council which is of the greatest importance to us. In March 1538 he appeared in the expense accounts of the treasurer of the chamber as "clerk of the privy council".³ We may deduce with some confidence that an office described in certain terms in that very correct and official account would rightly be called by those terms, and that Derby was indeed styled clerk of the privy council by 1538. Exactly when "privy" entered his title we cannot tell, but it must have been at some time between 1533 and the end of 1537. The date of the account proves nothing

1. A month or two earlier Derby had complained to Cromwell of ill-usage and destitution (L.P. v.1068), and his appointment in January 1533 was clearly in answer to that appeal.

2. L.P. xi.767,850(11).

3. L.P. xiii.II, p.528.

as none of Tuke's books survive between 1531 and 1538. It thus follows that a man who was described as clerk of the council attendant upon our person in 1533 was properly called clerk of the privy council by 1538. The inference is that the informal had changed into the formal body at some point between those two dates.

While the evidence for official intentions and institutional developments is fairly strong, it cannot be claimed that the creation of a clerk of the privy council resulted in any evidence of practical changes. The scanty council records provide no evidence of any one clerk doing council work in those years; we have seen that Wriothesley would write out an agenda,¹ and he was not one of the many clerks of the council discovered by Professor Pollard.² The strangest part of the whole story is that Derby was appointed secretary to the council in the West in April 1539;³ though he left London, no successor was appointed to him as clerk of the (privy) council while John Huttoft got his clerkship of the signet.⁴ The clerkship of the signet was, we know, an office requiring

1. Above, p.394.

2. Pollard says that "the fourteenth century difficulty of determining whether clericus de consilio means a clerk of the council or merely a cleric on the council does not trouble us under the Tudors" (loc.cit., p.351). But would not a survival of that difficulty explain why Bodell and Layton are described as clerks of the council (ibid., p.349f.)? We do not know that they were that, but we do know that they were councillors and in orders.

3. L.P. xiv.I.743.

4. L.P. xiv.II.435(2).

personal attendance, so that it seems reasonable to conclude that the other office was a sinecure, or at least did not require any one specially appointed person to do its work.

No more is heard of the clerk of the privy council until August 1540. The first entry in the register, as Sir Harris Nicolas pointed out, "affords nearly as strong presumption that a clerk of the Council was then appointed for the first time, as that the Proceedings of the Council had not before been recorded",¹ and indeed the strange absence of the clerk of the privy council from April 1539 onwards can only mean that no register was kept until Paget's appointment. Dorby was, then, a clerk of the council who could properly be called clerk of the privy council, but he did little if any work in that capacity and could combine the office with a clerkship of the signet which kept him very busy, and a secretaryship which removed him permanently from the neighbourhood of the privy council. Paget's clerkship was, in contrast, a reality. Nevertheless, it is of great significance that the clerk of the council attendant came to be called clerk of the privy council some time before the end of 1537.

This question of the clerkship has raised a problem which it will be best to discuss before we go on to the last and most

1. Nicolas, A.P.C., vii, p.ii.

important characteristic of the privy council, its personnel. That problem is the use of the term "privy council". It is often employed by foreign ambassadors, but their use of it proves nothing for the constitutional position of the council. They were used to the name from the practice of their own countries and habitually referred to the king's chief councillors as his privy council. Nor is much to be made of the term when it is used somewhat loosely and freely by Englishmen. However, it is of interest to note that Gardiner employed it as early as 1532 in addressing Cromwell, and that in 1535 an eminent lawyer might speak of giving information to "the kyngo & his privie Counsaill".¹ The matter is complicated by the fact that some references to the privy council in the Letters and Papers reveal themselves in the original as references to the king's "honorabyll Councell".² Nor can we place too much reliance on a mention of the "prevy Councell" by a well-informed man like Lord Lisle's London agent, even as late as January 1537,³ or in the fact that one of Cromwell's letters of 1534 is addressed to "my veray good lordes, my lordes of the kinges most honorable pryve Councell", for the address was written by a clerk.⁴ Yet all these are pointers to a more common use of the term.

1. L.P. v.1245; P.R.O. SP 1/91, f.216 (L.P. viii.518).

2. E.g., L.P. vii.828; viii.954.

3. L.P. xii.I.195.

4. P.R.O. SP 1/86, f.58 (L.P. vii.1271).

Discussions of this question have usually not failed to notice Sir Robert Wingfield's letter of February 1535 in which he claimed membership of the privy council for fourteen years.¹ Not only was Wingfield a "vain and garrulous old man" who had spent his privy councillorship at Calais,² but the original of his letter shows that he was not implying the existence of an organised privy council of which men were sworn, as the extract in the calendar makes him do. What he actually wrote was: "I am oon of thoose which hath ben sworne of the kynges Cowncell above xx^{ti} yerys past; & feyth, of his pryve Cowncell above xiiij yerys I haue Contynuyd." This leaves little doubt that he was not thinking of the privy council as an organised institution, but merely of himself as one of the inner ring of more confidential councillors distinct from the ordinary councillors. Similarly, nothing more formal is implied by the oath of the pilgrims of grace who swore to "expulse all villayn blode from the sayd kynges grace & his pryve cowncell".³

However, the name was beginning to be used in a way that can only be described as official. In October 1536 the earl of Sussex, one of Henry's leading councillors, spoke of a letter received from "my lord priveseale & others of the privy

1. P.R.O. SP 1/90, f.137 (L.P. viii.225). Cf. Pickthorn, Henry VIII, p.216.

2. A.F. Pollard, in E.H.R., xxxviii (1924), p.45, n.1.

3. P.R.O. SP 1/109, f.110 (L.P. xi.872[11]).

counsayll".¹ More significant still, the king himself mentioned his privy council in his answer to the rebels' demands,² and a letter from Sadler of September 1536, in which he reports a conversation with Henry, provides another example.³ The king wanted the council to assemble at Windsor. "And so, quod he, wryte to my lorde pryvey seale and mende him worde that my lorde Admyrall is here; Master Comptroller and the bisshop of Hereford be here; and pray him also, quod he, to com hither indelayedlye; and then, quod he, we shall sone be at a poynte. And, quod he, in case my lorde Chauncolour be nere London and all that be there of the prevye counsaile, pray my lorde prevy seale to bryng them with him." Clearly, to Henry the term privy council signified a distinct body with certain members, not just a vague inner circle of councillors whom he could pick at will from larger numbers. The fact that the privy council was not then with the king means nothing, for this was during the crisis of the pilgrimage of grace when king and council were sometimes separated. Two years later, a proclamation forbade the printing of books "on-les vpon examinacion made by some of his gracie Priue Counsaile".⁴ Surely we are justified in concluding that by the

1. P.R.O. SP 1/108, f.116 (L.P. xii.727).

2. L.P. xi.957.

3. P.R.O. SP 1/106, f.217v (L.P. xi.501).

4. B.M. Tit.B.i, f.516 (L.P. xiii.II.848). This is a seventeenth century copy, but there is no reason to doubt its accuracy. Not only does it embody spellings obsolete by

latter part of 1538, at any rate, the privy council was an officially recognised institution. Again we have had to notice a certain importance attaching to the year 1536 in connection with the development of the inner into the privy council.

There remains the question of the personnel of the council. It is clear that there were large numbers of men of varying degree of importance and varying functions calling themselves councillors, with a consequent distinction between an "inner ring" and "councillors at large", long before the privy council was finally established. In 1533 the "lords of the council" committed the execution of certain matters to five men all of whom were king's councillors - Sampson, Foxe, Tregonwell, Oliver, Carne - a distinction which implies that the inner circle was well developed.¹ The name of councillor was bestowed on local gentlemen like Sir Edward Guldeford of Kent and Sir Roger Townsend of Yorkshire, neither of whom ever attended the council proper.² Fisher was interrogated in the presence of some men known to be leading civil servants though not inner councillors, but they were described as councillors.³

the time it was made, but it also in one place mentions the king's council, so that there is no question of all references to the council having been emended by the addition of "privy". The proclamation is the one which Cromwell told Bonner was made by the council (cf. Grafton's reference to Cromwell's letter, L.P. xiii.II.972).

1. L.P. vi.1490.

2. L.P. vii.630; xiii.II.34.

3. L.P. viii.867(1): Bedell, Aldridge, Layton, Curwon.

The chief justice of Ireland and the lord mayor of London were both sworn of the council, but that did not make them members of that council which we are trying to trace.¹ The most interesting and complete list of this outer ring of councillors within the central body, though it contains only "outer" councillors about the court, is given in a list of councillors "learned with other his counsel at large" who walked in procession at the coming of Anne of Cleves.² There we find, among others, the law officers of the crown as well as many of the leading civil servants of the day: Peter Vannes (Latin secretary), Sir Richard Weston (undertreasurer of the exchequer), Sir John Williams (master of the jewels), Sir Mohn Dauncy and Richard Pollard (general surveyors of crown lands), Sir Brian Tuke (treasurer of the chamber), the treasurer of first fruits, and the officers of the court of augmentations. The distinction between the inner council and councillors at large was quite definite by the end of 1539, and the latter by then contained some of the king's chief servants.³

1. L.P. xiii.II.504; Add.1053.

2. L.P. xv.14, p.5.

3. The list of noblemen to be summoned to a meeting at Westminster, drawn up probably for 3 July 1536 (L.P. xi.5[1]) does certainly not refer to a meeting of either the inner council or the council at large. It may be concerned with a meeting of the lay members of the house of lords (parliament then sitting), or with a "great council" of the archaic type, called for some formal business. The ordinary council would not have included all those peers, but would have included a good many other men not noble.

How definite this distinction was in the early part of Cromwell's rule is not so easily ascertained. We have to rely on ambassadors' reports, and there are not so many of those. In August 1533 Chapuys was told to explain his business to the council; he found them in a house twenty-two miles from London and was entertained with hunting. On that occasion the council consisted of Gardiner, Cromwell, and Richard Sampson, dean of the chapel.¹ A few days later Chapuys met the council at Windsor, and this time there were present, in addition to those three, the duke of Suffolk, the great chamberlain (the earl of Oxford), and others.² In May 1534 a council meeting was attended by Norfolk, Exeter, Fitzwilliam, Paulet, Rocheford, the bishop of Ely, and Sir William Kingston, the captain of the guard, which looks more like a full session.³ Even more councillors were assembled when some very particular business had to be transacted. On 15 May 1534 Chapuys was called to meet the council at Westminster, at seven o'clock in the morning, in order to be given an official account of the act of succession and to hear complaints against the obstinacy of Katharine and Mary who refused to take the oath.⁴ The occasion was meant to be impressive; there was a Latin harangue from the almoner, Edward Foxe, and an acrimonious discussion ensued between individual councillors and the ambassador. For

1. L.P. vi.975.
3. L.P. vii.726.

2. Ibid. 1018.
4. Ibid. 690.

that reason, presumably, an exceptionally large number had been brought together - fourteen councillors and "all the principal judges". The councillors included all the familiar members of the inner ring except Gardiner, Fitzwilliam and Suffolk, and some whose connection with the council was more intermittent: Cranmer, Lee of York, Audeley, Norfolk, Exeter, Wiltshire, Cromwell, Stokesley of London, Tunstall of Durham, Goodrich of Ely, Sampson, Foxe, Paulet, and Kingston. The very fact that the judges were also present indicates that the inner circle had not yet developed into an organised body. Within the large body of men called councillors there was this certain inner group, numbering perhaps fifteen to twenty, but with no degree of fixity about its composition. Those available, or those whom it was desired to call, would assemble, and the number and persons would vary freely according to the nature and importance of the business. This is not yet a privy council.

The next stage in the development came during the pilgrimage of grace. We have seen that an immediate consequence of the rebellion was that Cromwell retired from the centre of the stage, and that the council as a body came to the fore. There were also signs of a new permanency in the council's membership. In his reply to the rebels' demands Henry gave this list of his "privy council":¹ Norfolk, Suffolk, Exeter,

1. L.P. xi.957.

Shrewsbury, Oxford, Sussex, Sandes, Fitzwilliam, Paulet, Foxe, Sampson, and Gerdiner. To these names must be added, at any rate, Cranmer, Cromwell, and Audeley, all intimate councillors but also men whom the rebels had singled out for attack, and whom it was therefore wiser not to mention. This council corresponds very largely with a list of leading councillors which could be derived from earlier evidence, but more important is what actually happened during the struggle with the north. Some of the councillors were absent in the field, Norfolk and Shrewsbury nearly all the time, and Suffolk, Kingston, Paulet, and Russell for short spells. They received most of their instructions in letters signed by the council as a whole, and these signatures reveal a council organised on the lines of a restricted and fixed membership and not different in any essentials from the later privy council.

The signatures show that between 14 October 1536 and 8 April 1537 the following councillors met on sixteen separate occasions: Cromwell, Oxford, Sussex, Foxe, Sampson, Kingston; Audeley, Cromwell, Sussex, Foxe; Audeley, Cromwell, Sussex, Oxford, Foxe, Sampson; Audeley, Cromwell, Oxford, Sussex, Sandes, Foxe, Sampson; Audeley, Norfolk, Cromwell, Sussex, Foxe, Sampson; Cromwell, Audeley, Oxford, Sussex, Sampson, Paulet; the same with Foxe and Kingston; Suffolk, Cromwell, Sussex, Foxe, Paulet, Kingston, Russell; Suffolk, Audeley,

Cromwell, Sussex, Foxe, Sampson, Fitzwilliam, Paulet, Russell; Suffolk, Cromwell, Exeter, Sussex, Foxe, Sampson, Fitzwilliam, Paulet; Cromwell, Sampson, Foxe, Paulet, Fitzwilliam, Russell; the same with Kingston; Cranmer, Audeley, Suffolk, Foxe, Cromwell, Paulet, Russell; Cromwell, Sampson, Paulet, Kingston, Russell; Audeley, Suffolk, Cromwell, Beauchamp, Foxe, Sampson, Fitzwilliam, Paulet, Kingston; Cromwell, Audeley, Suffolk, Tunstall, Foxe, Sampson, Fitzwilliam.¹

Few of the names appear only once: Tunstall, perhaps because a man of his known conservative opinions was kept away from the centre of affairs at this juncture, Norfolk and Exeter because they were nearly all these months engaged in fighting the rebels, Beauchamp who was but beginning to make himself felt. The rare attendance of Cranmer, Audeley, and Oxford was no doubt due to the fact that they were the three "inner" councillors appointed with a number of councillors at large to form a resident council in London, to attend on the queen while the troubles lasted.² Cromwell signed every one of these documents, so that we may take it that he normally attended, despite the evidence for his occasional absence from the council which was mentioned above. All except three of the letters are dated from royal palaces - Windsor, Richmond,

1. L.P. xi.701,788,799,885,1040,1228,1237; xii.I.201,332,333,505,558,636,667,846,864.

2. L.P. xi.580(3).

Greenwich, Westminster - clear evidence that here we have a council attending on the king wherever he went. The three exceptions, two from the Rolls and one from Christ Church (London), prove that the council would occasionally meet at Cromwell's house and further confirm his outstanding position, thinly disguised by the employment of an organised council.

We may therefore now draw up a list of the inner council of the years 1536-7.

Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury.

Sir Thomas Audeley, lord chancellor.

Thomas Howard, duke of Norfolk, lord treasurer.

Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, president of the council.¹

Thomas lord Cromwell, vicegerent in spirituals, lord privy seal, etc.

Henry Courtenay, marquess of Exeter.

John de Vere, earl of Oxford.

Robert Ratcliffe, earl of Sussex.

Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of Durham.

Edward Foxe, bishop of Hereford.

Richard Sampson, bishop of Chichester.

William lord Sandes, chamberlain of the household.

Sir William Fitzwilliam, lord admiral, treasurer of the household, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster.

1. So described several times in 1537-9: L.P. xii.II.1155; xiv.II.619(11-13,37),780(17).

Sir William Paulet, controller of the household and master of the wards.

Sir William Kingston, vice-chamberlain of the household.

Sir John Russell.

To this list of sixteen men there ought to be added George Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, lord steward of the household, who was always absent and had been included in the king's list of his privy council with the proviso "when he may come", and perhaps already Sir Edward Seymour, viscount Beauchamp, who was only on the threshold of his career. The most significant omission is that of Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, due to his absence as resident ambassador in France. There is good reason to think that Cromwell had deliberately rid himself of his most able and tenacious opponent in the council, but we can hardly doubt that Gardiner would have had to be included in the list of inner councillors if he had been in England.

We therefore have here a total of nineteen, the same number as that of the established privy council of August 1540. More important yet, if the clerical councillors be removed we shall arrive at exactly that council which a document of about October 1537 describes as "to be had at this tyme in the kinges most benigne Remembraunce":¹ Audoloy, Norfolk, Suffolk, Crom-

1. B.N. Tit.B.i, f.497 (L.P. xiii.I.1). The date of the list must be before 18 October 1537 when Beauchamp was created earl of Hertford (L.P. xii.II.939).

well, Exeter, Shrewsbury, Oxford, Sussex, Beauchamp, Sandon, Fitzwilliam, Paulet, Kingston, Russell. The manner in which the list is written down, bracketed together with "The Con-
seill" against it in the left margin, shows how definite the segregation of the inner circle had become by then. Professor Pollard has deduced a council for January 1540 which includes these same men, except that Exeter and Shrewsbury had dropped out by death, and Kingston for a reason unknown had been put among the councillors at large. He has also shown how the personnel of the council changed organically to give the nineteen men who head the register of August 1540.¹ Here we have conclusive proof that by the second half of 1536 the inner council had achieved that limitation and fixity of membership which characterised the privy council proper.

Let us marshal our conclusions. We have seen that in 1536 the following changes in the council appear to have taken place: attendance on the king became regular, meetings grew very frequent, there were "official" references to a privy council by that name, and - most important of all - membership became fixed and permanent. The crisis of the pilgrimage of grace revealed the development of the council; meetings became regular, business was transacted by the council as a whole, council letters were signed regularly by some of the

1. E.H.R., xxxviii(1923), pp.43f.

nineteen "inner" councillors. Add to this that at some time between 1533 and 1537 Thomas Derby, the clerk of the informal council attendant, became clerk of the privy council, and we can no longer refuse to admit the conclusion to which we are being driven. The privy council was established as a conscious measure of organisation by the second half of 1536; in all probability, it was formed suddenly from elements developed over the last year or two when the rebellion in Lincolnshire made necessary Cromwell's temporary withdrawal into obscurity.

It might be thought that with the end of the crisis the previous position was re-established, and that the privy council disappeared again. However, there was no change when the rebels were defeated. Though we do not get so many letters signed by the council as can be found for the critical months of 1536-7,¹ there are two such letters for the last three years of Cromwell's supremacy which indicate that the privy council continued to exist and that its membership did not change. It would be tiresome to give any more lists of councillors; may it suffice to say that the letters are signed by eleven and seven councillors respectively who all belonged to the privy council of 1536.² That there were many such

1. The preservation of these letters is, in any case, due to a modern transcriber. There are no originals among them, but they were copied with great care and are perfectly reliable.

2. L.P. xiii.I.628; II.968.

letters is clear from the words of some of Cromwell's correspondents who state ██████ themselves to be answering letters written by Cromwell and others of the council.¹

There is some rather more indirect evidence. In September 1538 Cromwell held a council attended by Audley, Cranmer, Tunstall, and others; the absence of two privy councillors, Norfolk and Sussex, was remarked upon - they were at court.² This shows that the privy council was not incapable of splitting up, some of its members attending the king and others Cromwell. This is most clearly shown in a letter from three privy councillors (Southampton, Tunstall, Kingston) to Cromwell, of September 1539.³ They were with the king who had ordered them to transmit certain of his wishes to the lord privy seal. The visit of the count palatine was expected; he was to go to Windsor and see the king, but if his business was "of no greate waight, than he may on thursday retorne to london and there bee answered by our Counsaile. And than wee desired to knowe his pleaser which of his Counsaile he wold have there, nameng vnto him my lord Chauncelour, my lordes of Norfolch Suffolch Oxford Sussex and Herford," to which list the king after some thought added Paulet ("Master Treasurer"). Although the king clearly thought of the privy council as

1. E.g., L.P. xii.I.639, 677, 1271; II.275; xiv.I.610.

2. L.P. xiii.II.446.

3. B.M. Tit.B.i, f.401 (L.P. xiv.II.183).

being in London, even the men at Windsor behaved like a proper council. After the king had called them and shown them a letter from Cromwell they "went to gidres and red your letteres, and considered the contentes thereof aswel as our simple wittes could serue vs; and that doone wee made our repaire vnto his said maieste", a decision being arrived at "after long consultation". The privy council was an accomplished fact, but its meetings and composition were, to a certain extent, still subject to the king's desires, and it had also to content with the problem of the great minister.

Where, after all, is Cromwell's place in all this? It seems almost as though his supremacy would have to be seriously doubted if from 1536 onwards there was an organised privy council which transacted business and governed England. That question has already been answered; we saw above what the truth was about Cromwell's relations with the council even at a time when it had already been organised as the privy council. There was a privy council, but it remained under his control. In his last years he had established himself so firmly that he could afford to stay away from court, and his correspondence shows that he no longer accompanied the king on progress. On such occasions some members of the privy council would go with Henry, while others might be assembled by the lord privy seal. To this extent the picture of 1536-7 was exceptional: a crisis

and the apparent eclipse of Cromwell had given the council a degree of unity, definiteness, and independence which it was not again to achieve until after Cromwell's fall. If the privy council was a fact from 1536, Cromwell did his best to modify that fact to suit his own ascendancy.

Yet Cromwell was, beyond reasonable doubt, responsible for the creation of the privy council. He was the man who under the king ruled England in the years when the new institution was worked out, and nothing of that kind happened without his knowledge. We have shown that he believed in conciliar government. The concentration of power and administration in a centralised body was part of his policy in the marches of England; he had established a "council" to administer monastic lands, and planned another for wards' lands. Twice in his years of power he noted down in his memoranda that he wished to do something about the council. In June-July 1534 he scribbled on the back of a letter "To remembre the Kyng for the establyshment of the Counsayle",¹ and in 1537 we have another note, "Item touching the king's council".² It is the first entry which is particularly interesting. The establishment of the council - that could mean only that some fundamental reform was being planned for the king's council as

1. L.P. Add.944. The date is given by the mention of a free election for the monastery of Bindon - cf. L.P. vii.821.
 2. L.P. xii.II.1151(3).

early as 1534. What Cromwell's plans were was shown when the crisis of 1536 suddenly produced the organised privy council. That could not have been the work of a moment but must have rested on preparations, on earlier and deliberate development, and Cromwell's note proves who was at the back of it. He himself planned and developed the council by 'withdrawing it more secret together' and by giving it the organisation of the privy council. He did not need the advice tendered in 1538 by Sir Philip Hoby who thought he had found a new and useful pattern in the emperor's council, for by then the English privy council was established.¹

On the other hand, Cromwell can hardly have failed to see that a fully developed privy council would detract from his own supremacy. Indeed, we have seen that there are signs that his rule became less unquestioned and less unrivalled towards the end of his life. The new privy council, organised and permanent, provided an arena for the struggle for power under the crown which had not existed in the old, informal, and fluctuating "inner council". This is not the place to rehearse the party struggles of Cromwell's last months; the evidence is scanty enough, in all conscience, and what there is has been

1. Cf. L.P. xiii.II.974(2), p.416. Too much has sometimes been made of Hoby's notes. He was putting down what his expedition to Spain led him to believe would be necessary for the better administration and defence of the realm, but there is no evidence that his advice was taken. He cannot be credited with the paternity of the privy council.

reviewed more than once.¹ Cromwell's fall was sudden, but there had been signs of his weakening position for well over a year, and it was in the council that he found his rivals, not in the sphere of administration. There he remained supreme till the end, so much so that his fall was delayed by several weeks because there was no one else who could get money out of parliament and take other necessary steps.²

Cromwell was, therefore, faced by a dilemma. He wished to create an organised council for the better government of England, but he did not wish it to endanger his own supremacy. Once again we find that dual purpose which runs through so much of his administration - organisation and personal ascendancy - and once again the same kind of solution was adopted. The privy council was organised, given a clerk and restricted membership, provided with a good deal of important work, but it was not allowed to develop into its full and final form. No register was kept and Derby's clerkship was at times a farce; the appointment of Paget in August 1540 marked, after all, as definite a step as the record indicates. If there was a council book it was apparently kept privately by Cromwell himself, and the extant series of registers begins rightly after his fall. The whole organisation of the privy council was worked

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1. The best short account from the point of view of the privy council is A.F. Pollard's in E.H.R., xxxviii(1923), pp.46f.
 2. L.P. xv, pp.xxx-xl; Merriam, i.289f.; Pickthorn, Henry VIII, pp.428f.

out under and by Cromwell, but his personal control and ascendancy held it suspended. When he had to retire into the background, as in 1536, or when he disappeared altogether, the privy council became a manifest reality. At other times, its nature, its work, and its competence were powerfully modified by the personality of the lord privy seal who had created it but continued to keep it under his control as best he might, and as far as the strength of his position with the king allowed. When that began to weaken the privy council became immediately more important, and in the end Cromwell found that he had laid out a garden in which his rivals could flourish.

Chapter 6.

CROMWELL'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF ADMINISTRATION.

Cromwell must have realised how the control of the council, and with it the control of the machinery of government, was slipping from his hands; whether he also realised that the organisation of the privy council, carried out by himself, had smoothed the path for his adversaries, that is another question. In this newly established body, drawn tightly together and acquiring a corporate existence through its novel continuity of membership and frequency of meetings, the opposition to Cromwell could gather strength. Its various elements found here a meeting ground - the disgruntled hatred of Norfolk and the nobles, the ambitions of the rising men like Riche and Wriothesley, the fears of the conservatives in religion. It was in the privy council that these groups also found a leader - in Gardiner - who was as able and unscrupulous as Cromwell himself, and more in accord with the ageing king's increasing caution and desire for the religion of his youth. Most important of all, the establishment of the privy council undermined Cromwell's indispensability, for it could seemingly supply the quality which had made him great and take his place where hitherto he had been unique and undisputed. No one but Cromwell could administer, until the organisation of a permanent govern-

ment suggested that even in this he could be superseded. What need was there of the lord privy seal now that he had taught the council to govern efficiently and effectively?

Thus Cromwell was cast off and went to his doom, but his place was not filled. Whatever ambitions it may have had, the council could not make itself supreme while the old king lived, and while his shadow, increasing in bulk and terror, hang over all his ministers. They settled down to the tedious routine of government, attempting to do what one man had done for seven years, and not making much of a success at it. It did not take Henry long to discover this; barely seven months after a "ragged and boocherly miser" had in so ungoodly a fashion performed the last "office" on Cromwell,¹ Henry was casting Cromwell's death in the teeth of his council, "saying that upon light pretexts, by false accusations, they made him put to death the most faithful servant he ever had".² But it was too late, and the rest of the reign is a sad tale, lacking both the somewhat extravagant splendour of the Wolsey years, and the sombre and terrible purposefulness of Cromwell's decade, and exemplifying at every turn that there can be no glory or greatness, or even a decent measure of success, without hard work, a set intent, ability, and efficiency. There is no better testimony to Cromwell's greatness than the unmistakable

1. Hall, Chronicle, p.839.

2. L.P. xvi.590.

collapse of the administration after his fall. The forms and outlines of the machine which had worked so well under him remained and were even added to, but the difference showed where it mattered - in the result.

Let us bring together the conclusions which have emerged from this study of some aspects of Cromwell's administration. In two and a half years he rose from near-extinction to supreme power under the crown, and he achieved this by working his way up within the administration. He spread his influence by accumulating a number of offices which enabled him to exercise direct control, in particular in the various sections of the financial and secretarial organisations. As regards the former, he cut short the rise of the chamber by making it one of a number of departments, both because he could not exercise unlimited control over a household office and because he wished to help on its existing tendencies to become an organised department of state; he assured his own freedom of action first by himself becoming a treasurer for the king's money and later by adopting the treasurer of first fruits and tenths as his private paymaster; and he initiated the system of revenue courts and in general increased the departmentalisation of the royal finances. The secretariats of the signet and privy seal were further organised, and an attempt was made in theory to restrict the use of these seals; the privy seal in particular

began its downward career which ended with its becoming merely a superfluous stage in an administrative process, while Cromwell's policy for the signet was similar though he did not intend to deprive it of its functions in connection with the king's correspondence. In practice, however, this "regular" use of the seals was little in evidence while Cromwell himself held the reins of government, though it at once became apparent at his fall. Lastly, we have seen that Cromwell turned the informal inner ring of the council into the organised privy council, though he prevented its full development by the force of his personal rule.

Several times we have had to point to clear evidence of a "dual purpose", of two lines of policy running through Cromwell's practice in the organisation of the administrative machine. We discovered a desire to organise on bureaucratic lines in the setting up of the revenue courts, the theoretical treatment of the seals, the organisation of the privy council. But another desire has been as clearly marked, the desire to maintain flexibility and lack of bureaucratic organisation so as to preserve Cromwell's personal autocracy. Organisation there was to be, but not to the extent of tying the hands of the organiser himself. Personal ascendancy and a dictatorial attitude we might have expected; organisational activities and a genuine desire for administrative reform we might have

hoped for. What we were given proved to be a perplexing mixture of the two, the more certainly true because it met us in every aspect of Cromwell's administration which we investigated. There is rather more in this than the common human failing to ride roughshod when the chance is offered, for here is a man who deliberately set about reforming the government and as deliberately put aside those reforms. Why did he trouble at all to pass acts of parliament and to organise machinery, when he did not apparently intend to use them? The contradiction is real enough, and the explanation must reside in the mystery of Cromwell's mind and character, so that it ought to throw some light on the personality the discovery of which was one of our starting points.

It ought first to be noticed that the two lines of policy were by no means always concurrent. They were so in the financial administration where the undertaking of a personal treasurership went side by side with the further departmentalisation of the chamber, and where the setting up of the formal department of the augmentations was not allowed to influence the informal arrangements for first fruits and tenths. But things were somewhat different in the other matters which have been discussed. Cromwell drew up his departmental rules for the signet office in 1534, and the act embodying his ideas for the two seals was passed in 1535. In each case the organisa-

tion was followed immediately by obedience to the rules and later by an increasing disregard for them. Similarly, the privy council was established by 1536 and reached its full development in that year, during the time of the northern rebellion; afterwards there were signs of a partial return to a less fully developed organisation. It seems, therefore, that Cromwell was most active in reforming the administration at the beginning of his supremacy. When he took over he set about overhauling the machinery of government and giving it a new efficiency, for it had been allowed to run down somewhat under Wolsey and in all probability still more in the interval since the cardinal's fall. In the course of this overhauling a number of innovations were introduced. However, once the organisation had been revised and the minister's instruments improved it was less necessary to adhere to the letter of each rule; Cromwell was now more absolute in his control and could afford to risk unauthorised and even arbitrary action; and for these reasons organisational activity, so strong in the early thirties, was less obvious during the last years of his supremacy.

It follows that there is no insoluble inconsistency in our "dual purpose". Cromwell's first consideration was the preservation and expansion of his personal control; this is shown by the manner in which he conducted the government - through

his private letters and his private servants - as well as by his accumulation of offices and the views of contemporaries who turned to him for everything. However, he used his personal control to reform the administration, and his ideas of reform took the shape of bureaucratic organisation. Cromwell was, therefore, not only a man of great ability and application, but he was also masterful and well aware of the reality of power. The picture of Henry's servile lackey, which is sometimes painted, always a tool and never himself the craftsman, can be discarded. Here was a minister of real greatness who ruled because he concentrated his attention on the weapons of political power; he took hold of them and made sure that they were always kept sharp and serviceable. There was, however, another and more important side to Cromwell. Not content with exercising power and government, he deliberately set himself to reform the administration. His work in this sphere (which alone has been our concern) proves, as would prove an investigation of his larger work in state and church, that he was a man of ideas, a practical statesman with a plan for the future. We have been able to show that in administrative matters he put a plan into practice which the future was to prove right and requisite.

In a recent discussion of the problem of political power, a German historian of political thought defined the "highest

level of true statesmanship", in particular in the period of Machiavelli and More, in words which have a strange applicability to Thomas Cromwell. "It is a question of the secret of truly responsible political action; of the ability to think ahead, even while the fight is on, to the new permanent order which is to result; of the moral justification of the struggle for power which is derived from the duty to replace an outworn legal order by a new and better one; of the evaluation of raison d'état as a piece of moral reason, not merely political cleverness; of the consequent self-restraint imposed on the will to fight, so that in the end the unity of the moral consciousness may be preserved despite all the antinomy inherent in the practical work of politics."¹ We have but discussed one, and perhaps a minor, aspect of Cromwell's work, and we must not claim too much. Certainly we cannot ascribe to him any very moral principles, in the ethical sense usually given to that term. But he lived in an age when an "outworn

1. G.Ritter, Die Dämonie der Macht (Stuttgart, 1947), p.207: "Es geht um das Geheimnis wahrhaft verantwortungsbewussten politischen Handelns; um die Fähigkeit, schon im Kämpfen selbst die neue Dauerordnung, die daraus folgen soll, vor auszudenken; um die sittliche Rechtfertigung des Machtkampfes aus der Verpflichtung, eine veraltete Rechtsordnung durch eine bessere neue zu ersetzen; um die Bewährung der Staatsräson nicht als blosser Staatsklugheit, sondern als ein Stück sittlicher Vernunft; um die Selbstbeschränkung des kämpferischen Willens, die daraus folgt, so dass schliesslich die Einheit des sittlichen Bewusstseins trotz aller Antinomie der praktisch-politischen Aufgaben erhalten bleibt."

legal order" had clearly broken down, when the struggle of politics was almost more naked than it had ever been, and when this nakedness was for the first time unequivocally recognised by the philosophers of the state. This much may be said that Cromwell was no mere patching politician, but a statesman who in everything saw clearly where he was going and had a definite intention and purpose in all he did. His reform of the administrative machine was a significant point in this general purposefulness.

This brings us to the question of the place occupied by his administrative work in the development of the government of England. The eight years during which he was at the helm were a vital period in the country's history, in the history of its church, and also of its administrative organisation. Looked at with regard to what went before and what came after, the administration is seen to have been influenced more by that line of Cromwell's work which has been described as a desire to organise bureaucratically. It was natural that the work of government should show signs of a new spirit, of greater energy and efficiency, when the chief minister was a man who made sure of his close personal control of every department. The personal character of Cromwell's rule gave to the administration that strength of purpose and rapidity of action which are particularly noticeable when the 1530's are compared with the last

years of Henry's reign. But if he had done no more than infuse a new spirit into an old order, there would be little to say of Cromwell as an administrator beyond the fact that he was a man of vigour who could make others work harder and better. That aspect of his work died with him, and his true greatness as an administrator lay in his reforms. Cromwell consciously changed and improved the machinery wherever he found it necessary. He was a practical reformer intent on providing himself with the best tool that circumstances required and made possible.

At the same time, even the most empirical of men must be influenced in his solutions to problems not only by the nature of his material but also by the bend of his mind, and Cromwell, as we have seen, showed again and again that he had a very definite idea of the kind of solution which he wished to apply. He aimed at centralisation; power was in the last resort to reside in him alone (under the king, of course), and from him all orders were to flow downwards and outwards through clearly defined channels. To do this he needed a bureaucratic organisation. In principle he disliked all methods which smacked of the informal, though he could be very informal indeed where it suited his personal ascendancy, and he showed this dislike in his treatment of the chamber, of the privy seal and signet, and of the loose "inner council". Cromwell was the first

groat modern reformer of the administration of England, the more so because unlike Henry VII he was only a minister and therefore reluctant to rely on the royal household. He could be satisfied only with a more permanent and more fully organised machine.

The administration which emerged after Cromwell's fall was therefore different in many ways from that which Cromwell had inherited. His fall was necessary to reveal the full extent of his reforms which the shadow of his own overwhelming personality had hitherto obscured. The royal revenue was now allotted to a number of organised departments, and there was no question any longer of an informal treasurer, dependent on the king alone, receiving and expending the better part of the money on which the state was run. The erection of the courts of first fruits and of general surveyors was merely a logical expansion of Cromwell's methods which Cromwell himself had found undesirable or unnecessary because of his personal rule. The later measures of drawing these departments together, first by fusing the courts of augmentations and of general surveyors, and later by including them under the umbrella of the reformed exchequer, did not detract from Cromwell's work; in a way they completed it in that they replaced his personal government by the kind of organised machinery on which he had taught his successors to rely.

The same development can be seen in the other branches of the administration with which we have dealt. The records of the privy seal have proved to us that the reforms which he had carried out in the departments of that seal and the signet were allowed to come to full fruition when he fell; his work in this sphere, too, was marked by the transformation of the mediævally loose and semi-organised weapons of the royal will into the bureaucratic members of the modern state. The same applied to the council; the organisation of the privy council proper, the basis of all future development of governmental bodies, was certainly the most important administrative reform of Cromwell's decade. It, too, aimed at making administration more efficient by making it more centralised and more permanent, and centralisation and permanency are the two hall-marks of bureaucratic government.

While the modern state was the work of its great rulers, whether kings or ministers, it would have been impossible without an organised bureaucracy. The new monarchy needed a new and different kind of servant, salaried and fairly secure of his post, and willing to do his work at the bidding of whatever government was in power. Henry VII had made a beginning when he picked his leading ministers from classes which had no traditional claim to government, but the task was really a wider one and became particularly important with the

eclipse of the church. Clerics in minor orders had so far supplied the vast majority of the lower ranks of the civil service, but after the Reformation possession of any kind of orders was no longer either a safe way to these appointments, or necessarily even a recommendation. The new state needed a new civil service, and Cromwell stepped into the breach with that system of patronage - the patron-client relationship, and the advancement in the royal service of men who had proved themselves in the minister's service - which in its essentials lasted until the administrative revolution of the 1830's. We cannot here enlarge on a subject with which we are, strictly speaking, not concerned, but a brief word seemed necessary in order to show that what Cromwell began lasted for 300 years, and also in order to indicate that the bureaucratic basis was not overlooked for that bureaucratic superstructure of which we have spoken at such length.¹

Thus Thomas Cromwell, who wished to make his king the autocratic master of a national state in which the national church would be but a servant of the crown, being a man of practice and not of theory, determined to provide the new monarchy with a structure of government suitable to its needs.

1. Cf. the case of one Cromwell's "clients" who was promoted to the civil service, above, p.350. For a view on Cromwell's "fatherhood" of the patronage system and modern bureaucracy, cf. D.Mathew, Social Structure in Caroline England (Oxford, 1948), p.4. More detailed research into this point is still necessary.

He realised that this meant centralisation and organisation, the result being bureaucracy. He never finished his work, and local government, for instance, remained largely unaffected despite such measures as the re-invigorating of the local councils and the stricter control exercised over local commissions. But in his work on the administrative machine he made a considerable and determined beginning on that transformation which has given us the modern state with all its attendant advantages and evils. Not all his work bore fruit; the fact that he did not create an autocracy such as Richelieu founded in France (for that would seem to be the nearest parallel to his intentions) was due to circumstances inherent in the country and its history - particularly perhaps to the absence of a standing army, the fact that Elizabeth differed in many ways quite essentially from her father, and the rise of a new and militant spirit in the second half of the sixteenth century to take the place of the almost byzantine obedience to a divinely hedged king which characterised the first half. Much of his work, however, stood the test of time, and no part more so than his reform of the administration and the ideas underlying that reform.

Appendix A.
TRANSCRIPTS OF DOCUMENTS.

A(I). The financial machinery when Cromwell came to power
(P.R.O. SP 1/67. ff.32-7).

(Passages between +...+ added by Cromwell himself).

f.32, a Memoriall for the kinges highnes for the regarde of his
 (endd.) ffiances

f.33 A Memoriall for the Kinges Highnes, declaring the kynde of
 thingis wherin Rishith yerelye aswell his Certein Reuenues
 as his Casual Reuenues and who be officers to his highnes
 in that behalf.

The thesaurer
 of Englonde

ffurst, the yerelie Reuenues and pro-
 ffites growing of the Kingis Custumes
 and Subsidies, accompted for in his ex-
 chequere by the Custumers of his portis.

The Master of
 the wardes

Item, the proffittes and yerelie Reue-
 news growing of his Wardes and of theyre
 Landes and Tenementes, accompted before
 the generall Surueyours by the Master of
 the Wardes.

The surueyours
 of the lyuereys

The Issues proffittes and Summes of Money
 yerelie groing to the king by the Sur-
 ueyours of the kingis Lyuerois, accompted
 before his generall surueyours.

The Butlar of
 Englonde

The yerelie proffittes growing to the king
 of his Butlerage, Recayued and taken by
 the Butlar of Englonde and accompted be-
 fore the generall surueyours.

The Surueyours
 of vacacions of
 Busshopriches
 and Abbasies

The yerelie proffittes and Reuennewes
 groing to the king by the surueyours of
 the vacacions of Bisshopriches Abbasies
 and priours, accompted before the gonorall
 Surueyours.

The surueyours of
 the Restitucion
 of the temporal-
 ties of Busshopes
 abbotis and pri-
 ours

The yerelie proffittes and Reuenues growing
 yerelie to the Kingis highnes for the Ro-
 stitucion of the Temporalities of Bisshopes
 Abbotis and priours, accompted before the
 generall Surueyours.

The Surueyour
of the kinges
wooddes

The Surueyoura of the kingis Wooddes for
Woodde sales made yerelie on thisside
and beyonde Trent, accompted before the
general Surueyoura.

The Clarke of
the Hanaper

The Issues proffiten and yerelie Reuenues
groing to the King in the office of the
Clarke of Hanaper for his gret Seale, for
writtes of Enteres, fines, and other
written and patentes, accompted for be-
fore the generall Surueyoura.

f.33v The Chancellor
of the duchye
of Lancastre

The yerelie Issues Reuenues and proffiten
groing to the king by the Receipours
generall and particular of the Duchie of
Lancastre, accompted before the Auditours
of his said Duchie.

The Generall
Surueyoura

The yerelie Issues proffiten and Reuenues
groing to the king by the handes of his
Receipours generall, particular, and all
other his officers being charged with his
Landes, being accompted before the kingis
Generall Surueyoura; that is to saye,
Warwike Landes, Spencers Landes, Bucking-
hams Landes, the Duchie of Cornowall, the
Chamberleyn of Cheestre, the Chamberleyn
of North and Southwalles, and the holo
Principalite of the same.

The Exchequer

The fines amerciamentes and Recounsounce
taken forfeited and assessed yerelie,
groing in the kingis Courtes of his Chaun-
cerie, the Sterred Chambre, the kingis
benche, and his Commune place, shold be
Streted and accompted for in the exche-
quere.

The Exchequer

The yerelie proffiten Which sholde growe
to the king by his Exchotours for the pro-
ffiten coming of Outlaries, [Instructions]
(1) and other exchotis of Landes tenemen-
tes and Mouable gooddes and catalles,
sholde be accompted for in the exchequere.

- The Exchequer The proffittes and Reuenues with the proffers of his Sheriffes which growe vnto his grace of his Counties and free ffarmes +of his Cytyes & Townes+, yorolie accompted for by his said Sheriffes in the Exchequere.
- The Exchequer Recounsaunces ffines and amerciamentes forfeited and assessed before his Iustice of Assise, Iustices Shewers, Iustices of the peax, Iustices of quorum, and Iustice of Oyer Detormynor, sholde be strotid into the Exchequere and there accompted for.
- The Exchequer The yorolie proffittes growing to the king of the Recounsaunces taken and forfeited before the Thesaurer Chamberlens and Barons of his Exchequour, of Custumers, Receipouers, Alnegours, gageours, ffarmours, Sheriffes, and Exchotours, and other officers, accompted in the Exchequere.
- f.34 The Generall Surueyours The yorolie proffittes growing to the king of Recounsaunces taken and forfeited before the kinges generall Surueyours sholde be Declared and accompted for. +and what they Amownt to at this+
- The Chaunceler of the Duchy The yorolie proffites growing to the king of Recounsaunces and obligacions forfeited, ffines amerciamentis assessed by the kingis Chauncelour of the Duchie of Lancastre Remayning in the said Duchie; and Wolde be knownen What they be.
- The Exchequer Obligations for Employment of merchandises brought into the Realme, taken by Custumers of the kingis portes.
- The Exchequer Dettes Remayning vppon the heddes of Dyuers Custumers Alnegerous (1) Gageours Exchotours Sheriffis Receipouers ffarmours and other accomptantes in the Exchequere to be sene and Declared. +and what ys dow at this day+

The Generall
surueyours

Dettis Remaynyng vppon the heddies of Dy-
uers particuler Receipours and other
accomptauntes accompting before the kin-
ges generall Surueyours to be sene and
Declared What they be and what the (1)
amounte to at this daye. +dow to the
kyng+

The chauncelour
of the Duchie
of Lancastre

Dettes Remayning vppon the heddies of Dy-
uers particuler and generall Receipours
Bayliffes and other officers before the
Chauncelour of the Duchie of Lancaster to
be sene and declared what they be and
What the (1) amounte to at this daye.
+dow to the Kyng+

The Generall
surueyours

Recounsaunces forfeited before the Cham-
berlen and other the kingis officers
within his Countie Palantine of (2) Ches-
ter wolde be demaunded for & (3) sene and
What they amounte to at this daye. +dow
to the kyng+

f.34v The Generall
Surueyours

Dettes depending vppon the heddies of dy-
uers particuler and generall Receipours
of the said Countie Palantine, accompted
for and yet not paid, Wolde be sene What
they amounte to at this daye.

The Generall
surueyours

Recounsaunces fines Issues and amercia-
mentes forfeited within the principallite
of Wallis, as before the Chamberlens of
North and Southwales and also within his
Chauncerie of Pembrokeshire, Wolde be sene;
And also the dettes due by any of the ac-
comptauntes there to be known what they
be and what they amounte to at this daye.

The Generall
surueyours

The Receipours and other officers of the
Kingis Duchie of Cornewall accompting be-
fore the generall Surueyours Wolde be ex-
amyned, Wherein it ys (4) Supposed the
king to be moche dyspayned; and What det-
tes they be and what they amounte to at
this daye.

-
1. Sic.
 2. "of" corrected from "and".
 3. "&" interlined by scribe.
 4. "ys" corrected from "was".

The Generall
Surueyours

The yerelie proffites growng to the king
of his landes and tenementes within Caloe,
Guineses, Hamya, Marko & Oyo, and the Mar-
ches of the same, accompted before the
generall Receipours, Wolde also be sene.
And what dettis do remayne vppon the hod-
dis of the Accomptauntes accompting for
the said landes tenementes and other pro-
ffites growing of the said landes in Ca-
loe, Guineses, Hamya, Marko, Oyo, and other
the kinges landes aforesaid; and what
they amounte to at this daye. +And who
be the dettor, So that louy might be made
therof Spedelye+

[+The yerely proffyttes growing to the kyng+
The yerelie proffittes growing] (1)

f.35 The Warden &
(2) masters of the
kinges mynt

The yerelie proffittes growing to the kin-
ges highnes of his mynt within the towre
of London and other places within this
Realme Wolde be enquiered for and to knowe
what proffittes hath growen to his highnes
this Six yeres passed, which I thinke do
amount to a greate Summe of money.

The kinges Lear-
ned Counsaile

The Reuenues and yerelie proffittes gro-
wing to the Kinges highnes of Statutes
penall, And also of endes taken with his
highnes or Counsaile by obligacion, Indon-
ture, payment, or otherwise, for any maner
offence or forfaiture, Wolde be Declared
by abooke so that his highnes might be
acortayned therof yerelye.

f.36 The warden and
(3) Masters of the
kynges mynt

The yerlye proffyttes growing to the kyn-
ges highnes of his mynt within the Towre
of london And other places with (4) this
Realme wolde be [exal(5) inquiryd for and
to [So](5) knowe what proffyttes hath[C]
(5) growen to his highnes this [fify](5)
Syx yeres passyd, which I thinke do Amownt
to A grot Summa of money.

-
1. The two lines cancelled in the MS.
 2. f.35 in the hand of a different clork.
 3. f.36 in Cromwell's hand.
 4. Sic.
 5. Letters in square brackets crossed out.

A(II). "Account A", a specimen of Cromwell's accounts
(P.R.O. SP 1/72, ff.156-7).

f.156 Hereafter ensuyth the vow of the Accompt of Thomas Cromwell Esquire, Aswell of all and singuler Sommes of money by hym receyued to the vse of oure most drade Soueraigne lorde the king, as of all and singuler paymentes by hym made for oure saide soueraigne lorde and by his commaundement, ifrome the ffeast of saint Michell tharchangell in the xxiiijth yere of the reigne of oure said soueraigne lorde the king vnto the xvijth day of Decembre then next ensuyng.

that is to say

ffurst, chargid for Arrerages of the last accompt of the said Thomas Cromwell Esquire, endid at the said ffeast of saint Michell tharchangell Anno xxiiij^{to} Regis Henrici viijth

DCviiij li' xvij s' iij d' ob' q' di'

Also, receyued to the kinges vse by the said Thomas Cromwell Esquire sence the Determinacion of the saide Accompte, which was the Secundo day of Aprill inclus', vnto the foresaid xvijth of decembre exclus', as by the particuler bookes therof examynid more playnly it may appere

xxvth DCiiv li' xj s' x d' ob'

Some totall of the Recopt with the Arrerages

xxvjth CCclxiiij li' ix s' ij d' q' di'

wherof

In sondry paymentes made by the saide Thomas Cromwell Esquire, of and for the Affaires of oure saide soueraigne lord the king and by His commaundement, within the tyme aforesaid, as by the bookes therof examyned it may more playnly appere

xxiiijth DCvj li' vj d' q' di'

Ande so remaynith dowe to the king

MDCliiij li' vj d' q' di'

for the whiche

f.156v Ther is remayning in the Custody and charge of William

Body, seruaunte to the said Thomas Cromwell Esquire, the said xvijth day of decembre

MCCliij li' xij s' di' q'

whorof

Ther is due to oure said soueraigne lord the king the foresaide xvijth day of decembre, as is abouenaide

MDClviiij li' vj d' q' di'

And so Remaynith in the Custody of the saide William Body in money of the said Thomas Cromwelles Esquire the saide xvijth day of decembre

Diiij^{xx}xv li' xj s' v d' ob' q'

And more ther is lent by the saide Thomas Cromwell Esquire of his owne moneye to sondry persons, as it apperith by the bookes therof examynyd

Diiij^{xx}xliij li' vj s' viij d'

r.157 ifynes for knyghtes Sensid by the said Thomas Cromwell Esquire to the kinges vse and nat paid, as it apperith by the obligacions therof examynyd, the foresaid xvijth day of decembre

MCCliij^{xx} li' vj s' viij d'

ifynes mad the (1) said Thomas Cromwell Esquire with sondry persons spirituall and temporall to the kinges vse whiche be vnpaide, with CCCC li' for the ifyne of the elect Bishopp of Chester, the said xvijth day of Decembre

xij^uCCl li' v s' j d'

Money lent to sondry personnes by the kinges commaundement and delyuered by the foresaid Thomas Cromwell Esquire, within the tyme aforesaid

Mxxx li'

The some of the specialtes forfeitted to the kinges vse by sondry persones for conueying of corne, as it apperith by obligacions remayning in the custody of the said Thomas Cromwell Esquire the said xvijth day of decembre

MDiiij^{xx} li' xliij s' iiiij d'

Summa of the ffynnes and the money lent with the forfotton
Aforesaid

xviiij^{li} xxxj li' v s' j d'

f.157v (endorsed) the accompt of Mr Cromwe[ll]

A(III). The earliest surviving warrant for payment addressed to Cromwell (P.R.O. E 101/421/1).

Henry R

By the king

Where as we vndrestande that ye haue receyved to our vse certain Somes of money of the Rentos and Revenues of the Landes sumtyme apperteignyng vnto the Colloge within our Vniuersitie of Oxonford, Late called the Cardinall Colloge, We signifiye vnto you that we haue appointed our trusty and welbiloued Maister William Tressham and Maister William Beattes, Clerkes, to receyve by the waye of prest the Some of Oon hundred poundes sterling of the said Money, for the payement of the Diettes and wages of suche Scolers, studentes, and stipendiaryes as now bee Resident and abidyng within the said Colloge. Wherefore we woll and commaunde you that furthwith vpon the sight herof, Of the said money beyng in your handes, ye not oonly deliuere vnto the said Maister William Tressham and Maister William Beattes or to either of theym the said Some of Oon hundred poundes to thentent abouespecified; But also that you receyve again to our vse at the ffeast of Saint Michell tharchaungell next comyng the said Some of oon hundred poundes of the Rentos and arrearages of suche Landes and Reuenues as hath been by vs Lately assigned to the said Colloge for the sustentacion and mayntenance of the studentes, Scolers, and stipendiaryes of the same. And these our Letteres shalbe your sufficient warraunt and discharge in this behalf. Yeuen vndre our Signet, at our Monasterye of Chertsey, the xviijth daye of Iuly, the .xxijth yere of our Reigne.

To our trusty and welbiloued
seruaunt Thomas Cromwell.

A(IV). Cromwell's orders to the Signet Office.
(P.R.O. DL 42/133, ff.1-4v).

- f.1 A direction taken by me, Thomas Cromwell, principall secretary to the kinges highnes, aswell concerning the attendance of the clerkes of the Signet as certeyne other thinges for the ordre of the said office, xx^{mo} die Iulij, Anno Regni Regis Henrici Octavi xxvj^{to}.

First, that monethly twoo of the Clerkes of the Signet, that is to saye, Thomas Derby and William Pachet ioyntly as one person with Henry Conway for his ayed in consyde-
 ration of his age, one monethe, Thomas Wryothesley and Iohn Godsalue an other monethe, as their courses shall from [tyme](1) monethe to monethe com, (the said Thomas Derby and William Pachete begynnyng their attendance acor-
 ding to this direccion the ffyrst of August next ensuyng), shall give their Attendance vppon the kinges highnes and his graces principall Secretary for the tyme being; as-
 well endeuoring themselves to do their duties in the expe-
 dition of suche the kinges highnes affayres as shalbe appointede vnto them, as to see the haule furnyschede by
 them selues or by their Clerkes, for the ease, further-
 aunce, and relief of suche power enteres as shall resorte
 to the Cowrte for Iustice, According to the olde ordre
 and custume vsede hertofore in the said office.

Item, that none of the saide Clerkes at any tyme receyve
 receyve (2) or take, ne to his or their handes, the monoy
 fee or fees growing of any Seale or seales; but to re-
 myt the receipt of the said fee belonging to the seale
 fully and holly to him that shalbe deputed therunto.

- f.1v Item, that none of the saide Clerkes within the court in
 tyme of his fellowes moneth intromede himself with the
 writing of any warraunt, bill to be signed, or any other
 writing to be presented to the kinges Maiestie or to his
 graces moost honorable counsaill, but to leave the ad-
 vantage of all such writings to the other tow Clerkes
 that shall then gyve their attendaunce; onles he shall
 have therunto by the kinges highnes or his graces prin-
 cypall secretary speciall commaundement.

1. "tyme" crossed out.
 2. Sic.

Item, that euery of the Clerkes at the dealing of euery warraunt, letter, or other thing, what so euer it be, shall entre the same with his oon hande in to a booke to be made for that purpose; And that at euery monethes ende the deuident shalbe made and delyvered to euery of the Clerkes his parte (1) of suche thinges as haue been passed in that moneth.

Item, [that noon of] (2) the saide Clerkes of the Signet shal not permitt or (3) suffre any personne to write in the king hault, oonles the same be saruaunt to the lorde privie seale, the principall Secretary, or to oon of the clerkes of the Signet, or to oon of the clerkes of the privie Seale.

Item, that no lettere passe the Signet but that the same be first examined by oon of the clerkes of the same, and the saide clerk, so hauing examined it, doo write in the neyther parte of the saide lettere for a testimonye of his said examination his name.

Finally, it is appointed that the last daye of euery moneth the two clerkes whose cours shalbe to waite the moneth folowing shall repaire to the place wher the principall Secretary shalbe, or in his absence to suche other as shall haue the keeping of the seale, and so recoving their deuydentes as is appointed bifore; and they to entre euer their attendaunce the first daye of the moneth folowing.

-
1. Corrected from "pakto".
 2. "that noon of" crossed out.
 3. "or" corrected from "of".

A(V). Thomas Derby's appointment as clerk of the council.
(P.R.O. C 82/664. no.25).

Henry the eight by the grace of god King of England and of
 ffraunce, Defensour of the foith and lord of Irland, To
 our trusty and right welbiloued Counsaillour Sir Thomas
 Audeley, knight, our Chauncellour, greting. We woll and
 commaunde you that vnder our greato Seale, being in your
 keping, ye make forth our letteres patentee in maner and
 fourme folowing: Henry the eight &c, To our trusty and
 right welbiloued Counsaillour sir Bryan Tuke, knight, Trea-
 sourer of our Chamber, and to the Treasourer of our Chamber
 That herafter shalbe, greting. We late you witt that of
 our grace especiall and more mocion and in consideracion of
 the acceptable service to vs hertofore doon by our trusty
 and welbiloued seruaunt Thomas Derbye, oon of the clerkes
 of your (1) signet, we haue gemen and graunted vnto him the
 rowme or office of Clarke of our Counsaill attending vppon
 our person which Richard Eden lately had; To haue and to
 holde the same office to our said seruaunt and his suffi-
 cient Deputie or his assignee, During his lif; together
 with the fees and wages of twenty poundes by yere, And with
 all other profittes, commodities, preheminences, aduantages
 and emolumentes therunto belonging or in any wise appertey-
 nyng, in as large and ample maner and fourme as the said
 Richard Eden or oon (2) Beloue or any other hertofore
 hath enioyed and perceived in and for theexercising of the
 said office; his said wages and fees to be paid from tyme
 to tyme by the handes of you, our Treasourer, frome the
 feast of Mydsomer last passed, and so quarterly During the
 lif of our said seruaunt as afore. That expresse moncion
 &c. And a transumpt of thies our letteres to be entrid
 in your boke of warrautes shalbe your sufficient warraunt and
 discharge in this behalf. Yeuen vnder our priue Seale, at
 our Manour of Grenewich, The xxviijth day of Ianuary The
 xxiiijth yere of our Reigne.

T. Ioffroy

(endd.) Derby

(Delivered into chancery on 29 January
 1533).

1. Sic.

2. Blank in MS.

Appendix B.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

This bibliography contains only manuscripts, books, and articles actually quoted in the thesis.

B(I). Manuscript Sources.

(a) Manuscripts at the Public Record Office.

This list gives the call number as quoted in the thesais with a full description of each class. The figures in brackets are page references to Guiseppi's Guide.

C 66.....Chancery, Patent Rolls (i.31ff.).

C 82.....Chancery, Warrants for the Great Seal (i.68ff.).

C 193.....Chancery, Miscellaneous Books, Crown Office (i.62).

DL 5.....Duchy of Lancaster, Entry Books of Orders and Decrees (i.326).

DL 12.....Duchy of Lancaster, Privy Seals and Warrants (i.333).

DL 28.....Duchy of Lancaster, Various Accounts (i.326f.).

DL 41.....Duchy of Lancaster, Miscellaneous Books (i.331f.).

E 36.....Exch., Treasury of Receipt, Misc. Books (i.202ff.).

E 101.....Exch., King's Rememb., Various Accounts (i.78ff.).

E 135.....Exch., King's Rememb., Eccles. Documents (i.91).

E 159.....Exch., King's Rememb., Memoranda Rolls (i.96ff.).

E 163.....Exch., King's Rememb., Miscellanea of the Exch. (i. 98ff.).

E 164.....Exch., King's Remembr., Misc. Books, Series I (i.100ff.).

E 323.....Exch., Augmentation Office, Treasurer's Accounts of the Court of Augmentations (i.161).

E 336.....Exch., First Fruits and Tenths Office, Misc. Books (i.164f.).

E 351.....Exch., Lord Treasurer's Rememb., Pipe Office, Declared Accounts (i.118ff.).

E 369.....Exch., Lord Treasurer's Rememb., Misc. Books (i.128f.).

- E 404.....Exch. of Receipt, Warrants for Issues (i.191f.).
- E 405.....Exch. of Receipt, Rolls etc. of Receipts and Issues
(i.192f.).
- GD 15.....Gifts and Deposits, Manchester Papers (i.349).
- PSO 2.....Warrants for the Privy Seal, Series II (ii.132).
- Req 1.....Court of Requests, Books of Orders and Decrees (i.271).
- Req 2.....Court of Requests, Proceedings (i.270).
- SP 1.....State Papers, Henry VIII (ii.3f.).
- SP 2.....the same, folio volumes (ii.4).
- SP 3.....the same, Lisle Papers (ii.4).
- SP 6.....Theological Tracts (ii.4).
- SP 60.....State Papers, Ireland (ii.18).
- Wards 9...Court of Wards, Misc. Books (i.275ff.).

(b) Manuscripts at the British Museum.

Arundel MS 97 (Accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber, 1537-1541).

Cotton MSS

Caligula B.iii (state papers, Henry VIII).

Galba B.x (the same).

Otho E.ix (papers concerning the navy and shore defences).

Titus B.i (state papers, Henry VIII).

Titus B.iv (papers concerning finances).

Cleopatra E.iv (papers concerning the monasteries).

Cleopatra E.vi (papers concerning church affairs).

Egerton MS 2603 (Misc. historical papers, 1494-1696).

Harleian MS 1878 (papers concerning customs, etc.).

Harleian MS 5174 (finances, Richard III - Henry VIII).

Lansdowne MS 156 (Caesar Papers - Treasury).

Lansdowne MS 168 (Caesar Papers - Exchequer).

Lansdowne MS 171 (Caesar Papers - Transcripts).

Royal MS 7.F.xiv (state papers, Henry VIII).

Royal MS App.89 (the same).

Stowe MS 163 (Misc. papers).

Stowe MS 554 (account of the treasurer of the chamber, May -
September 1542).

Additional MSS:

4160 (miscellaneous papers).

9835 (papers concerning the household of Henry VIII).

21481 (accounts of the treasurer of the chamber, 1509-18).

25114 (papers, chiefly relating to Gardiner's embassy).

33376 (declaration of the state of the treasury, 1531-2).

34324 (Caesar papers).

35818 (signet register of Sir Ralph Sadler, 1540-2).

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