

Agricultural Protection in Berkshire and Opposition to the Collection of Agricultural Statistics

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In the course of discussion of my Paper on Wiltshire Agriculture in *Southern History* (4) 1982 John Lowerson suggested that the Poor Law Inspector involved generated local antagonism and that this could have been a factor as well as the suggested political opposition to the collection of agricultural statistics in 1854.

Since then I have been able to comprehensively evaluate the position in Shropshire which produced similar opposition, and proved that the prime mover opposing the scheme was the Agricultural Protection Society.

So too in Berkshire where as discussed in the present paper the Berkshire Agricultural Protection Society attempted to wreck the scheme.

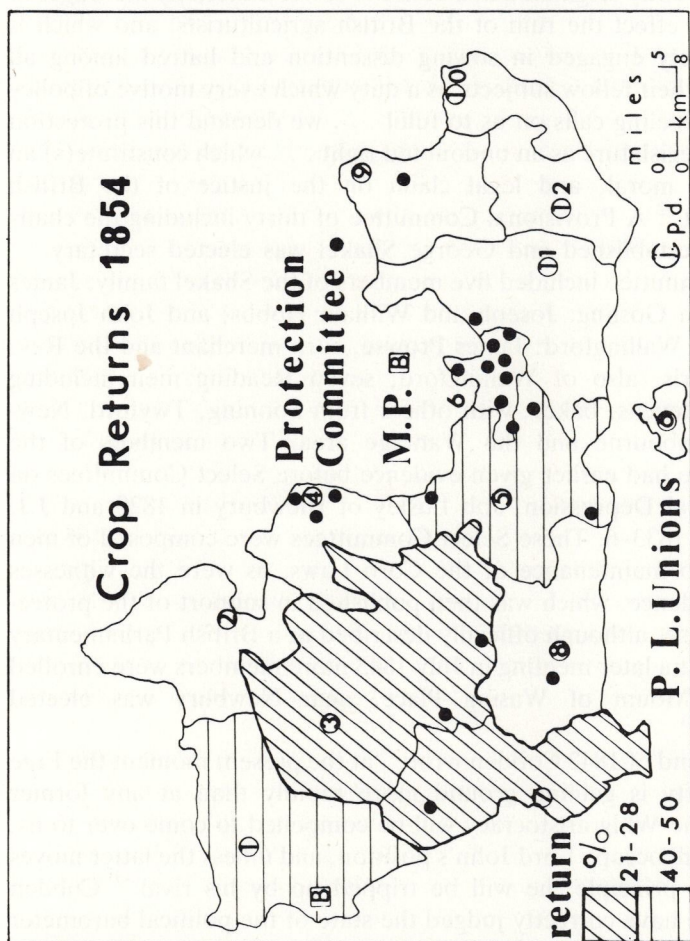
Early in the 1840's it became clear that the Anti-Corn Law League was easily leading the propaganda campaign to establish Free Trade and to abolish the Corn Law duties. On March 8th 1842 the League extended its organisation by setting up twelve regional centres each with a local agent to coordinate its propaganda activities. The success of the Free Trade lobby goaded the Protectionist interest into rather belated counter activity and the Central Agricultural Protection Society was brought into being. The institution of the League's Southern District covering Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Berkshire and Hampshire in the Spring of 1842 made the Berkshire landowners and farmers realise that the enemy was at their gate and that action was imperative. 'A meeting of Gentlemen connected with the Agricultural Interest was held at the Upper Ship Inn, Reading, on Saturday, 17th June 1843, Col. Blagrove of Calcot Park in the chair, it was resolved . . . that it was expedient to form a Berkshire Association for the Protection of Agriculture.'¹

It was stated that the society was not political, but serious consideration was needed by all who had embarked their capital in the pursuit of British agriculture, it being declared that, 'The

maintenance of a Protective system is indispensable to the British agriculturist because a country oppressed by peculiar and heavy burdens of general and local taxation cannot successfully compete with foreign states, where the soil is equally fertile, where rents, tithes and taxes are scarcely known and where labour is forty per cent cheaper than in England. . . . To oppose the designs of the League, which evidently originated in a desire to lower materially the wages of labour, to effect the ruin of the British agriculturists, and which is now actively engaged in sowing dissention and hatred among all classes of their fellow subjects, is a duty which every motive of policy and right feeling calls on us to fulfil . . . we demand this protection from the legislature as an undoubted right . . . which constitute(s) an equitable, moral, and legal claim on the justice of the British parliament.'² A Provisional Committee of thirty including the chairman was established and George Shakel was elected secretary.

The committee included five members of the Shakel family; James and Edwin Gosling; Joseph and William Hobbs; and John Joseph Allnatt of Wallingford; James Prowse, corn merchant and the Rev. John Harris, also of Wallingford; seven Reading men including William Stevens, baker; with others from Sonning, Twyford, Newbury, Lambourne and the Wantage area. Two members of the Committee had earlier given evidence before Select Committees on Agricultural Depression, Job Lusley of Blewbury in 1820 and J.J. Allnatt in 1833-6. These Select Committees were composed of men devoted to maintenance of the Corn Laws, as were the witnesses giving evidence, which was then published in support of the protectionist cause, although officially described as a British Parliamentary Report. At a later meeting in July 1843 more members were enrolled and W. Mount of Wasing Place, near Newbury was elected President.³

At the end of 1842 Cobden wrote, 'at the present moment the Free Trade Party is gaining ground more rapidly than at any former period. The Whig aristocracy will be compelled to come over to us, for Peel will occupy Lord John's position, and unless the latter moves on to our principle, he will be tripped up by his rival.'⁴ Cobden appears to have correctly judged the state of the political barometer and although both Peel and Lord John Russell had yet to get off the fence, other observers were also assessing the evolving political climate. In Berkshire, the Agricultural Protection Society observed that 'we must rely more on our own exertions, and less on the unsupported efforts of our friends in Parliament.'⁵ As part of their exertions to effect the defeat of the League it would be necessary to 'associate for mutual defence'. In pursuance of such association,



Key to Figure 1

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|--------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Faringdon | 2. Abingdon | 3. Wantage | 4. Wallingford |
| 5. Bradfield | 6. Reading | 7. Hungerford | 8. Newbury |
| 9. Cookham | 10. Windsor | 11. Wokingham | 12. Easthampstead |

George Shakel travelled to Northwich, Cheshire in March 1844 to lend support and advice to the Cheshire Agricultural Protection Society then being inaugurated. Among the promoters with Shakel on the platform were Lord F. Egerton and Sir Philip Egerton, both of whom were later to be found in the company of Viscount Barrington, Philip Pusey and R. Palmer, the Berkshire Members of Parliament during the critical debates on the motion to repeal the Corn Laws.⁶

The members of the Berkshire Protection Society recognised quite correctly that the League was trying to set one section of the agricultural interest against another. Cobden in League tracts particularly aimed at the tenant farmers stated that the Corn Laws gave them no real protection, they failed to guarantee a certain price level, and were a snare and a delusion produced by the landlords to distract their attention from their real grievances such as the Game Laws and the refusal to give long leases. English agriculture needed more draining, more fertilisers, and long leases to encourage tenants to invest capital and to make improvements.⁷ Even where leases were granted as on College and Church lands, such as that held on a seven year lease by John Houghton of Sunning Hill, tenants were obliged to pay very high fines on renewal. He had broken up heath land which in 1830 'was in a state of nature', concerning which he commented 'if you happen to break up your waste lands, or build a new house and premises, and lay out a large sum in making it a fit residence to live in, they come at the end of the seven years and make you pay an increase upon your own capital invested.'⁸

Cobden's tracts were designed to touch upon what was a continual bone of contention between landlord and tenant, the lack of compensation of unexhausted improvements made at the tenants' expense. Thomas Owen, a land agent of Hungerford, in giving evidence on tenant-rights in Berkshire, confirmed that an outgoing tenant received no compensation for capital expended on the purchase of artificial food or manure. The point here is that the expenditure on artificial food would be reflected in the enriched quality of the dung which had to be left on the farm thus 'The manure of the two last years we consider the in-coming tenants' property'. Nor was any compensation paid for more durable improvements of the land. This would apply to capital laid out on fences, buildings, draining, the chalking of sand and clay lands, which cost 35 shillings to 50 shillings per acre plus cost of haulage.⁹ Tenants changed over at Michaelmas which meant that although the out-going tenant was recompensed for operations of cultivation made since harvest, he would not be paid for what he had spent on under-sowing a grain crop with a seeds mixture for a temporary ley or a long term grass course. This was a point

made by Haughton.¹⁰ In 1847 Philip Pusey, a Berkshire member and Secretary of the Royal Agricultural Society, promoted a Bill to secure compensation for tenants, and this Bill was referred to the Select Committee of 1848. Although the measure passed the House of Commons in 1850 it was thrown out in the Lords.

The League was also concerned to drive a wedge between tenant farmers and the agricultural labour force. The effect of this was to cause the Protectionists to express their solicitude for the welfare of the agricultural labourer and to spell out the disasters which would eventuate should repeal become a reality. The Berkshire Protection Society spoke of the need to protect the agriculturalist 'on whom tens of thousands of labourers and their families depend for employment'.¹¹ Peter Carter, Secretary of the Cheshire Agricultural Protection Society spoke of the 'tens of thousands of agricultural workers who would be thrown out of work as thousands of acres now cultivated for corn must be thrown out of cultivation by Free Trade'.¹² These and many other sentiments expressed at Protection society meetings were obviously quotes from some policy document drawn up by the Central Committee and issued to the individual county societies.

R. Palmer, one of the members for Berkshire, stated in the House that 'when there was a considerable addition to the price of corn, there was always a rise in wages in agricultural districts; when there was a great fall, wages in like manner fell. When prices were unfavourable for farmers, the labourers were worst off.'¹³ In other words the farmers' losses were passed on to the labour force, which hardly accords with the concern for the labourers as expressed by the Protectionists outside the House. The Duke of Richmond, one of the Protectionist movement hardly minced matters when he declared that 'farmers should be able to get their labour at the cheapest possible rate'.¹⁴ On Caird's Statistics for 1850 with the rate at 7s. 6d. it would appear that Berkshire had successfully achieved the Duke's target.¹⁵ The public expression of concern for the welfare of the agricultural labourer was a concept less easy to find translated into practice. If one examines the statements made by J.J. Allnatt, one of the leading members of the Berkshire Agricultural Protection Society, it is clear that labour costs were regarded as excessive to the point that they detracted from the profitability of Berkshire farming. In the Wallingford area there was an excess of labour 'and we found that unless we employed the labourers they came on the poor-rates and were paid for idleness; and if they are employed in the farm we have as a set off the increased produce. . . . At this time, for instance, there are four men employed on this farm constantly in threshing, which is a very

great proportion to a farm of this extent (163 acres); but the produce being so great it is absolutely necessary'. In looking at the parish as a whole for the year Michaelmas 1834 to Michaelmas 1835, the 'amount paid to labourers and other poor above the produce of the whole wheat crop was £578 2s. 8'.

Although it was not expressly stated it was probable that the roundsman system was in operation with the able-bodied poor being taken round to the farms to be found employment by the ratepaying farmers. In any case the overall effect would be to depress wage rates. Allnatt obviously resented the size of the labour bill even though it was essential for the efficient management of what was a highly productive farm. 'I should observe that one reason why the amount of labour is so high upon this farm is, the extraordinary amount of produce; the extra labour increases the produce, and then again the increased produce creates a demand for more labour'.¹⁶ Apart from the cost of the labour input, profits on Berkshire farms were said to be epressed by the low price obtained for wheat. In support of this, Allnatt submitted a ten year table contrasting wheat prices with annual profit or loss on a farm of 163 acres. If his table is analysed it reveals that the average price for the profitable years 1825–1832 was 70s. 8d. per quarter. For the loss-making years 1832–5 when a total loss of £459 was made, the average price was 48s. 9d. a quarter. It was stressed that the land in the Wallingford area was highly productive, as was the stock-land, with farms fully stocked with sheep and cows. Wheat yielded five quarters per acre and a productive harvest would naturally tend to depress prices in the Wallingford market or in Reading, because of so much grain being available. Apparently this was recognised and farmers kept a proportion of the harvest in the stack for at least a year in the attempt to regulate the amount entering the market. However, not to be able to make profit from land yielding 40 bushels of wheat to the acre seems incredible, while to carp at the low price realised on a high yielding harvest was both to want one's cake and to eat it.

Although I would doubt Caird's estimation of Berkshire agricultural wage levels, the Wallingford district was at the bottom of the Berkshire league table in this respect. In Drayton parish between six and ten shillings was paid in summer and five to nine shillings in winter. At Milton the rates were nine shillings all the year but only 8s. 6d. in cash if beer was given. If the rates for some of the other Protection Society members' parishes are examined, Job Lousley's was comparable with the Wallingford rates, while in the President's parish of Wasing, ten shillings was paid all the year with extra for harvest work. Other Committee members were at Lambourne,

where the rate was nine shillings and at harvest double rate; at Newbury where ten shillings was paid at Thatcham with extra at harvest, ten shillings at Boxford throughout the year and at Speen ten shillings in winter and fourteen shillings in summer. The Faringdon rate was eight to nine shillings in winter and twelve shillings at hay harvest.¹⁷ Over the next quarter of a century the rates showed little change, if any. It was stated in 1860 that the average weekly pay was ten to eleven shillings; in the lower part of the county rates were rather less but nearer to London they were somewhat higher.¹⁸

The standard of cottage accommodation in Berkshire was generally poor and the county along with Dorsetshire, Bedfordshire, and parts of Shropshire exhibited some of the worst to be found in England. Arguably, Wantage Poor Law Union had a lower standard than other parts of Berkshire. In the parish of Hanney, some cottages had only one bedroom and no garden. There were several ashpits and dunghills almost over the shallow wells. In East Hendred, some cottages were very poor and accommodation was on the whole bad, many were old and out of repair. Many were very bad and overcrowded, among which the police stated that 35 had only one bedroom and of those said to be very bad, 9 belonged to a single landowner, 3 to a farmer, 2 to a miller, 5 to smallholders and 2 to unknown proprietors. Culley, the Assistant Commissioner conducting this survey, reported, 'I saw more signs of poverty in this village than in any one I visited in Wantage Union, except perhaps in East Challow'. In West Hendred, as in Sparsholt and some other parishes, boys of seven and eight were set to work in the fields, and of one cottage it was reported that a carter, his wife and nine children, the eldest of whom were 17 and 20 years of age, all occupied one bedroom or loft. The children were nearly naked and were as dirty as was the home.

At Letcombe Regis, several cottages had only a single bedroom, there were no drains, ventilation was very bad and there was a ratio of one privy to every five cottages. However, W. Palmer, who was Vice-Chairman of the Guardians proclaimed 'there are no very bad cottages here'. In Job Lousley's parish the boys were set to work at the age of ten years, the cottage accommodation was described as being 'simply abominable' and there had been no school until the vicar, the Rev. Richard Hooper, built one at his own expense. There were some enlightened landowners, such as Colonel Lindsay who built model cottages at East Lockinge and N. Humfrey at Upton, who built a few new cottages each year but the position in Wantage parish drew down the comment 'the cottages are generally owned by small

proprietors, who are utterly reckless of the health and morals of their tenants'.¹⁹

It has been indicated that in Berkshire the condition of the agricultural labourer could hardly be described as flourishing or even as desirable. Neither in respect of remuneration received nor in the quality of the accommodation he had to accept, could the labourer be said to have profited from the benefits so glowingly portrayed by R. Palmer, the Berkshire member, in a long speech to the House. 'He would put it to any person acquainted with the face of the country during the last twenty years, whether a more scientific system of cultivation did not now prevail in all places; whether more capital was not employed upon land; and whether the produce as not much greater now (1846) than at that period? . . . the farmer has now just begun to recover strength; he was getting remunerating prices for his produce; the labourers were better paid; and a general prosperity commenced to prevail in the country'.²⁰ These were the rewards of protection of which Job Gringell, a Wiltshire labourer of Bremhill stated 'I be protected, and I be starving'.²¹

Thomas Owen of Hungerford in 1848 hardly supported the view that more capital was being employed on the land, on the contrary tenant farmers held back because of the lack of security for their outlay of capital. 'The tenants would do a great deal more if they could be certain as to being repaid; every tenant who has capital I am convinced would outlay it. . . . if the tenant had security he would lay out more money'.²² As for members of the Agricultural Protection Committee such as Allnatt, the more scientific system of cultivation and a greater produce failed to give them that belief in a general prosperity as described by R. Palmer in the House. His speeches as with those of other members, were as much designed for home consumption through the columns of the Berkshire Chronicle and the Reading Mercury, as for the enlightenment of the House. 'His constituents were awaiting with the most intense anxiety the result of their deliberations (in the House), believing that upon it would depend either their future prosperity or permanent distress, . . . many respectable tradesmen he had conversed with were all convinced of the alarming consequences which would ensue from these measures'.²³ Among such tradesmen who would read this in the Chronicle or Mercury were members of the Protection Committee such as John Webb Shakel, chemist and druggist of Maidenhead; John Allnatt, coal and salt merchant of Wallingford and James Sharp, printer and stationer of Reading. 'There was a complete stagnation in the market for agricultural produce. No miller bought now (1846) except for present purposes, as it was 'from hand to

mouth'. No business had been done in the market of the county, which he represented, the market of Reading, since the period of the proposition' (Peel's motion to Repeal the Corn Laws after a three year interval) . . . 'That the stagnation was a most material disadvantage to the farmer . . . and it created a difficulty in making up his rent, fully equal to a difference of 7s. or 8s. a quarter in the price of his produce'.²⁴ It is difficult to see how he arrived at these figures but the speech would have appealed to Committee members such as William Stevens, baker of Reading; James Prouse, corn merchant of Wallingford; Charles West, farmer of Flowers Farm, Reading and landowners like Colonel Blagrove of Calcot Park; William Shakel of Erleigh Court, and W. Mount of Wasing. Palmer's speeches demonstrated an interest in those matters which were of concern to several specific elements in the Berkshire electorate and in so doing he showed a considerable degree of political skill.

In the event Palmer together with Philip Pusey and Viscount Barrington, cast their votes against Repeal but lost the day. On the principle that one should gain on the swings what had been lost on the roundabouts, the Protectionist interest pressed for annual compensation of £500,000 for agriculturalists should they be defeated on the issue of Repeal.²⁵ Such a claim naturally followed on from the constantly reiterated declaration by all Agricultural Protection Societies that they demanded 'protection from the legislature as an undoubted right' . . . and this 'constituted an equitable moral and legal claim on the justice of the British Parliament'.²⁶ At grassroots level John Twynam of Houghton, near Basingstoke, expressed the hope that the tenant farmers would direct 'their whole efforts to the attainment of that compensation to which they are entitled for this wanton invasion of their vested interests'.²⁷ Other than the constant assertion that they were legally entitled to protection against foreign competition and that the Corn Laws must be retained to maintain the incomes of agriculturalists, with the taxpayer and the consumer meeting the expense of this subsidy to a sectional interest, the Protectionist lobby had no specific policy to explain why this should be so, nor had they any other interests strong enough to bind them together.

Although many, possibly the majority of Berkshire farmers for long after 1846, believed that they had been betrayed and denied their rights, there were more thoughtful moderate elements who realised that Peel had little option but to push through Repeal. Philip Pusey wrote, 'Since all these political appearances I have felt it necessary to speak out, and have told the farmers we are beaten, and that protection, if any protection could be retained, would never

more be of any use to them, . . . protection to agriculture, a sickening sound, has been our only bond of union, and where is another to be found?'²⁸ The ruination of farmers which it had been predicted would inevitably follow from removal of the crutch of protection, did not come about and farmers who adopted more progressive methods, were able to report an increase in revenue from their land. These were the men who had put into practice the system of 'high feeding' promoted by Philip Pusey in 1842.²⁹

George Harriet, who farmed near Basingstoke was chairman of the Basingstoke Agricultural Protection Society and thus was no friend of Free Trade. In 1848 he reported 'I formerly farmed on the four-field system; about seven years ago I was induced to try the six-field system and since that time by keeping more stock on oil cake etc., there has been a greater productiveness of the soil'. In addition he applied bones, guano and salt to the land. Harriet drilled his turnips on land which had been dressed with these artificial manures and was able to double his sheep stock. 'I have this year not only enough to keep my extra stock, but I was able to take 300 ewes into keep this spring, and if it had been a good turnip year I should have sold £200 worth of hay. . . . on the adjoining farm to me the young man who has taken it has been fattening oxen and sheep, which he has sold off, and keeping the exact amount of stock, even longer, in fact, than it used to do as a breeding farm; this is all extraneous, both beasts and fat sheep, I never knew one to be fatted on the farm formerly; he fats some 200 or 300 head beyond the stock that for years has been carried on that farm; the oil-cakes used has increased and very much improved the manure'.³⁰

Harriet stated that other tenants were doing the same on these chalk downlands, which were comparable with those of Mid-Berkshire (figure 2). In 1860 mangolds were finding favour on the Mid-Berkshire lands and were given 'copious dressings of good farmyard manure, with a liberal application of guano or superphosphate of lime . . . and 4 to 6 cwt of salt per acre. . . . The Berkshire farmers are fully alive to the value and importance of artificial fertilisers . . . and go now as regularly to the manure manufacturer for dressing for their root-crops, as to the market for corn or oil-cake for their fattening stock. . . . The root crop consumed by stock (usually sheep) receiving oil cake or corn in addition, paved the way for the growth of succeeding corn crops'.³¹ From this it would appear that improved methods based on high feeding or high farming, had replaced the earlier dependence on protection to maintain the profitability of Berkshire arable farming.

However, a considerable sector of the agricultural interest re-

mained resentful after Repeal and looked for some suitable opportunity to express their feelings. Gladstone, who was Secretary for Colonies in 1846 attracted much opposition at the time for his support of Peel in the debates which led up to Repeal.³² In 1854, he again brought down the resentment of farmers and landowners even more forcefully expressed, when he increased income tax to 1s. 2d. in the pound and refused to exempt the farming sector. At the same time the Board of Trade introduced a trial scheme for the collection of agricultural statistics from eleven counties including Hampshire, Berkshire and Wiltshire.³³ In some counties there was considerable opposition to the scheme, such opposition being motivated by suspicion that the scheme was a prelude to new taxation, or it was an additional chore to be added to the workload of Poor Law staff, through whom the scheme was administered, or it was a government sponsored intrusion into the private affairs of farmers which must be vigorously opposed.

In the case of Bromyard Poor Law Union, Worcestershire, the farmers were reluctant to make returns 'from an apprehension that it would be used by the government for the purpose of taxation, and would disclose too much to their landlords'. In Acham Union, Shropshire it was stated that there was suspicion that 'the inquiry is an undue interference with private business; the return is for the additional taxation of the landed gentry; and a fear by the tenant farmers that the information is sought for and will be individually used by the landowners against their tenants'. In Bradfield, Wantage and Windsor Unions of Berkshire, while the Guardians refused to undertake the administration of the scheme, the clerks agreed to cooperate 'although objecting to the inadequacy of the remuneration'.³⁴

The most serious opposition appears to have been politically motivated and leaves the impression that agriculturalists felt that at last there was an opportunity to oppose a government scheme and to upset the dark designs of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, W.E. Gladstone. The Berkshire Poor Law Inspector, Grenville Pigott reported that 'the number of blank and missing schedules refer to many of the most considerable occupations in the country, solely due to the refusal of the occupiers to fill up the forms themselves or to permit the enumerators to make such inspection of their occupations as would enable them to do so'.³⁵ In Wiltshire and Hampshire, the Inspector had no doubt that, 'among those who have shown an unfriendly disposition towards the inquiry, there is a small class, consisting of owners as well as occupiers of property, whose hostility has been prompted by party and political feelings, and in a few

instances the former have not scrupled to use the influence, which their position as landlords has armed them with, to prevent the occupiers, in some cases whole parishes, from exercising their own discretion in making returns'.³⁶

From figure 1, it may be seen that Faringdon and Bradfield Poor Law Unions made a statistical return of 40–50 per cent of the acreage under cultivation, while only half of this figure was forthcoming for Hungerford and Wantage Unions. The inference that the lower returns were politically inspired is strengthened by the fact that the adjoining Unions in Wiltshire and Hampshire were also defective. Thus Swindon and Faringdon Unions each produced opposition to the collection of the 1854 agricultural statistics; the same was true of Andover and Hungerford Unions: and of Basingstoke, Headley and Bradford Unions. These groupings can hardly be regarded as accidental and tend to support the statement of Hawley, the Inspector for Hampshire and Wiltshire that opposition was along party lines and was politically inspired.

In the Berkshire Unions, the political opposition by the members of the Agricultural Protection Committee is clearly to be recognised, as is the influence of Viscount Barrington in the Faringdon Union. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to discover any list of names of the individual members of the Protection Society despite searches made at the County Record Office, the County Library and the University of Reading Library. Thus, one has to infer that each of the Committee members would have enjoyed local support, while the Poor Law Boards of Guardians were composed in many cases of members antagonistic to the collection, such as tenant farmers, landowners, millers and other tradesmen and some of the clergy. It also needs to be said that what may be considered a plausible but unproven thesis in the case of Berkshire, becomes hard fact when in a county like Shropshire, it is possible to map the distribution of the hundreds of individual members of the Agricultural Protection Society and to relate these to the missing or deficient areas of collection of the 1854 agricultural statistics.

In Shropshire we may substitute Benjamin Disraeli for Viscount Barrington, with a political influence backed by Protection Society members extending from the Shrewsbury region northwards to the Cheshire boundary, completely coincident with the area in opposition to the collection of the 1854 statistics. In south Shropshire, the Ludlow Union made no return and this coincided with a large tract of country dominated by the Hon. H.R. Clive of Oakley Park, a protectionist whose tenant farmers were known members of the Agricultural Protection Society. Although the collection of the 1854

statistics for Berkshire did not enjoy the complete degree of success it merited, for reasons of opposition which relate back to the events of 1846, the collection went ahead and with the co-operation of the clerks to the Unions where the Guardians refused assistance, as in Wantage and Bradfield, the scheme arrived at a statistically satisfactory conclusion.

Analysis of the final results of the Berkshire collection indicates that in terms of acreage, Cookham, Easthampstead, Reading and Windsor afford virtually complete coverage. Newbury, Wallingford, Wokingham and Abingdon vary between 65–76 per cent of the computed acreage, while Bradfield and Faringdon yield a 40–50 per cent return. Wantage with 21 per cent and Hungerford with 28 per cent are the least satisfactory. The latter is to some extent an exceptional case inasmuch as some 50 per cent of the Union lay in Wiltshire and for which part no return was made. Thus the acreage contained in the statistics probably represents about 45 per cent of the Berkshire parishes in the Union.

Because of the influence exerted by Wantage, Bradfield, Newbury and Hungerford Unions on the corn average for the county it would be an unfruitful exercise to present acreages as a ratio per 1000 acres for the county. It can be said however that in Hampshire, where topography and soils closely match those of Berkshire, wheat, barley, oats and temporary grass showed a decrease of some 8 acres per 1000 total acres between 1854 and 1875. In all probability something of the same nature occurred in Berkshire. The livestock ratios shown in the following table are suggestive of this

Table A Livestock per 1000 acres

		cattle	sheep	pigs	horses
Berkshire	1854	58	601	104	38
	1875	78	669	78	33
Hampshire	1854	41	585	73	31
	1875	60	577	61	27

The sheep figure for Berkshire in 1854 is possibly too low, but the overall trend is clear enough. A slight move from arable to stock farming was in progress, thus fewer horses were required whereas cattle proportions increased by 35 per cent in Berkshire and 46 per cent in Hampshire. With downland arable farming committed to a sheep-barley economy, any decline in the arable acreage would involve an associated decline in sheep densities. This process is in evidence in Hampshire and must have operated likewise in Berk-

shire, thus supporting the view that county sheep densities in 1854 would be higher possibly of the order of 700 per 1000 acres.

In assessing the degree of coverage of the collection the map, figure 1, brings out the fact that the scheme was most successful in those Unions where the Protection Society was weakest i.e. Cookham, Easthampstead, Windsor, Newbury, Wokingham and Abingdon. In the case of Wallingford the committee members were Allnatt, coal merchant, Prowse, corn merchant and the Rev. J. Harris, whose activities were largely confined to the town and had little effect on the Union at large. Although there were at least seven of the committee resident in Reading, it was relatively easy to obtain a satisfactory return from the town. In contrast the coverage was least successful in those Unions where the Protectionist faction was able to exert the most opposition to the scheme.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

¹ *Berkshire Chronicle*, 24 June 1843.

² *ibid.*

³ I have to thank the County Library, in particular Ms. Daphne Phillips, County Local Studies Librarian, Reading for supplying transcripts of reports from the *Berkshire Chronicle* of June–July 1843 regarding the early history of the Berkshire Protection Society.

⁴ N. McCord, *The Anti-Corn Law League*, 1838–46 (1958) p. 136.

⁵ *Berkshire Chronicle*, 24 June 1843.

⁶ B.P.P. *Hansard* Corn Law debates (1846) p. 575–6.

⁷ N. McCord p. 143.

⁸ B.P.P. *Report of Select Committee on Agricultural Customs* (1847–8) (461) vii
Evidence of John Houghton question 4360.

⁹ S.C. *Agricultural Customs* Evidence of Thomas Owen questions 4585–6 4592.

¹⁰ Houghton question 4372.

¹¹ *Berkshire Chronicle*, 24 June 1843.

¹² *Macclesfield Courier*, 2 March 1844.

¹³ *Hansard* Corn Law debates (1846) p. 1108.

¹⁴ *Hansard* p. 352.

¹⁵ James Caird *English Agriculture 1850–51* p. 480 edition of 1966.

¹⁶ B.P.P. *Report of Select Committee on the State Of Agriculture* (1833) (612) v iii Evidence of J.J. Allnatt questions 777, 791, 792-3.

¹⁷ B.P.P. *Report of the Select Committee on the Poor Laws* (1834) Appendix B Evidence for Berkshire.

¹⁸ J.B. Spearing 'On the Agriculture of Berkshire' *Journal Royal Agricultural Society* xxi (1860) p. 43.

¹⁹ B.P.P. *Report of Select Committee on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture* xxxii (1867) Evidence for Berkshire pp. 391-5.

²⁰ *Hansard* 17 February 1846 Speech by R. Palmer p. 1105.

²¹ *Hansard* 17 February 1846 Speech by J. Bright p. 1126.

²² *S.C. on Agricultural Customs* Evidence of Thomas Owen questions 4599, 4604.

²³ *Hansard* Speech by R. Palmer p. 1102.

²⁴ *Hansard* R. Palmer p. 1106.

²⁵ *Hansard* Speech by Mr. Finch p. 538.

²⁶ Report in the *Berkshire Chronicle*, 24 June 1843.

²⁷ J.T. Twynam *Farm Account Book 1845-47* Ms. University of Reading Library Han 9.1.

²⁸ McCord p. 199.

²⁹ Philip Pusey 'On the Progress of Agricultural Knowledge during the last four years' *Journal Royal Agricultural Society* iii (1842) p. 205.

³⁰ *S.C. Agricultural Customs* 1848 Evidence of George Harriett questions 5288-93.

³¹ Spearing 15-16.

³² *Hansard* Speech by Captain Layard 17 February 1846 p. 1099.

³³ Note discussion in J. Phillip Dodd 'Wiltshire Agriculture in 1854 - the value of Board of Trade Returns' *Southern History* 4 (1982) 145-9.

³⁴ B.P.P. *Reports of Poor Law Inspectors on Agricultural Statistics* 1828 (1855). Report by John Graves on Worcestershire 70-76; Report by Andrew Doyle on Shropshire 77-79; Report by Grenville Pigott on Berkshire 56-58

³⁵ Grenville Pigott p. 57.

³⁶ Report of W.H.T. Hawley for Hampshire and Wiltshire p. 6.