

What was the significance of enfranchisement on the establishment of elementary education in England and Wales between the years 1870-1891?

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## Introduction

In 1866 famous author and Church of England theologian Frederick Denison Maurice wrote:

*“The words, Representation of the People, Education of the People, are continually ringing in our ears. It is felt by all, that Education and Representation must be connected with each other. How they are connected, how one depends upon the other, is a question of deep interest to England.”*<sup>1</sup>

Enfranchisement and the establishment of a national elementary education system are just two examples of the revolutionary nature of politics and societal change that occurred in Britain through the 19<sup>th</sup> century yet they can be seen as the most significant. In the late Victorian era, two parties were in Government, the Conservative and the Liberal Party who between them created the type of two party system that exists in Britain today. The Liberal Party developed from roots in the Whig tradition and became recognisable for the first time when its members formed an alliance to try to remove the existing Conservative Government in 1859 and from then on was recognised as the Liberal Party.<sup>2</sup> Although made up of many different factions, in essence, the Liberal Party represented the “new social forces in the country at large” and as such has become seen as a party of social reform.<sup>3</sup> The first reference to the Conservative Party as such was made in 1830 in ‘The Quarterly Review’.<sup>4</sup> The name was coined to escape the Tory legacy which was seen as backward looking and to reflect the image of a party which developed an ideology based around maintaining the status-quo whilst implementing necessary gradual change.<sup>5</sup> One thing that both parties did share in principle, in their own ways, was a laissez-faire philosophy which makes the fact that this era which was one of great social reform even more remarkable. This could be because both parties recognised the need to make themselves popular with the growing enfranchised population.

The magnitude, importance and revolutionary nature of the Second Reform Act of 1867 implemented one year after Frederick Maurice was writing is not to be underestimated.<sup>6</sup> The Great Reform Act of 1832 had enfranchised male owners of property worth £10 or more as well as £50 tenant holders in the counties. Moreover, in the boroughs male householders with property worth £10 or more were also included and this resulted in 1 in 5 males being enfranchised.<sup>7</sup> While this Act was clearly of great importance to the history and inclusivity of the British franchise, the Second Reform Act had an even greater impact, enfranchising “a

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Denison Maurice, *The Workman and the Franchise: Chapters from English History on the Representation and Education of the People*, (London: Alexander Strahan Publishing, 1866), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Adelman, *Gladstone, Disraeli and Later Victorian Politicians*, (London: Longman Group Limited, 1970), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, *Gladstone, Disraeli and Later Victorian Politicians*, (London: Longman Group Limited, 1970), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Blake, *The Conservative Party from Peel to Thatcher*, (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1985), 6.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 6-7.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Saunders, *Democracy and the Vote in British Politics, 1848–1867: The Making of the Second Reform Act*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2011), 1.

<sup>7</sup> John Garrad, *Democratisation in Britain Elites, Civil Society and Reform since 1800*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 10.

million new voters, doubling the electorate and propelling the British State into the age of mass politics”.<sup>8</sup> The final piece of really noteworthy legislation regarding the franchise in the Victorian era was the Third Reform Act of 1884. This Act, “enfranchised all male house owners in both urban and rural areas and added 6 million people to the voting registers”.<sup>9</sup>

Only three years later after the Second Reform Act, another transformative piece of legislation was passed, the 1870 Education Act otherwise known as the Forster Act which was named after William Forster the Liberal politician who introduced the Bill to Parliament. It was the first piece of British legislation that recognised education as a public service and ever since it was implemented it has always been “widely perceived as a momentous legislative landmark in the history of English and Welsh schooling”.<sup>10</sup> What’s even more remarkable is the incredible amount of legislation that followed. From the 1870 Education Act until the turn of the century, at least another 47 pieces of legislation, that aimed to improve or modify public education were passed in Parliament.<sup>11</sup> However of these legislative Acts, three stand out. The first was naturally the 1870 Education Act which established a formal public elementary education system in England and Wales. This was followed by the 1876 Elementary Education Act which in combination with other existing factory legislation, limited the number of hours’ children could work, effectively making education mandatory across England and Wales. Thirdly, the 1891 Elementary Education Act which abolished elementary school fees. The combination of these three legislative Acts provided the basics of what is generally considered a public education system today, state run, mandatory for certain ages and free.

Secondary literature suggests these legislative acts transformed education. In 1857, Prince Albert estimated of the 5 million 3-15 year olds in Britain, only two fifths attended school at all and that only 600,000 children aged 9 and over were in school, with just 4% of the child population attending for more than five years.<sup>12</sup> The 1861 census was marginally more encouraging, estimating that two-thirds of 5-9 year olds and 50% of 10-14 year olds were in some form of education.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, William Farr, a government statistician at the time estimated that just over 40% of the lower classes attended school between the ages of 10 and 14.<sup>14</sup> By 1900, 90% of children in were in enrolled in elementary education, attendance had been made compulsory during the period 1876-1880 and fees abolished in 1891.<sup>15</sup> This figure showed a substantial increase since the early 1860’s demonstrating just one of the achievements of educational reform in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Another achievement of 19<sup>th</sup> century educational reform was the increase in literacy rates. In 1851 only 69.3 % of

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<sup>8</sup> Saunders, *Democracy and the Vote in British Politics, 1848–1867: The Making of the Second Reform Act*, 1.

<sup>9</sup> The National Archives, “Getting the Vote”,

([http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/citizenship/struggle\\_democracy/getting\\_vote.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/citizenship/struggle_democracy/getting_vote.htm)), accessed on 5/07/2016.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon Baker, “The Romantic and Radical Nature of the 1870 Education Act”, *History of Education*, 30(2010):3, 211.

<sup>11</sup> Education England, “Education in England: a brief history”, (<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/timeline.html>), accessed on 10/03/2016.

<sup>12</sup> Lionel Rose, *The Erosion of Childhood*, (London: Routledge, 1991), 116.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 116.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 117.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Windzio, *Integration and Inequality in Institutions*, (New York: Springer Science Publishing, 2013), 24.

males in Britain were literate, rising to 75.1% by 1861.<sup>16</sup> By 1881, eleven years after the 1870 Education Act literacy rates had risen by a further 5.9 % meaning that a total of 86.5% of males were literate.<sup>17</sup> By the time compulsory education had taken full effect, there was an even greater percentage increase of 7.1% resulting in 93.6% of males being literate by 1891.<sup>18</sup>

Educational reform clearly had a transformative effect on the deficiencies that had existed in England and Wales prior to 1870. As explained already the equally transformative 1867 Reform Act had been passed only three years before the 1870 Education Act. In addition, the 1884 Third Reform Act had increased the number of men enfranchised before fees were abolished in 1891. This suggests there may be some causality between enfranchisement and the establishment of public elementary education. This naturally leads to this study's primary research question: 'What was the significance of enfranchisement on the establishment of elementary education in England and Wales between the years 1870-1891?' Were the two connected as Frederick Maurice was so certain of in 1866? To answer this question, I have decided to use the Historic Commons Hansard which provides access to the key Parliamentary sessions that resulted in these legislative Acts being passed. This seems a natural way to assess the impact of enfranchisement on the establishment of elementary education because it was within Parliament, that the government had to explain and justify to their fellow MP's why it was necessary to establish and develop a national system of elementary education. Thus, analysing, key Parliamentary sessions should reveal whether enfranchisement did impact on politicians' way of thinking and the arguments they used in debate to persuade Parliament to establish education. Doing so, should contribute to our understanding of the history of education by revealing why politicians decided to establish education in England and Wales. This paper shows that enfranchisement certainly did impact politicians' way of thinking and the arguments they used to justify establishing education. However, this is not to say enfranchisement was the sole factor or the most important factor in establishing public education because through this paper's approach I have also demonstrated that the reasons behind the establishment of education were incredibly complex and therefore to regard one factor to be more important than another is a bold claim. To understand the particular method I employed to analyse the Commons Hansard and reach these conclusions, a discussion of the existing literature surrounding the link between the franchise and the establishment of education is required because they are central to the methodology.

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<sup>16</sup> E.G. West, "Resource Allocation and Growth in Early Nineteenth-Century British Education", *The Economic History Review*, 23(1970):1, 42.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

## Literature Review

Examining the secondary literature regarding the link between enfranchisement and the establishment of mass schooling is often contradictory. David Wardle argues it was “no mere coincidence” that the establishment of a public education system occurred shortly after the extension of the franchise.<sup>19</sup> Authors who use these arguments seem to derive this view from two lines of thinking. First that enfranchisement gave people a political voice to put pressure on their local MP’s to provide education.<sup>20</sup> However, Andy Green argues that no evidence of a direct link between the two exists and the reasons behind mass schooling were much more “complex”.<sup>21</sup> Secondly, that education was granted immediately after the franchise because there was a need to educate the newly enfranchised population so that they could properly understand their new democratic rights.<sup>22</sup> However Gillian Sutherland argues against both of these stating that “there is not enough evidence to sustain...that, having enfranchised a whole lot of new people, politicians then started worrying about their fitness to vote, or along the lines that newly enfranchised voters began to demand action on education. Apart from anything else the interval of time between Reform Act and Education Act seems much too short.”<sup>23</sup> This is indicative of the contradictory nature that exists in the historiography concerning the link between enfranchisement and education. However, I would argue that Sutherland’s assertion that the time interval between the two was too short is an oversimplification. When the Second Reform Act was passed in 1867, enfranchisement was not, by any means, a novel concept that politicians or the public did not have time to understand or contemplate by the time the 1870 Education Act was introduced. There had already been enfranchisement in 1832 so it had been a long debated issue in British politics before it was extended again in 1867, meaning politicians and the public had understood its potential for many years. Furthermore, enfranchisement had occurred in other countries long before Britain, so it was not a completely alien concept to politicians who might have seen the need to educate the newly enfranchised population. For these reasons, it is plausible that enfranchisement did impact the 1870 Education Act. Thus, the aim of this literature review is to decipher this debate, yet to avoid the cyclical nature that exists within academia concerning the link between democracy and the establishment of education. To do this it may be worth, first analysing some of the leading theories that explain why the franchise was extended to begin with and what the after effects of this were.

I will now discuss the most prevalent theories in academia which seek to explain why the elite extended the franchise in Britain. Whilst this is not this paper’s focus it still is important for the reader to understand these theories because they have implications for this study’s primary aim and methodology which is to examine

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<sup>19</sup> David Wardle, *English Popular Education 1780-1975*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 26.

<sup>20</sup> Derek Heater, “The History of Citizenship Education in England”, *The Curriculum Journal*, 12(2001):1, 110.

<sup>21</sup> Andy Green, *Education and State Formation, The Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), 33.

<sup>22</sup> Heater, “The History of Citizenship Education in England”, 111.

<sup>23</sup> Gillian Sutherland, *Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: Historical Association, 1971), 111.

the impact of enfranchisement on the establishment of elementary education in England and Wales. What reasons would the elite in Britain have for extending the franchise? One would think granting the franchise would in the long term damage the elites' prominent position in society. Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson neatly summarise the three main theories in academia explaining why the ruling classes in western countries started to extend the franchise as well as providing an influential theory of their own. These theories are the enlightenment theory, the political competition theory (or political faction's theory) and the theory that the extension of the franchise was driven by the expanding middle classes.<sup>24</sup> While they give credit to these theories, they argue that the threat of revolution was the biggest factor in explaining why the franchise was extended.<sup>25</sup> I will now explain these in more detail and how different authors have reached these conclusions.

The Enlightenment theory contends that the elite gradually extended the franchise to more and more members of the public as their social values also gradually changed.<sup>26</sup> It is of course hard to find evidence that shows a direct link with changing values and the extension of the franchise. As Acemoglu and Robinson point out the most significant enlightenment writers Rousseau and Paine wrote long before the extension of the franchise.<sup>27</sup> Yet that is not to say this theory is not plausible. Some of the most influential writers and philosophers at the time such as Edmund Burke who, although conservative in nature, began writing about the threat of revolution and the need to accommodate the needs of the majority to protect the current social order. This demonstrated a change in moral values in response to the developing political situation.

Meanwhile the political divisions theory contends that the elite extended the franchise as different "factions" within the elite tried to garner further political support by bringing different social groups into the political system.<sup>28</sup> A theory that is also supported by Gertrude Himmelfarb. This theory is also plausible because after six failed attempts by the Liberals to introduce franchise reform, ironically it was the Conservatives who passed the highly influential 1867 Reform Act.<sup>29</sup> Disraeli feared that if the Liberals were to pass franchise reform and extend it to the majority, they would hold power for a "lifetime" and thus, took the bold move of implementing the 1867 Reform Act, a piece of franchise legislation that was even more radical than "the Chartists had demanded" in the 1840's.<sup>30</sup> This demonstrates how politics was gradually becoming more competitive, less about reaching compromise with other elite groups but instead garnering the support of the people to further their own party political causes and take support away from the opposition. In many ways this is also supported by Alessandro Lizzeri and Nicola Persico who argue that the franchise was extended to

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<sup>24</sup> Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, "Why did the west extend the franchise? Democracy, Inequality and growth in historical perspective", *The Quarterly Journal of economics*, 115(2000):4, 1169.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 1169.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 1169.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 1187.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Gertrude Himmelfarb, "The Politics of Democracy: The English Reform Act of 1867", *Journal of British Studies*, 6(1966): 1, 97-100.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

give “better incentives to politicians”, increasing political competition and as a result improve the quality of political institutions.<sup>31</sup> Yet the main problem with this theory is the fact that the strategy did not work for Disraeli, one year after passing the 1867 Reform Act the Conservatives lost the general election by a large margin.

The third view is that the middle classes were the “driving force behind the extension of the franchise”.<sup>32</sup> Robinson and Acemoglu summarise this theory as follows: The middle classes even though they had already obtained some political influence themselves, recognised the need to campaign for the enfranchisement of the lower classes.<sup>33</sup> Doing this, it is argued would enable the middle classes to cement their own future social and political position because the newly enfranchised working class would naturally support the politicians that had granted them the vote in the first place.<sup>34</sup> However, Robinson and Acemoglu are rightly sceptical that the middle class were a strong driving force for social reform because it was an era in which the middle classes strongly believed in laissez-faire principles and very little evidence exists that indicates MP’s felt pressured by them.<sup>35</sup>

Acemoglu and Robinson give credit to all three of these theories but contend that the threat of revolution was the biggest factor in leading to the extension of the Franchise.<sup>36</sup> Edmund Burke’s famous earlier book “Reflections on the Revolution in France” rang true among his fellow Conservatives and Liberals alike. Perhaps these ideas were enhanced even further by the Chartist movement which had caused riots in Britain in the 1840’s. In response the elite could extend the franchise which would dampen the demand for revolution while still maintaining the social order by ensuring a property qualification still existed. However, this according to Acemoglu and Robinson led to an adverse effect that the elite hadn’t predicted. Once the franchise had been extended, it also meant MP’s had to listen to the electorate or potentially lose their seats. This led the public to demand ever increasing public spending to fund developing public services which in turn led to the greater taxation of the elite to pay for it.<sup>37</sup>

The threat of revolution theory as argued by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson assumes that as countries democratise, public spending rises correspondingly including education but is it really that simple? Toke S. Aidt et al, take the opposite view arguing that after democratisation public spending is actually U-shaped and in many cases, public spending falls.<sup>38</sup> Their thesis states that after the 1867 Reform Act, those boroughs

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<sup>31</sup> Alessandro Lizzeri and Nicola Persico, “Why did the Elites Extend the suffrage? Democracy and the Scope of Government, with an Application to Britain’s Age of Reform”, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 119(2004): 2, 708.

<sup>32</sup> Acemoglu and Robinson, “Why did the west extend the franchise? Democracy, Inequality and growth in historical perspective”, 1190.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 1168.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 1169.

<sup>38</sup> Toke S. Aidt et al, “The Retrenchment Hypothesis and the Extension of the Franchise in England and Wales”, *The Economic Journal*, 120(2010): 547, 990.



which contained enfranchised middle and upper middle class voters led to fiscal retrenchment for the most basic public amenities.<sup>39</sup> Those boroughs which had a greater proportion of poorer, newly enfranchised voters or boroughs where there was a small increase in newly enfranchised voters, saw spending increased hence the U-shape.<sup>40</sup> While the Second Reform Act was of course revolutionary, by 1870 still only 57% of the population were enfranchised and enfranchisement was unevenly distributed across the country.<sup>41</sup> Thus, it is hard to imagine that there was any systematic pressure across the country that threatened to unseat MP's if they did not support an increase of expenditure on public amenities including education. They support this with statistics that convey that total public spending was roughly the same between the years 1860 to 1900.<sup>42</sup> Peter Lindhert also casts doubt on the idea that democratisation in Britain led to increased public spending, specifically with regard to education. He highlights the fact that in 1880, Britain's GDP per capita was the equivalent of \$3,500(1990 international dollars) but Germany, France and the USA had barely reached \$2000.<sup>43</sup> By 1900 this figure had risen to a mammoth \$4,500 for Britain yet Germany had barely eclipsed \$3000 by 1910, France's hadn't reached \$3000 by 1910 and the USA was just lagging behind Britain's with a GDP per capita of \$4000 in 1900.<sup>44</sup> Despite the fact Britain was by far eclipsing other nations in terms of GDP per capita, its percentage public support ratio for primary education was nearly half that of Germany, France and the USA between 1850-1900.<sup>45</sup> This shows that despite having a large income, an enfranchised public didn't demand greater provision for elementary education. This again casts further doubt on the democratisation hypothesis that as more members of the public become enfranchised there is a greater demand for public services such as education and supports Green's statement that there is no direct link between enfranchisement and the establishment of education.<sup>46</sup>

However, I argue that the comparative analysis of public support for education put forward by Lindhert's is misleading for two reasons. Firstly, the public support ratio he uses does not measure the support of the public for education, it simply conveys the level of funding per child in relation to the average income.<sup>47</sup> This does not prove that public support for greater educational provision was low, it instead just demonstrates Britain spent less per child in comparison to other countries in relation to its own GDP per capita. Or that money was redistributed unequally rather than there being a lack of public demand for public education. Secondly, even though funding per pupil in relation to its GDP per capita was lower in Britain education still rose remarkably after enfranchisement. In order to create a national system of education a large proportion of public

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 996.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 990-994.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 990-994.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 997.

<sup>43</sup> P. Lindhert, "Voice and Growth: Was Churchill right?", *The Journal of Economic History*, 63(2003):2, 330.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 330.

<sup>46</sup> Green, *Education and State Formation, The Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA*, 33.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Lindhert, *Growing Public: Social Spending and Economic Growth Since the Eighteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 89.

expenditure must have been redirected. Something which is supported by other authors such as David Mitch. In 1860, before the 1870 Education Act was enacted the Committee of Council on Education reported: schools on average received 4% of their income from endowments, 25% from voluntary contributions, 6.6 % from other sources, 25-27% from fees and 38.6% from government grants.<sup>48</sup> By 1898 the same Committee reported that the average school now received 66% from government grants, demonstrating a significant increase in government funding after enfranchisement and the 1870 Education Act which had previously been even lower. In addition, Mitch points out that total expenditure per pupil rose by 127% between 1859 and 1900 which supports the theory that public expenditure on education did rise correspondingly with democratisation.<sup>49</sup> While total funding on education may have been perhaps comparatively lower than other countries, there was still a significant increase and therefore something must have altered the political will to implement this.

So what is significant about these four theories seeking to explain the extension of the franchise? After all the purpose of this paper is not to find out why the franchise was extended but what impact it had on the establishment and development of public education in Britain. I argue that these theories are significant for this study because if any of these theories are correct, they should have in principle have also impacted the establishment of public education. Take the enlightenment theory for example. If the social values of the elite really did change as they saw the moral case for extending the franchise, one would assume they would have a similar attitude to public education. For if it was unjust for the upper classes to enjoy a monopoly over the political system, it should also be unjust for them to enjoy a monopoly over education. Similarly, with the political competition theory, if politics did indeed become more competitive and the use of public opinion was used by parties to further their own agendas, then a similar effect should be seen in the establishment and development of education. If Disraeli saw the need to implement franchise reform before the Liberals did, the same should apply to education. If in theory the working classes would vote for the middle classes that enfranchised them, they might do the same for the middle classes if they had also secured the working classes education. Likewise if the middle classes were so influential at this time, it is logical to assume their point of view would have been taken into account when establishing a public system of education. If the middle classes really did see the need to take control away from the elite and campaigned for further enfranchisement to gain the support of the working classes, campaigning for working class education would also give them the same result. Finally, the threat of revolution model also acknowledges that as the elite slowly gave power away to the electorate, the unexpected effect of increased public spending resulted due to a new political demand for improved public services<sup>50</sup>. As with the other models, this means there is a logical link to the development of a national education system, a conclusion that Robinson and Acemoglu also reach, stating that as well as a

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<sup>48</sup> David Mitch, "Underinvestment in Literacy? The Potential Contribution of Government Involvement in Elementary Education to Economic Growth in Nineteenth-Century England", *The Journal of Economic History*, 44(1984):2, 372.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

general increase in public spending, “education increased substantially after the franchise”.<sup>51</sup> The more sceptical reader may argue that these established theories were based around enfranchisement and are therefore not applicable to the establishment of education but there are clear links between the two. The 1870 Education Act was passed three years after the 1867 Reform Act, if any of these factors were a driving force behind enfranchisement there is no reason for them not to be as influential three years later.

In short these theories may have been the cause of the changing political will that led to establishment and funding of public elementary education in England and Wales. In the following section I will explain the methodology I will use to test whether any of these leading enfranchisement theories can also be linked to the establishment of education in England and Wales by using the Parliamentary archives.

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<sup>51</sup> Acemoglu and. Robinson, “Why did the west extend the franchise? Democracy, Inequality and growth in historical perspective”, 1194.

## Methodology

The three legislative Acts this paper will use to analyse the effect of enfranchisement on the establishment and development of elementary education in England and Wales are the 1870 Education Act, The 1876 Elementary Education Act and the 1891 Elementary Education Act. As explained in the introduction, it was these three legislative Acts that created the foundation of what is now considered a public elementary education system. The 1870 Education Act established a public system to begin with, the 1876 Elementary Education Act in combination with other legislation made elementary education compulsory and the 1891 Elementary Education Act made the system free. This framework provides three key break points to justify the time period of 1870-1891 in which to examine the initial establishment and development of public elementary schooling. To complete the process of primary research I decided to complete a detailed examination of the First and Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act as well a night of debate which occurred one day after the Second Reading. For the 1876 Elementary Education Act I have done the same but without an extra night of debate. The Parliamentary sessions I have chosen to evaluate the impact of the franchise on the abolition of fees in 1891 were the deliberations of a Committee which debated submitting a formal Bill with the intention of abolishing fees and the Second Reading of the Act. I had originally intended to simply analyse the First and Second Reading of each Act but for the 1870 Education Act, the Second Reading proved to be of little use because no Conservative MP's had a chance to offer their opinion. For this reason, I chose to include a night of debate that took place a day after in order to ascertain the opinions of Conservative MP's. I could have taken this approach for the other two legislative Acts and produced more analysis of debates surrounding the issues explored however, due to the exhaustive nature of analysis this would have been beyond the scope of this paper. The reason I chose to analyse a Committee for the 1891 Elementary Education Act is that the First Reading of the Act was not available in the online Hansard. Therefore, a committee which debated whether a Bill should be introduced to the House proposing that proposed the abolition of fees replaced it.

While a more systematic selection of sources may have been desirable analysing only the First and Second Readings of each legislative Act, I am still confident that these sources have served the purpose of this study. Including the following night of the debate after the Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act allowed analysis of Conservative points of view and therefore produced a more nuanced argument to be developed. Likewise, the Committee session also occurred less than month before the Second Reading and contained the viewpoints of both Conservative and Liberal MP's providing evidence for the support of the abolition of elementary school fees and the opposition to this within both parties. Most importantly, these seven Parliamentary sessions provide detailed debates between the two major political parties at the time and therefore tracks the political discourse by providing the opinions and motives politicians gave for establishing elementary education in England and Wales. This contributes to the understanding of why a public elementary education system was established in England and Wales and allows me to answer my primary research

question: ‘What impact did enfranchisement have on the establishment and subsequent development of elementary education in England and Wales in the years 1870-1891?’

The debates also answer another question pertinent to the study: whether or not the leading theories that have been put forward in academia to explain the extension of the franchise can be applied to the almost simultaneous development of elementary education in England and Wales. The theories, I examine seek to explain the actions and motivations of those involved in franchise reform and in reflecting the political culture of the time it seems worthwhile exploring them as factors that could explain franchise reform. To test this, I applied the following method. I created a table for each Parliamentary session which would show the number of occasions an MP formed an argument which related to one of the four chosen established theories explaining enfranchisement in 1867 but was instead used in support for the establishment and development of elementary education. In addition, a fifth column was created to record the frequency of arguments made by MP’s which directly referenced the franchise and democratic principles to support the establishment of education. For example, if a Conservative MP argued that it was necessary to establish elementary education because it was the moral thing to do then this instance was recorded by Hansard reference under the ‘Enlightenment Theory’ column because this is evidence that politician’s social values changed and thus they advocated the establishment of elementary education. The fact it was a Conservative MP was also noted to provide a more nuanced analysis by allowing comparison of party political views. If an MP supported the establishment of elementary education with a comment that inferred doing so would improve his party’s success at the next election this was also recorded in the appropriate column: political competition. These instances were also recorded if an opposition party advocated the establishment of elementary education made it clear he did not want his party to be associated with opposition to reform. Likewise, the same method was used every time an MP argued education should be established because the middle class demanded it or because there was threat of possible revolution if public elementary education was not implemented. Finally, in exactly the same way, arguments in support of the development of elementary education which were directly linked to the franchise or based around democratic principles were recorded. When an MP made the same point more than once in the same Hansard column they were ignored so as to not give a false impression of a high frequency when really the MP was still making the same point.

Given the length and character of these parliamentary sessions, a cumulative approach was taken to make this method feasible. However, to ensure this analysis was as rigorous and systematic as possible I still strove to record every instance when one of the four chosen theories or the franchise could be linked to the arguments made by MP’s. In addition, it should be noted any arguments that were based on these criteria but in opposition to the establishment of elementary education were not included in the table. Instead an analytical commentary has also been provided for each Parliamentary session to account for these arguments as well as to explain the tone of the debate. The commentary also explains other significant reasons that MP’s gave for establishing education as well as any particularly important quotes that add to this paper’s hypothesis. This analytical

approach has allowed the paper to not only ascertain the viewpoints of key names that are often quoted in the history of British education but also take account the opinions of a variety of lesser known MP's from both parties. This approach also allows the paper to find out what other reasons politicians frequently gave for establishing elementary education in England and Wales or why they would oppose it. As a result, the analytical commentary contributes even more to the academic understanding of the establishment and development of elementary education.

This method could be criticised largely on two grounds. Firstly, it requires judgement on part of the author to define when an MP's argument falls under one of the four chosen theories or relates to the effect of the franchise on political thinking and actions, thus it could be argued that this chosen methodology is rather subjective. It is also acknowledged that the threat of revolution in regard to the establishment of education is very unlikely and the least plausible of the theories in relation to this context. This is reflected in the paper's findings as the reader will see. Moreover, in this regard if a politician remarks on the "demands of the people" it would sometimes be difficult to be completely clear which "people" he is referring to and although the reference would be recorded in the fifth column: "Arguments made with a direct reference to the franchise" it is true that he could be also have be referring to middle class demands. This highlights the subjective element of the paper.

Secondly, it could also be argued that the reasons politicians give in Parliament for implementing policies or establishing public services are not always the real reasons for doing so, therefore a more empirical study which analyses other evidence other than largely the opinions and arguments made by politicians could be argued to be more objective and conclusive. These are both general criticisms that apply to qualitative studies of this nature. Qualitative studies always run the risk of "oversimplifying" the nature of the evidence they are analysing or decontextualizing in an effort to make the evidence fit the studies primary aim.<sup>52</sup> Studies regarding the link between education and the franchise are also criticised on these grounds by Andy Green. He states that the educational developments in Europe were often found more correspondingly with absolutist states such as Prussia rather than in democratic ones and often it was more democratic nations who looked to these absolutists states educational systems as examples to follow.<sup>53</sup> Green does acknowledge that the greatest case for a link between democracy and education in Europe does exist in Britain, stating that the gradual emergence of democratic political forms was reflected in the spread of mass education".<sup>54</sup> Still he insists that the reasons were "more complex" and that while "educational reform was ideologically influenced by democratic ideas and pushed from below by the demands of the working class organisations, the intentions of those who implemented it were largely to hold in check and control the results of democratic working class

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<sup>52</sup> Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for small-scale social research projects*, (New York: Open University Press), 305.

<sup>53</sup> Green, *Education and State Formation, The Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA*, 31.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

advance”.<sup>55</sup> Therefore considering all the other evidence that suggests mass education expanded for other reasons, the link between democracy and education can only be linked in a “very qualified sense”.<sup>56</sup>

I would still argue that a qualitative approach that analyses Parliamentary sessions provides strong evidence on the impact of enfranchisement on the establishment of national education in England and Wales. Green does admit the strongest case within Europe for a link between enfranchisement and education exists within in Britain. Moreover, it was in these Parliamentary sessions that the Government of the day had to justify establishing education not only to the opposition but to their own parties which as this study will show was often a greater cause for political concern. Analysing the political debate in these sessions allows the reader to see the complexity and variety of reasons put forward for establishing education in relation to the franchise and other factors. The use of tables showing the number of occasions MP’s formed arguments in relation to the chosen established theories conceived to explain growing enfranchisement as well as the number of times they formed their argument in relation to the franchise allows the reader to gauge how prevalent each was in each Parliamentary session. This clearly illustrates the changing political discourse throughout the time period of the study. Finally, by using the combination of the tables at the start of each Parliamentary session, followed by an analytical commentary many of the problems of a qualitative study have been negated. The tables which record each instance of an MP making an argument attributable to one of the chosen established theories or regarding enfranchisement were only completed under strict parameters as explained above. This reduces instances only being recorded subjectively while the analytical commentary prevents the paper from being too narrow in focus and ignoring other important factors in explaining the establishment of public elementary education in England and Wales.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 33-34.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 1- The 1870 Education Act

Before delving into an analysis of Parliamentary debates that explain reasons behind the 1870 Education Act, it may be useful to highlight exactly what this Act achieved and why it is regarded as being so influential. It was the first Act in British history that established a formal national education system and because of this it is “widely perceived as a momentous legislative landmark in the history of English and Welsh schooling”.<sup>57</sup> Originally; the Bill set out to create school districts by county; establish elected school boards that had the power to build and support new schools; eliminate faith school inspectors because of their cost and ineffectiveness; remit school fees for children in poverty and to allow newly elected school boards to “compel attendance”.<sup>58</sup> While largely unchallenged in its first reading, the Bill turned out to be unpopular with the public because the public and other politicians felt too much power was being left with the Church of England. As a result, the Bill was amended before being enacted and so “school boards were to be elected popularly by ratepayers and burgesses, instead of by town councils and vestries as originally suggested and Religious instruction was to be limited to certain fixed hours”.<sup>59</sup> How this hugely influential piece of legislation came into being will be detailed below through analysis of the Parliamentary archives. Doing so allows an examination of the influence of enfranchisement on this incredibly significant legislation in comparison to other factors.

### First Reading of 1870 Education Act.

William Forster introduced this Bill to the House of Commons on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870 with a long speech that was met with great approval by his fellow MP’s.<sup>60</sup> Forster dominated the first reading, speaking for most of it, with only twelve other MP’s actually giving a response. Forster’s fellow Liberal MP’s that responded were: George Whalley, George Dixon, George Melly, Anthony Mundella, William Cowper Temple, Henry Fawcett, John Hibbert and John Walter. Only five Conservatives on the other side of the house issued a response: Robert Montagu, William Wheelhouse, John Pakington, Viscount Sandon and Stafford Northcote. A great variety of reasons were given by MP’s on both sides of the house for establishing a national system of education including; to ensure national prosperity; to end the denominational control of education; to bring down the cost of the existing system; to prevent England and Wales from falling behind in comparison to the educational achievements of other countries and to prevent crime. In relation to the four academic theories seeking to explain the extension of the franchise, which I wish to test in relation to the establishment of

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<sup>57</sup> Gordon Baker, “The Romantic and Radical Nature of the 1870 Education Act”, 211.

<sup>58</sup> Neil J Smelser, *Social Paralysis and Social Change: British Working-Class Education in the Nineteenth Century*, (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1991), 141.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 142.

<sup>60</sup> William Forster, first reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199.

(<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1870/feb/17/leave-first-reading>), accessed on 15/02/2016.



education, I found that in this Parliamentary session the two most commonly cited reasons given by MP's were because it was the moral thing to do (i.e. the enlightenment theory) or they argued it was because the people demanded it (direct references to the franchise and or democracy). This is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Shows Hansard references for each instance a chosen franchise theory or a direct link to the franchise was attributable to either a Conservative or Liberal MPs argument for establishing education in the First Reading of the 1870 Education Act.<sup>61</sup>

The First Reading of 1870 Education Act.									
(17 <sup>th</sup> February 1870, House of Commons. Vol 199, cc438-498)									
Motives/Reasons									
Enlightenment Theory/ Moral Case		Political Competition		Middle Class Pressure		Threat of Revolution		Direct link to the Franchise	
Party									
Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal
485-486	438-439	480-481	439-440		454-455			466-467	443-444
485-486	441-442		442-443						443-44
	445-446		443-444						444-445
	447-448		448-449						445-466
	450-451		464-465						457-458
	457-458		466-467						464-465
	459-460								465-467
	461-462								466-467
	462-463								475-476
	464-466								477-478
	466-467								479-480
									482-483
									488-489
									495-496
			497-498						
Frequency									
2	11	1	6	0	1	0	0	0	15

This table shows that the most commonly cited reason by Forster and other MP's for establishing public elementary education was the franchise or democratic principles. In this Parliamentary session, the specific words 'franchise' or '1867 Reform Act' were not used however phrases such as "duty to our constituencies" and "wishes of the country" were frequently used instead.<sup>62</sup> This conveys an awareness from MP's at the time,

<sup>61</sup> First Reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199.

(<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1870/feb/17/leave-first-reading>), accessed on 15/02/2016.

<sup>62</sup>William Wheelhouse, First Reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199, column 479-480 and William Forster, column 443-444.

that since the 1867 Reform Act, they were now serving their constituencies and listening to the will of the people who now had more influence on them than ever before. As can be seen in the table, this reason was put forward by different MP's from the very start to the very end of the reading. Surprisingly, the second most cited reason for establishing education in England was that of morality. In this regard the argument included everything from declaring the Bill to be "one of the noblest messages of peace" to dramatic statements such as the one from Conservative MP John Pakington, proclaiming that the bill was necessary because the current system of education in England and Wales was "one of the greatest evils" in the country.<sup>63</sup>

Although harder to identify, political competition was inferred by a number of MP's, either by Conservatives who didn't wish the party to be associated with being anti-reform or Liberal MP's who declared it a triumph for their party.<sup>64</sup> This factor will be examined in the more detail in the qualitative analysis below. Finally, this table could make it appear that the opinions of an ever expanding middle class or the threat of revolution were of little concern to MP's in this reading. Caution however, is needed because as explained in the methodology, this could be an unfair assumption because those 'demands from the people' could be applied to either of the two categories. Thus, a more qualitative account of this reading is required to elucidate these factors and more importantly to make clear on what grounds the Bill was opposed. To do this, I will begin by summarising Forsters speech that dominated much of this Reading then move onto summarising the views of the opposition as well as Forsters fellow Liberal MP's.

Forster, introduced this bill with a speech that began by stating that "The subject of primary education is, indeed, one of great and serious importance".<sup>65</sup> Throughout this speech he argued passionately for the establishment of elementary education for numerous reasons including promoting national prosperity and the reduction of crime however three basic principles dominated his speech. Firstly, because it was morally right as he cited the desperate need for increased educational provision, explaining that under the present system "only two-fifths of the children, of the working classes between the ages of six and ten years" were officially on school registers.<sup>66</sup> He declared "in helping those only who help themselves, or who can get others to help them, we have left un-helped those who most need help".<sup>67</sup> This was quite a statement in a political era that was dominated by laissez-faire principles. The second reason used by Forster, in this long and passionate speech, was elementary education was needed because the people demanded it.

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<sup>63</sup> George Melly, First Reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199, column 479-480 and John Pakington, column 485-486.

<sup>64</sup> Viscount Sandon, First Reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199, column 481-482.

<sup>65</sup> William Forster, First Reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199, column 465-466.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, column 441-442.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, column 443-444.

In perhaps the most telling quote of the entire parliamentary session, Forster stated:

*“It is the education of the people's children by the people's officers, chosen in their local assemblies, controlled by the people's representatives in Parliament. That is the principle on which our Bill is based; it is the ultimate force which rests behind every clause.”*<sup>68</sup>

This powerful quote is a strong indication of the impact that the franchise had on government thinking or, at the very least on the rationale parties started to give for introducing a policy whether it was true or not. When talking about which sort of people demanded and needed education, Forster only specifically mentions the middle classes once.<sup>69</sup> He argued that despite the need to establish elementary education for the poorest, fees should not yet be scrapped because then the middle classes “would step in and say “There must be free education for us”.<sup>70</sup> While this provides some evidence of the middle classes becoming more demanding at least in this session, the demands of the working classes were definitely of more concern to Forster and his fellow MP's.

While this analysis so far may paint a picture of Forster being a saintly figure, only wishing to establish education out of the goodness of his heart and for democratic principles, there was of course some political point scoring on his part. The first explicit example of this is when he criticises Conservative Robert Montagu claiming that he had “a far too sanguine view of the case” of the present education system, criticising him for not recognising the educational deficiencies that existed at the time or choosing to ignore them.<sup>71</sup> He did this while deliberately choosing not to be too hostile in his speech, perhaps in an attempt to garner support from both sides of the House, which MP's congratulated him for after his speech, Forster finished his speech stating:

*“But there are many men, I doubt not many Members of this House...who are swayed not so much by these general considerations as by the condition of the individuals around them...elementary education, gives power to resist temptation—is a safeguard against calamity...do we not know child after child—boys or girls—growing up to probable crime, to still more probable misery, because badly taught or utterly untaught?”*<sup>72</sup>

As a final ploy to gain the support from both sides of the house, he made criticism of the morality of any MP who dared opposed his and the Liberal Party's the new Bill that sought to finally establish public elementary education in England and Wales.

Analysis from this first reading also highlights other reasons which were unrelated to the franchise or moral argument explaining why Forster introduced this Bill. Forster believed that if a basic education was provided

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, column 465-466.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, column 454-455.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, column 454-455.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, column 442-443.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, column 465-466.

for the poorest children “an education rate would save the prison and pauper rate”<sup>73</sup>. Furthermore, Forster also took much time in this opening speech to highlight the educational deficiencies in England and Wales in comparison to other countries arguing “We are behind almost every other civilised country, whether in America or on the continent of Europe”.<sup>74</sup> This highlighted two reasons that would continue to be important factors in establishing elementary education in England and Wales throughout this study’s time period.

How did the Conservatives in opposition react to this long and important speech? Unsurprisingly, it was the Conservative Robert Montagu, the only MP to be specifically criticised by Forster that was first to respond. Proceeding with caution, Montagu stated straight away that it was far too complicated a Bill to launch into outright criticism and on the whole he was generally positive.<sup>75</sup> However he did directly respond to Forster’s specific criticism of him. He set out to try and argue that the state of education was not as bad as Forster had claimed saying that Forster had exaggerated statistics about the number of children not attending school in Liverpool.<sup>76</sup> He was also critical of the clause which Forster wanted to implement that would give school boards the power to compel attendance, arguing that the aim of a national education system was not to “cram education down the throats of the people”.<sup>77</sup>

The views of Montagu were generally representative of the other four Conservative MP’s who were all positive in their response to the Bill. Wheelhouse, said he would be “much pleased” if the Bill achieved its objectives, only questioning whether School Board’s would be better by being chosen independently.<sup>78</sup> This was actually agreed by the Liberals before passing the Bill into law. Viscount Sandon also agreed with Montagu that the statistics, Forster had cited about Liverpool schools may have been exaggerated but again also welcomed the Bill stating that while some may assume that the Conservatives might oppose the Bill he wanted to “assure the house” that on the whole this assumption was not true.<sup>79</sup> Pakington again agreed with his Conservative colleagues that the Bill was welcome, saying the Bill was necessary in order to meet the “wishes of the country” and necessary because of the poor quality of education in place at the time.<sup>80</sup> While these Conservative MP’s welcomed the Bill due to the poor education system that existed at the time, very few based their arguments on a moral case quite like Forster’s. Unlike the debate on extending the franchise three years previously no arguments were made suggesting that education should be extended to prevent revolution by any of these Conservative MP’s or indeed the Liberals in this Parliamentary session.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Liberals were more united behind Forster’s influential Bill than the Conservatives. All arguing that the bill was in the interests of the people and George Melly going as far to say it was the

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, column 455-456.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, column 452.

<sup>75</sup> Robert Montagu, first reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199, column 466-467.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, column 469-470.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, column 471-472.

<sup>78</sup> William Wheelhouse, First Reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199, column 479-481.

<sup>79</sup> Viscount Sandon, First Reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199, column 481-482.

<sup>80</sup> John Pakington, First Reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199, column 484-485.

“greatest Bill that had ever been offered by any Administration or the House to the people it was called on to govern”.<sup>81</sup> Anthony Mundella also lavished praise on the Bill claiming that it “would render the inhabitants of this country the best educated people in the world”.<sup>82</sup> Yet while some did briefly put forward moral cases for establishing education as the Conservative opposition had done, the remaining Liberal MP’s didn’t make quite as many as Forster had when he opened the session. Thus, Table 1 could be misleading in this aspect as the majority of MP’s, both Conservative and Liberal for the most part based their arguments around the wishes of the people and because they perceived the current education system to be so bad.

The main point of contention for Liberal MP’s however was that the Bill did not go far enough, with George Dixon, Anthony Mundella, George Melly, Henry Fawcett and John Hibbert all arguing that School Boards should be able to enforce attendance rather than simply compel it. In their view, simply giving the school boards the ability to compel attendance rather than actually enforce it was impractical and would achieve very little in reality. George Dixon was also disappointed that Forster had defended retaining school fees in such a passionate way and contended that it was a real obstacle to increasing attendance as there were many parents who still could not afford to send their children to school. He also suggested that in coming years, his fellow Liberal MP’s would begin to realise this and in many ways predicted the 1891 Amendment long before it was enacted. Despite a general consensus amongst Liberal MP’s it is interesting to note that the only MP to fully oppose the bill was not a Conservative but Liberal MP George Whaley. He argued stubbornly that there was not “sufficient feeling on the subject in the country” to legislate.<sup>83</sup> He continued that Forster had failed to convince the House that the current system of education “had failed”, that Forster hadn’t convinced the house how his Bill would remedy this perceived failure and that there was no evidence it would reduce crime.<sup>84</sup> This was the last statement in this Parliamentary session and interesting one perhaps showing that Whig principles hadn’t quite died out quite yet in the Liberal Party.

In summary analysis of the First Reading of the 1870 Education Act highlights that democratic principles and references to the franchise were used and implied throughout the Parliamentary session as reasons to establish education in England and Wales. This analysis does, however, show that the factors motivating the establishment of education were both complex and intertwined. While the moral case was strongly argued in this session, some political competition can also be identified from this reading as Forster and his fellow Liberal MP’s were keen to praise the efforts of their own party, while Conservative MP’s who clearly had an interest in education were also keen to be seen as reformers. What is clear is that the threat of revolution and pressure from the middle classes were not prominent motivations according to the statements made in this Parliamentary session. In fact, the concerns about the condition of the working class were far more prominent, casting doubt that either of these two factors caused serious pressure on the government to establish education.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 479-480.

<sup>82</sup> Anthony Mundella, First Reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199, column 478-479.

<sup>83</sup> George Whaley, First Reading of 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1870. Vol 199, column 478-479.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

This pattern can be identified throughout all the Parliamentary sessions that I analysed surrounding this Bill. Finally, it may surprise the reader that very little opposition was put forward to such a significant and momentous Bill however, as we will see, this certainly changed in the Second Reading by the time MP's had a chance to examine the Bill in more detail.

## The Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act

By the time, MP's had time to read the Bill in more detail, a deep split within each party began to emerge surrounding aspects concerning religious teaching in the Bill, leading to a Second Reading on March 14<sup>th</sup> 1870 that was a lot more hostile than the first. The argument between MP's who were non-conformists and MP's who held other strong religious views, led to a lengthy debate about the degree to which religion should be part of children's elementary education and whether or not schools should be secular. In the original Bill, Forster had set out plans to allow locally elected School Boards to decide whether teaching should be secular. Many MP's also brought up concerns about the children of religious minorities having Christian education forced upon them. This debate surrounding religion in this Parliamentary session is of course not relevant to this study, however within this debate MP's from both parties still give their motivations justifying why a national system of education should be established. There is more evidence of these motivations being directly linked to the franchise or to strengthen their own parties position or because it was simply the enlightened moral thing to do. However, unlike in the First Reading in the Second Reading no mention of middle class pressure was given as a reason to establish education. One reason for the blend of factors cited could be that Forster appeared to filibuster meaning no Conservative MP's actually had a chance to make a significant contribution and only three Liberal MP's Forster, Dixon and Illingworth actually made any significant contributions. Table 2 shows this lack of Conservative involvement.



Table 2: Shows Hansard references for each instance a chosen franchise theory or a direct link to the franchise was attributable to either a Conservative or Liberal MPs argument for establishing education in the Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act.<sup>85</sup>

The Second Reading of 1870 Education Act.									
(14 <sup>th</sup> March 1870, House of Commons. Vol 199, cc1919-53)									
Motives/Reasons									
Enlightenment Theory/ Moral Case		Political Competition		Middle Class Pressure		Threat of Revolution		Direct link to the Franchise	
Party									
Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal
	1926-1927 1928-1929 1929-1930 1932-1933 1934-1935 1938-1939 1944-1945 1948-1949 1949-1951 1951-1952		1932-1933 1937-1938 1949-1951						1920-1921 1923-1924 1925-1926 1926-1927 1928-1929 1930-1931 1935-1936 1938-1939 1942-1943 1943-1944 1945-1946 1949-1950 1951-1952
Frequency									
0	10	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	13

Table 2 serves the same purpose as Table 1, indicating the frequency of references in relation to the four franchise theories as well as direct references to the franchise but for the Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act. Similar, to the First Reading many MP's argued for the establishment of elementary education

<sup>85</sup> Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act. 14<sup>th</sup> March 1870, House of Commons. Vol 199. ([http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1870/mar/14/bill-33-second-reading-first-night#S3V0199P0\\_18700314\\_HOC\\_55](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1870/mar/14/bill-33-second-reading-first-night#S3V0199P0_18700314_HOC_55)).

on the grounds it was either the moral or democratic thing to do. The table indicates, both of these causes were implied or directly stated by MP's from the very start of the Parliamentary session to the very end, unlike the remaining three defined categories. It should also be noted that any moral arguments that were made by MP's linked to the degree of religious teaching have been omitted from the table. They are irrelevant to this study's primary aim which is to assess the impact of the franchise on the establishment of education in relation to other variables. As this Second Reading was dominated by cross party debate about religious teaching the element of competitive political competition as a factor was largely lost with only six references being made to it by Liberals. Again there was little concern from MP's regarding potential revolutions nor was there any implication that the middle classes demanded educational reform. This is not to say that democratic and moral arguments were the sole and primary reason MP's supported establishing education in the Second Reading. Just as in the First Reading, a whole host of other reasons were given for and against establishing elementary education. Just as in every other analysis of Parliamentary sessions in this paper, a more qualitative and analytical commentary will clarify these variables and explain how no Conservative MP's were able to make a significant contribution.

Liberal MP George Dixon started the Second Reading with a long speech of his own, however the tone of this Parliamentary session was clearly a lot more hostile to Forsters proposals. Dixon quickly stated that "he was sorry even to appear in opposition" to the Bill and that whilst he would vote for the Bill, he had a number of concerns.<sup>86</sup> These concerns included the need for a separate education department and the need for greater school board powers that would allow them to enforce attendance rather than just compel it.<sup>87</sup> In regard to the religious aspects of the Bill that had prompted a Second Reading, Dixon took a fairly neutral stance not wishing to impede the Bill. However, he did state that whether the Conformists or Non-conformists were correct,

*"there stood an enfranchised people and the people had always given their votes in favour of equality, if the clause were to be passed by the House in its present shape he did not think that we should have peace in England until the Churches had laid down their arms defeated."*<sup>88</sup>

This is a very telling quote for this study because it implies that while he was not going to oppose the Bill, he still sided with secular teaching on the basis of the franchise and meeting the demands of the people. He also inferred possible serious dissatisfaction, if the Bill passed in its current form. Still, Dixon finished his speech praising the government for its efforts to introduce a national system of education and hoped the "religious

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<sup>86</sup>George Dixon, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1870.Vol 199, column 1919- 1920. ([http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1870/mar/14/bill-33-second-reading-first-night#S3V0199P0\\_18700314\\_HOC\\_55](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1870/mar/14/bill-33-second-reading-first-night#S3V0199P0_18700314_HOC_55)), accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

<sup>87</sup> George Dixon, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1870.Vol 199, column 1920- 1921.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, column 1925- 1926.

difficulty” would be solved promptly so that they could enjoy the “nations gratitude” for introducing such a Bill.<sup>89</sup>

The lack of compulsory powers that School Boards had also concerned Alfred Illingworth, arguing that attendance of both children in rural and urban areas would be low without stronger powers.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, he asserted that “The position of the working classes” in regard to religion “must not be forgotten” including those who had not yet been granted the benefit of “direct representation”. It is true, this is not an argument for or against the principle of a public elementary education system yet it is still interesting to this study because Illingworth is noting the feelings and wishes of those still unfranchised should be considered. It was this statement that prompted George Dixon to propose the debate – “this House is of the opinion that no measure for the elementary education of the people will afford a satisfactory or permanent settlement which leaves the question of religious instruction in schools supported by public funds and rates to be determined by local authorities”.<sup>91</sup> Dixon in making this proposal tried to bring the issue of religious teaching to a head by forcing the debate. If this was an attempt by Dixon to speed up proceedings, unfortunately it failed leading to a debate lasting several nights perhaps made even longer by Forster who then began to filibuster.

To detail every aspect of Forster’s following speech would be an endless task but he still made some interesting statements regarding the establishment of education while defending the religious clause within his famous Bill. Firstly, he criticised opposition members “who all wish to get rid of the Bill” on the grounds of religious clauses when their real agenda was simply to impede a national system of elementary education being established.<sup>92</sup> Forster also defended his Bill on moral grounds suggesting that while the religious aspects of the Bill were far from perfect, to create a Bill that threw away religious teaching entirely was a “blow against morality”.<sup>93</sup> Finally he went on to specifically argue with George Dixon’s statement that no satisfactory outcome could be made regarding religion and public funding, arguing that “At each General Election the question divides the voters”.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, disagreeing with Dixon and stating it was not the duty of government to decide whether teaching should be religious but the duty of their local assemblies in the form of school boards. Again another example of using democratic principles to further his agenda even if the argument was about religion rather than the establishment of education. This Parliamentary session ended with the agreement by both parties to carry on the debate the following day, a debate which lasted several nights.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, column 1928- 1929.

<sup>90</sup> Alfred, Illingworth, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1870.Vol 199, column 1929- 1930.

<sup>91</sup> George Dixon, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1870.Vol 199, column 1930- 1931.

<sup>92</sup> William Forster, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act. House of Commons, 14<sup>th</sup> March 1870.Vol 199, column 1932- 1933.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, column 1938- 1939.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, column 1943- 1944.

While, this study originally planned to only analyse the First and Second reading of each legislative Act, due to the political tactics employed by Forster, I have decided to analyse the following nights that followed this Second Reading. Doing so allows the study to analyse a more comprehensive debate and see the opinions of Conservative MP's. The continuing debate after the second night has been omitted on the grounds it was very repetitive in nature, mainly focusing on religious aspects of the Bill which are irrelevant to this study.

#### 15 March 1870 Adjourned Debate 2<sup>nd</sup> Night

The topic of debate remained the same as the one, George Dixon had proposed the day earlier, which proposed “this House is of opinion that no measure for the elementary education of the people will afford a satisfactory or permanent settlement which leaves the question of religious instruction in schools supported by public funds and rates to be determined by local authorities”. Again analysis of the religious aspects of the bill has been kept to a minimum because the papers focus is establishing what impact the franchise had on the establishment of education. This Parliamentary session lasted a very long time with many more MP's speaking compared to the previous two sessions. The Liberal MP's who made significant contributions were Henry Winterbotham, Henry Samuleson, James Kay-Shuttleworth, Edward Miall, Roundell Palmer, Auberton Herbert, Robert Lowe, Henry Fawcett and Walter Morrison. Again the Conservatives who spoke were outnumbered significantly yet the three that did, Robert Montagu, Frederick Corrance and Alexander-Beresford all made long and significant contributions in this debate. Despite religious teaching being the focus of this Parliamentary session, the motivations from both parties for establishing a national system of elementary education in relation to the franchise can still be seen on Table 3.

Table 3: Shows Hansard references for each instance a chosen franchise theory or a direct link to the franchise was attributable to either a Conservative or Liberal MPs argument for establishing education in the Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act, Second Night.<sup>95</sup>

The Second Reading of 1870 Education Act, Second Night.									
(15 <sup>th</sup> March 1870, House of Commons. Vol 199, cc1963-2068)									
Motives/Reasons									
Enlightenment Theory/ Moral Case		Political Competition		Middle Class Pressure		Threat of Revolution		Direct link to the Franchise	
Party									
Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal
2008-2009	1970-1971	1983-1984	1971-1972		1965-1966			2015-2016	1963-1964
2009-2010	1971-1972	2021-2022	2004-2005		2037-2038			2016-2017	1965-1966
2013-2014	1972-1973		2005-2006						1966-1967
2015-2016	1976-1977		2019-2020						1968-1969
	1978-1979		2058-2059						1969-1970
	2207-2008		2068-2069						1971-1972
	2020-2021								1978-1979
	2050-2051								2004-2005
	2051-2052								2019-2020
	2059-2060								2020-2021
	2060-2061								2029-2030
									2051-2052
									2062-2063
									2068-2069
Frequency									
4	11	2	6	0	2	0	0	2	14

As indicated in the table above, in this Parliamentary session there no references to threat of revolution as a reason to formally establish a national system of education. While in the previous day no mention of middle class pressure occurred, in this sitting there was a slight increase to three. Yet again the arguments based on enlightened morality were put forward with eleven references by Liberal MP's and four coming from the

<sup>95</sup> Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act [Second Night]. 15<sup>th</sup> March 1870, House of Commons. Vol 199. (<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1870/mar/15/adjourned-debate-second-night>).

Conservatives throughout the debate. Similar to previous Parliamentary sessions, direct references to the franchise or arguments based on democratic principles were also made throughout, totalling thirteen times by Liberals and twice from Conservative MP's. A more qualitative analysis of this very large Parliamentary session will be detailed below, however to go through it in its entirety would be unfeasible. As with the two previous sessions, the opening speech made by Henry Winterbotham will be analysed followed by an analytical summary of both the concerns of Conservative and Liberal MP's before concluding this first chapter.

It is fair to say that Liberal MP Henry Winterbotham opened this Parliamentary session with a long and vicious speech attacking those MP's who supported religious teaching whether they belonged to the Liberal or Conservative Party. This set the tone of the Parliamentary session leading it to, in many instances, lose focus on the educational aspects of the Bill and instead turned into argument between the supporters of the established Church and non-conformists. At the start of the speech Winterbotham states that the settling of the details, "is not a task to be undertaken without the full and intelligent assent of the people".<sup>96</sup> He went onto question the Members understanding of this principle, stating "Have you got this? I think not".<sup>97</sup> This blunt, almost patronising statement signified the frustration and anger which finalising the details of this Bill caused. He continued,

*"there is no doubt that the extension of the franchise has quickened our national life, has brought together the different classes of the community, has made us see more clearly our mutual dependence and has led us all to take a deeper interest in the wants of the people."*<sup>98</sup>

This strong statement adds to this papers hypothesis that the franchise undoubtedly impacted on the establishment of education. WinterBotham went on to question the extent that his own Government had consulted with and taken into account the views of the public. He, in effect, questions the Bill's fitness for purpose but argues it would be against the "public faith" to now withdraw the bill entirely, arguing that a national system of elementary education was a moral imperative considering the current educational deficiencies which had led to increased crime.<sup>99</sup> Unfortunately the rest of Winterbotham's speech, makes it unclear whether he would actually vote in favour of the Bill and turns into an unfocused ramble about religion, something which was noted by the MP's that spoke after him.

Robert Montagu was the first Conservative MP to make this point, arguing that Winterbotham while passionate had forgotten the purpose of the debate and changed the questions focus to "Church and Dissent".<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Henry Winterbotham, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act, Second Night. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1870. Vol 199, column 1964- 1965.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, column 1964- 1965.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, column 1965- 1966.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, column 1972- 1973.

<sup>100</sup> Robert Montagu, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act, Second Night. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1870. Vol 199, column 1981- 1982.

Moreover, Montagu was definitely on the side of Forster and the government arguing that one advantage a national system of education in England and Wales could have over the Prussian system was flexibility instead of “mechanical uniformity”.<sup>101</sup> Thus, in his view the idea that school boards could decide whether teaching was secular was the correct stance to take and would in fact lead to a better educational system than the much revered system that had existed in Prussia for some time. Moreover, he argued “How could any moral impression be produced by teaching reading, writing and arithmetic?” alone, in Montagu’s view it was actually immoral to do away with “denominational teaching”.<sup>102</sup>

Meanwhile fellow Conservative MP Frederick Corrance took a slightly more compromising approach expressing the fact that MP’s on both sides of the house, “profess the same object, the education of the people”, urging MP’s to reach a prompt compromise.<sup>103</sup> In fact he urged this quick compromise by making a rather unusual comparison- the amount spent on beer per head in a family in a year in comparison to the amount spent on education per head in a family in a year.<sup>104</sup> Stating that the average family in Old Brentford spent £15 per head on beer while only spending 6 shillings per head on education in a year. Thus, making the moral argument to establish public elementary education as quickly as possible because “all England is beery and uneducated”, something which might change if the people received a good education.<sup>105</sup>

Alexander Beresford-Hope spoke in the same tone as his colleague Corrance, stating that he had been disappointed that “Churchman, Dissenters or Secularists” could not reach a compromise to the “pressing practical problem, how to educated the far too many uneducated children”.<sup>106</sup> He was the last Conservative MP to make any sort of significant contribution to this debate and near the end of the sitting he attacked the Liberals opposite, “The Bill is not perfect, and may be capable of amendment, but the opposition to it in its present stage is the work of a discontented and disappointed faction”.<sup>107</sup> Clearly frustrated by the party in Government bickering over small details, this may have been the most incisive quote of the entire debate. Something which is evident in the analysis of the Liberal MP’s views below.

The Liberal Party was clearly split in this debate as Beresford-Hope had inferred above. On one hand, MP’s such as Henry Samuelson wanted to pass the bill “speedily as possible” as “it was upon that ground he had gained his seat”.<sup>108</sup> Something which James Kay-Shuttleworth directly agreed with as he warned his fellow Liberal MP’s not to delay over trivial matters, reminding them what they had promised “at the General

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid, column 1983-1984.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, column 1988-1989.

<sup>103</sup> Frederick Corrance, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act, Second Night. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1870. Vol 199, column 2008-2009.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, column 2009-2010.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, column 2009-2010.

<sup>106</sup> Alexander Beresford-Hope, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act, Second Night. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1870. Vol 199, column 2021-2022.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, column 2025-2026.

<sup>108</sup> Henry Samuelson, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act, Second Night. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1870. Vol 199, column 2004-2005.

Election” and that “the time for action had come” to “bring a school to the door of every poor child in the country”.<sup>109</sup> Roundel Palmer also agreed with this sentiment contending that if they did not swiftly reach a compromise they ran “the risk of rendering impossible this great work of national education”.<sup>110</sup> While Robert Lowe Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time, argued along the same lines by saying it was not an exaggeration, “that both sides of the House, agreed in principle” yet progress had been halted because of a “single point”, preventing money from arriving “where it would be most needful”<sup>111</sup>. What is common among the Liberal MP’s who held this view is that they all argued it was immoral to prevent the Bill from passing.

Yet these moral pleas for establishing a national system of elementary education didn’t seem to deter the secularists and Non-Conformists within the Liberal Party who argued it was immoral to impose denominational teaching upon those who did not want it. Fearing that if elected school boards were to decide upon religious teaching then religious minorities and non-conformists would be forced to endure it. Henry Fawcett was not quite this strong in his wording, neither was Walter Morrison who “concurred” with Fawcett that the Government should “ascertain more fully the feeling of the House and country on the subject” before handing it to committee to be decided. Yet alongside Henry WinterBotham who started proceedings with a provocative speech, MP’s such as Edward Miall and Auberton Herbert insisted strongly throughout their contributions that secular teaching was in fact the right policy to follow.

In summary, this chapter has demonstrated that the reasons why MP’s supported or challenged the 1870 Education Act were extremely complex. Some argued the need to establish a public elementary system because the current system was costly and dependent on government grants anyway. Others suggested that doing so would reduce crime in the long run. There was also a strong feeling that it was in the interest of the nation, as establishing education would improve national prosperity and bring Britain more in line with its European rivals. However, despite this, the chapter has also shown that the franchise and democratic principles were the basis of many of the arguments that MP’s used in favour of establishing public elementary education. Moreover, analysis of the Parliamentary sessions surrounding the 1870 Education Act, also demonstrate a genuine desire by the Liberal Government and MP’s from both parties to establish public elementary education because it was the right thing to do giving credit to the enlightenment theory. I will now move onto Parliamentary sessions regarding the 1876 Education Act to see if the same trends continue or the language of politicians changed.

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<sup>109</sup> James Kay-Shuttleworth, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act, Second Night. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1870.Vol 199, column 2020-2022.

<sup>110</sup> Roundell Palmer, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act, Second Night. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1870.Vol 199, column 2050-2051.

<sup>111</sup> Robert Lowe, Second Reading of the 1870 Education Act, Second Night. House Of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> March 1870.Vol 199, column 2059-2060.



## Chapter 2 – The 1876 Education Act.

The 1876 Education Act did not technically make attendance universally compulsory, however the 1880 Mundella Act which did was simply an amendment of the 1876 Act. In addition, the 1876 Education Act made great strides in raising the attendance rates of children because it placed the legal duty on parents to make sure their children attended school.<sup>112</sup> It also allowed School Boards to enforce attendance in relation to the factory or workshop Acts.<sup>113</sup> Making attendance compulsory was an issue noted by MP's in the First and Second Readings of the 1870 Education Act and in many ways was inevitable, yet it was still very controversial. The arguments in opposition to compulsory attendance had actually been circulating since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but in relation to other social issues. For example, in 1802, 1819 and 1833, Parliament proposed legislation which aimed to reduce the working hours of children yet ran into opposition from both the working class and aristocracy who mutually agreed that parents should have the autonomy over how much their own children should work.<sup>114</sup> This was an example of the laissez-faire attitudes that prevailed throughout 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain. Thus, analysis of Parliamentary sessions surrounding this Act still serve the purposes of this study because they outline the political motivations by both the Conservatives and Liberal party's for making attendance compulsory as well as those who opposed it.

### The First Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill

The same methodology has been applied as in Chapter 1, I have tested whether four of the leading theories seeking to explain why the franchise was extended can be applied to the establishment of elementary education in England and Wales. The factors that can be identified as motivations for the extending the franchise and which contributed to the political culture were not so much in evidence. However, it is striking that the debate is developed around the statements which have a direct link to the franchise. In addition, once again simultaneously recording how many times the MP's directly referenced the franchise or used democratic principles for establishing elementary education. The only difference in this chapter is that I am testing how many times these theories can be seen in the motivations of politicians specifically for making attendance compulsory. A total of four Conservative MP's made significant contributions in the debate; Viscount Sandon, Clare Read, George Storer and William Makins. Other MP's yet again brought up the issue of religious instruction and were therefore not relevant to this study. Three Liberal MP's also offered their opinion on the topic; William Forster, Anthony Mundella, Lyon Playfair and James Kay-Shuttleworth. Similarly, to the Conservatives, many more spoke in this debate but their statements were irrelevant to this study as they often

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<sup>112</sup> A. V Dicey, *Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England*, (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund Inc, 2008), 196.

<sup>113</sup> Education England, "Education in England: a brief history", (<http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/timeline.html>), accessed on 10/03/2016.

<sup>114</sup> Smelser, *Social Paralysis and Social Change: British Working-Class Education in the Nineteenth Century*, 141.

kept coming back to denominational teaching. As seen on table 4 below, analysis of the statements from these MP's was less promising for this papers hypothesis.

Table 4: Shows Hansard references for each instance a chosen franchise theory or a direct link to the franchise was attributable to either a Conservative or Liberal MPs argument for making elementary education compulsory in the First Reading of the 1870 Education Act.<sup>115</sup>

The First Reading of 1876 Elementary Education Act									
(15 <sup>th</sup> March 1876, House of Commons. Vol 199, cc929-965)									
Motives/Reasons									
Enlightenment Theory/ Moral Case		Political Competition		Middle Class Pressure		Threat of Revolution		Direct link to the Franchise	
Party									
Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal
941-942 949-950 951-952		930-931	952-953					929-930 930-931 932-933 934-935 939-940 950-951 965-966	952-953 960-962
Frequency									
3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	7	2

When analysing the table, it can be seen that unlike Chapter 1 where Liberal MP's frequently argued in the First Reading that establishing education was the moral thing to do, the Conservatives who were in power at this time, whilst alluding to the moral case did not develop their arguments in the same way. Likewise, there appears to be, at least in the First Reading of the 1876 Act a decline in the frequency of political competition that was used to further the Conservative cause. In common with the analysis of the 1870 Act in Chapter 1

<sup>115</sup> First Reading of Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons 18<sup>th</sup> May 1876. Vol 199, column 929-931. (<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1876/may/18/leave-first-reading>), accessed on 10/07/2016.

however, there are no mentions of pressure from the middle class of possible revolution if education was not further developed. One might think compulsory education would have been heavily supported by the middle classes but as attendance was not a real issue affecting them they had little interest in furthering this cause. Although smaller in number there was still references to the franchise throughout from the start of this parliamentary session to the end. This may have been caused by the fact that this First Reading was relatively short in length, moreover there are explicit examples of quotes directly referencing the franchise alongside other variables that MP's put forward for making attendance compulsory. This will be explained and analysed in the following commentary.

The Conservative MP Viscount Sandon opened this Parliamentary session with yet another long speech, starting by stating that the Bill “would meet the requirements of the country” and was in the “interest of the country as a whole”.<sup>116</sup> Arguing that, the bill was necessary to address the shortcomings that still existed after the Agricultural Children's Act of 1873 and Textile Factories Act of 1874 which had been implemented with the intention of making more children attend school.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, that placing legal duty upon parents to send their children to school was necessary because children who were allowed to be “idle” neither in school nor the workplace “would in all probability become bad and mischievous”.<sup>118</sup> Without this Bill according to Sandon, the country “could not hope for the vigour that would enable” them to “command the world in future”.<sup>119</sup> National prosperity which was clearly a recurring theme in the debates, was clearly articulated here.

Unfortunately for Sandon, his fellow Conservative MP's who spoke in regard to compulsory education did not agree with him, specifically for children who resided in agricultural areas. Clare Read asserted that “certain work on the farm which was done cheaper and better by children than by anybody else and would probably would not be done at all if they did not do it”, finishing his statement by also asserting that the idea of half time hours in agricultural districts was “simply preposterous”.<sup>120</sup> John Storer finished the Parliamentary session by arguing “the compulsory attendance of children at school in the agricultural districts until they were 10 years of age would give great dissatisfaction in the agricultural districts”.<sup>121</sup> He was in a way showing concern for the wants of the people in those districts despite most of the working class in rural areas not being enfranchised by this point. In addition, William Makins, recognised the unfair conundrum that this legislation would place on many poorer parents. That if they were legally required to send their children to school, they would also be forced to pay the fees while also sacrificing the income that their child would have brought

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<sup>116</sup> Viscount Sandon, First Reading of Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons 18<sup>th</sup> May 1876. Vol 199, column 929-931.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, column 936-937.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, column 941-942.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, column 952-953.

<sup>120</sup> Clare Read, First Reading of Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1876. Vol 199, column 957-958.

<sup>121</sup> John Storer, First Reading of Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1876. Vol 199, column 965-966.

home from a day at work. Thus in his view if education was not at least made cheaper it: “would be considered by many people a very great evil”.<sup>122</sup> Makins was again addressing the concerns of the poor working classes.

William Forster who had introduced the 1870 Education Act was the first Liberal to respond, saying “he had heard with the greatest possible pleasure the opening remarks... because they showed that he and the Government had fully comprehended what was required in an amending Act” and went on to say “they had certainly attempted... to meet the attendance difficulty”.<sup>123</sup> This demonstrated that he did support the bill in principle but perhaps suggesting it did not go far enough. This was naturally supported by Anthony Mundella who only four years later introduced the Mundella Act which made education universally compulsory. He argued on the same lines as Forster, that “he was disappointed” that compulsion would not be even more strictly enforced in this Bill and that since Scotland had both School Boards and universal compulsion, he did not see why it could not work in England and Wales.<sup>124</sup> Mundella also made comparisons to Switzerland and argued unless England and Wales brought in universal compulsion, Switzerland “was likely to rival England in her manufactures”.<sup>125</sup> This is an interesting statement because it explicitly makes an argument that education should be made compulsory and universal in the interests of national prosperity and competitiveness. James Kay-Shuttleworth was less direct in his response, while suggesting he would be in favour the Bill, he trusted the Government would allow “ample time for consultation with friends and constituents”.<sup>126</sup> Again another indication that the franchise had begun to, at the very least, impact MP’s ways of thinking.

### The Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill

Unlike the First Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill, analysis of the Second Reading which took place nearly a month later was a lot more promising for this study’s hypothesis that leading theories explaining why the franchise was extended could potentially explain why education was established. This is again demonstrated in the Table 5. It again demonstrates that the franchise was in fact in the minds of politicians at this time, being specifically referenced to a total of fourteen times by MP’s in this Parliamentary session. Again similar trends prevailed in regard to threat of revolution or middle class pressure as factors, which were not mentioned once by MP’s. Although some arguments for making education compulsory were based on morality, it is noticeable that there is a fall in these arguments at this point. However, surprisingly there is more evidence of political competition between the parties in this debate to further their own agendas of

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<sup>122</sup> William Makins, First Reading of Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1876. Vol 199, column 961-962.

<sup>123</sup> William Forster, First Reading of Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1876. Vol 199, column 952-953.

<sup>124</sup> Anthony Mundella, First Reading of Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1876. Vol 199, column 955-956.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, column 956-957.

<sup>126</sup> James-Kay Shuttleworth, First Reading of Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1876. Vol 199, column 960-961.

making attendance compulsory. Nine Liberal MP's made significant contributions in this Parliamentary session including Anthony Mundella, Evelyn Ashly, Frederick Cavendish, William Evans, David Davies, Lyon Playfair, George Dixon, John Walter and Henry Fawcett. Arguments used to harm the opposition party were quite explicit as were references to the franchise as shown in the analytical commentary that follows.

Table 5: Shows Hansard references for each instance a chosen franchise theory or a direct link to the franchise was attributable to either a Conservative or Liberal M's argument for making education compulsory in the Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Act.<sup>127</sup>

The Second Reading of 1876 Elementary Education Act. (15 <sup>th</sup> June 1876, House of Commons. Vol 199, cc 1897-1962)									
Motives/Reasons									
Enlightenment Theory/ Moral Case	Political Competition		Middle Class Pressure		Threat of Revolution		Direct link to the Franchise		
Party									
Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal
1912-1913	1904-1905	1908-1909	1901-1902					1908-1909	1897-1898
1918-1919	1905-1906	1940-1941	1906-1907					1912-1913	1898-1899
1919-1920	1931-1932	1959-1960	1933-1934					1913-1914	1899-1900
1928-1929	1932-1933		1948-1949					1917-1918	1904-1905
			1955-1956					1924-1925	1949-1950
			1959-1960					1925-1926	
			1962-1963					1931-1932	
								1939-1940	
								1960-1961	
Frequency									
4	4	3	7		0	0	0	9	5

Fierce political competition started immediately, with Liberal Anthony Mundella's opening statement. He firstly implied that the Conservatives motive for introducing such an amendment may have had other reasons, to gather popular support popular support for the party by saying "If such a statement had been made by any private Member within the last 10 or 15 years it would have been utterly ridiculed".<sup>128</sup> This is significant not only as an example of implied political competition but because it shows the remarkable legislative progress

<sup>127</sup> Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1898-1899. (<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1876/jun/15/bill-155-second-reading>).

<sup>128</sup> Anthony Mundella, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1898-1899.

that took place regarding education since the Forster Act of 1870. Yet this was not to say Mundella did not support the Bill arguing that “the country was thoroughly ripe for legislation”.<sup>129</sup> Supporting the reforming Bill is typical of Mundella in this paper, he still insisted the bill did not go far enough by simply working in accordance with the Factory Acts which in his view “only led to general confusion, general inconvenience and dissatisfaction”.<sup>130</sup> Finally in line with this papers hypothesis, Mundella finished his speech with this argument:

*“They were gradually extending the franchise, so that in time the agricultural labourer would be in possession of it, and that being so, it became the duty of the State to see that he was so far educated as to understand the value of the right which he possessed.”*<sup>131</sup>

A very interesting quote because as well as calling for elementary education to be made mandatory, he is also making a moral case for doing so because it was the states ‘duty’ to the enfranchised people. Liberal MP Evelyn Ashley was the first to reply, also agreeing in principle but also demanding that the Bill did not go far enough as it “relieved the Government from a responsibility” by placing the legal duty on parents.<sup>132</sup> This led to Mundella speaking again and propose the amendment- “In the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the recommendations contained in the recent Report of the Factor and Workshops Acts Commission, relating to the enforcement of the attendance of children at school, should be introduced in any measure for improving the elementary education of the people”.<sup>133</sup> The Liberal input into this Bill was vital to its eventual form.

This proposed Amendment was backed by Liberal MP’s Frederick Cavendish, William Evans David Davies and Lyon Playfair. Frederick Cavendish stressed that while “there were certain provisions in the Bill which would be useful” he trusted the Government that they “would summon up courage, and adopt provisions” that had been suggested “which would give general satisfaction and operate beneficially to the country”.<sup>134</sup> Evans also supported the Bill in principle but was cautious to give his support for it unless it was amended further, arguing that “if the Bill became law as it now stood, it would cause disappointment, and in many parts of the country would prove very nearly inoperative”.<sup>135</sup> Davies asserted “he did not like the Bill; but he hoped it would be so far improved as to make it a good measure”.<sup>136</sup> Lyon Playfair simply commented on the “timidity” of the Government Bill, arguing that the compulsion measures were not strict enough<sup>137</sup>.

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, column 1899-1900.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, column 1907-1908.

<sup>132</sup> Evelyn Ashley, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1907-1908.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Frederick Cavendish, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1924-1925.

<sup>135</sup> William Evans, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1927-1928.

<sup>136</sup> David Davies, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1928-1929.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.



On the other hand, George Dixon more explicitly opposed the Bill proposed by the Conservative government and similar to Anthony Mundella insinuated the Government may have had other motives for introducing this measure. He did this cleverly by questioning why the Government was now suggesting this Bill when on “several occasions he had brought forward an Elementary Education Bill he had been met with objection almost universally from the other side of the House”.<sup>138</sup> John Walter also questioned the Government’s motives but was a lot more explicit stating, “It was an ingenious way of catching votes”.<sup>139</sup> Henry Fawcett, as the last Liberal MP in this parliamentary session to make a significant contribution, complained “of the manner in which the debate been conducted on part of the Government”, asserting further “that a Bill of such importance should have been discussed during an entire evening ”.<sup>140</sup> A statement that as we will see, irked Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. These statements by Dixon, Walter and Fawcett are all very important to this study because they question the Parliamentary tactics of the Conservative government while also suggesting that they were furthering the development of public elementary education in England and Wales to win votes and retain power rather than because it was the moral or right thing to do.

The Conservatives however, insisted that their bill was sound both in principle and in its details. Some arguing against the Liberals that the bill did not go far enough and insisting on slow gradual change to the elementary education system that existed in England and Wales. Matthew Ridley urged caution in expanding education too quickly and finished his statement by arguing that “No country ever did more for education within the six years than we have done since 1870”.<sup>141</sup> William Heygate “objected in theory” to the principle of compulsion but “yet he could not be insensible to the growing desire for it throughout the country, and therefore he would not put himself in opposition to it”.<sup>142</sup> This is yet another powerful statement indicating that MP’s were responsive to public opinion since the 1867 Reform Act. While William Makins, was more straight forward in his support of his Government’s Bill stating that the amendments suggested by Anthony Mundella would “if adopted, instead of improving the Bill, would render it still less acceptable than it was”.<sup>143</sup> Onslow also supported the Bill in the form that Viscount Sandon had introduced it a month earlier saying it “would meet all the requirements of the country, and for that reason the measure deserved to pass”.<sup>144</sup> In line with the rest

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<sup>138</sup> George Dixon, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1948-1949.

<sup>139</sup> John Walter, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1955-1956.

<sup>140</sup> Henry Fawcett, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1959-1960.

<sup>141</sup> Matthew Ridley, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1919-1920.

<sup>142</sup> William Heygate, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1924-1925.

<sup>143</sup> William Makins, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1928-1929.

<sup>144</sup> Denzil Onslow, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1930-1931.

of the party, Albert Pell argued that the country would not be prepared for “any more than was proposed by the Bill”.<sup>145</sup>

Meanwhile, before the controversial statements by Dixon, Walter and Fawcett who inferred that the Government was simply rushing the Bill to gain votes, Conservative Hugh Birley “congratulated the House on the eminently practical character which this debate had throughout assumed”, arguing that while perhaps the Conservatives did not speak with the emphasis that the Liberals did they shared the desire to see this Bill passed in order to “see truant children of the careless poor or of the criminal part of the population sent to school”.<sup>146</sup> This once again was another instance of education being seen as a tool to combat crime. The provoking statements of Dixon, Walter and Fawcett, resulted in a defensive and combative response from Benjamin Disraeli. He began by directly referencing Fawcett claiming that his statement was “One more unauthorized or unfair I never heard.”<sup>147</sup> Disraeli continued by refuting the statements made by Fawcett, Walter and Dixon who had implied or explicitly questioned the motives or Parliamentary tactics of the Conservative Party by arguing,

*“We have not attempted to curtail the debate; we have thrown no obstacle in the way of its adjournment; and we shall be prepared at the proper time to take our part in the debate. The hon. Gentleman, who is always dictating to the Government how we are to conduct the Business of the House, gave a solemn warning of empty threats as to what he will do unless we pursue a course which is agreeable to himself.”*<sup>148</sup>

Disraeli was clearly making the point that although Fawcett was long standing advocate of educational reform, he would block pragmatic legislation unless it mirrored his own personal convictions. He continued insisting the pragmatic nature of the government before finishing his statement by criticising Fawcett yet again,

*“The debate will be continued, and I trust concluded, on Monday, and, unless the hon. Member who has just addressed us brings forward any very original views which may perplex the Government, we shall, in relation to the observations and suggestions which have been made, offer our opinions to the country and to you, Sir.”*<sup>149</sup>

The end of this debate shows the political competition that often surrounded the establishment of education in England and Wales. This gives credit to authors such as Gertrude Himmelfarb who argues that the extension of the franchise resulted from increased party political competition, a theory which is more likely to be correct

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<sup>145</sup> Albert Pell, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1946-1947.

<sup>146</sup> Hugh Birley, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1938-1939.

<sup>147</sup> Benjamin Disraeli, Second Reading of the 1876 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 15<sup>th</sup> June 1876. Vol 229, column 1959-1960.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, column 1960-1961.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, column 1960-1961.

if it is still evident nine years later in the debates concerning development of elementary education. Furthermore, this chapter while less promising in analysis of the First Reading of the 1876 Education Act has demonstrated again through the language used by politicians at the time, that enfranchisement did impact their way of thinking. This can be seen in the Table 4 and 5 above where there is consistency in politicians using the franchise or using democratic principles to further their own agendas as seen through the explicit quotes presented in the analytical commentary. This is not to say the franchise was the sole factor of the establishment of education in England and Wales, if anything this paper's analysis shows that the reasons were both great in number and complex, ranging from cost, to reducing crime and improving national prosperity. I will now move onto Chapter 3 in order to analyse the 1891 Elementary Bill which abolished fees across elementary schools in England and Wales to see if these trends continue.

### Chapter 3 – The 1891 Elementary Education Bill

In 1891 under a Conservative Government, elementary school fees were abolished universally across England and Wales. The Bill did this by offering a fee grant to those schools who charged up to 10s or schools which charged more than 10s could also accept this grant to reduce fees. So, for example, a school which charged 15s would only then charge 5s to the children's parents. Nevertheless, this Bill made education free for the vast majority because there were now enough schools for parents to send their children to a school that would be free rather than be forced to send them to one that still charged additional fees. By this point, a national system of elementary education had been established, had been made mandatory and was now free. This demonstrated a remarkable rate of progress considering only twenty-one years earlier no public system existed at all. Moreover, in 1884, the majority of the agricultural population including labourers had now been enfranchised, so it will be interesting to see if their concerns became more apparent in these Parliamentary sessions especially since they had already been recognised in the passage of previous education reforms.

#### The First reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Bill

Again, the same methodology will be applied to this legislative Act as it was in the previous two chapters. While a first reading, was not available on the online Commons Hansard, this study has selected a committee that took place previous to this and discussed whether a Bill proposing the abolition of fees should be put forward to the House of Commons. Therefore, the views and opinions of both the Conservative and Liberal Party are present here so this Parliamentary session serves the same purpose as a First Reading. The frequency of which the enlightenment theory, political competition theory, middle class pressure theory, threat of revolution theory as well as any direct links to franchise which were made by MP's have been detailed in the table below. Similar to Chapter Two, these instances were only recorded when MP's used them to argue in favour of abolishing fees rather than the establishment of education as a whole. Just as in the previous two chapters, a qualitative analysis will follow to ascertain the views of those who opposed the abolition of fees and to elucidate on other reasons MP's proposed abolishing fees.

Table 6: Shows Hansard references for each instance a chosen franchise theory or a direct link to the franchise was attributable to either a Conservative or Liberal MPs argument for abolishing fees.<sup>150</sup>

Committee Session, Discussing Proposal for Fee Grant for Elementary Schools in England and Wales (8 <sup>th</sup> June 1891, House of Commons. Vol 353, cc 1834-1919)									
Motives/Reasons									
Enlightenment Theory/ Moral Case	Political Competition		Middle Class Pressure		Threat of Revolution		Direct link to the Franchise		
Party									
Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal
1837-1838	1885-1886	1878-1879	1897-1898					1845-1846	1883-1884
1875-1876	1894-1895	1880-1881	1907-1908					1877-1878	1897-1898
1887-1888	1897-1898	1881-1882						1887-1888	
	1907-1908	1899-1900						1891-1892	
	1912-1913							1898-1899	
									1903-1904
				1905-1906					
				1914-1915					
Frequency									
3	5	4	2	0	0	0	0	8	2

As seen in table 6 above, MP's from both the Conservatives and Liberals referenced the franchise or used democratic principles a total of 11 times in their arguments for abolishing elementary school fees in England and Wales. This demonstrates an emerging pattern throughout this paper's analysis, democratic ideas or direct references to the franchise were from throughout the Parliamentary session as by the Hansard references.

<sup>150</sup> Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1834-1835. (<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1876/jun/15/bill-155-second-reading>), first accessed on 10/07/2016.

Furthermore, a second pattern is emerging in regard to this column: the party which proposes the Bill, in this case the Conservatives were much more likely to use democratic ideas to argue their case for implementing the Bill. In this debate there were again no instances of them citing middle class pressure for abolishing fees nor because of threat of revolution. Conservative MP's used political competition to strengthen their arguments for abolishing fees on four occasions while this study only found two instances of the Liberals doing the same. Finally, moral arguments were used in nearly the same frequency by both parties, with the Conservatives using them four times and the Liberals using them five, reiterating the previous trend of showing a decline in the use of moral arguments throughout the study's time period. In order not to simplify the reasons MP's gave for abolishing elementary school fees in England and Wales, I will provide an analytical commentary that explains this Parliamentary Session in more detail.

A total of ten Liberal MP's made significant contributions to this Parliamentary session including; A.H Dyke Acland, Anthony Mundella, Sydney Buxton, William Harcourt, Samuel Smith, James Caldwell, Alfred Illingworth, James Stuart, Samuel Waddy and Lyon Playfair. Twelve Conservative MP's made significant contributions including; Henry Haworth, Richard Temple, George Batley, Joespeh Chamberlain, Henry Eyre, Roper Lethbridge, Edward Birckbeck, Arthur Heath, Frederick Rasch, John Talbot, Sydney Gedge and W.H Dyke who started proceedings. I will now summarise Dyke's opening speech followed by the Conservative and Liberal viewpoints continuing to follow the methodology of the previous two chapters.

W.H Dyke opened proceedings stating the Conservative aims clearly, "it will be my duty to place before the Committee as succinctly and clearly as I can the proposals of the Government for relieving parents from the payment of fees in elementary schools".<sup>151</sup> Why did the Conservative government, who in 1876, advocated gradual change propose something so radical? According to W.H Dyke because if "the State has to enforce on them the loss of the earnings of their children's labour, it is only fair that the State should assist the parent in carrying out the compulsory process".<sup>152</sup> Specifically W.H Dyke proposed that every school where the "fee did not exceed the sum of 10s. per head per child should be a free school".<sup>153</sup> Perhaps shocked by this radical proposal, Liberal Lyon Playfair then interjected "Absolutely?" and W.H Dyke replied simply "Yes" making it clear schooling should be completely free.<sup>154</sup> He finished his speech by asserting that the proposals he had just read would "prove a great boon to the masses of this country, while they will maintain to the very utmost our present efficient system of elementary education, and will promote generally our educational system

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<sup>151</sup> W.H Dyke, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1834-1835.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 1837-1838.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 1839-1840.

<sup>154</sup> Lyon Playfair and W.H Dyke, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1839-1840.

throughout the country. I beg to move the formal resolution".<sup>155</sup> He then stated the formal resolution which would form the focus of the debate:

*"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of a Fee Grant in aid of the cost of Elementary Education in England and Wales, and to make further provision with regard to Education in Public Elementary Schools."*<sup>156</sup>

Not all his fellow Conservative MP's were happy with this idea, especially Henry Howorth, Richard Temple, George Bartley and John Talbot. Henry Howorth made his views clear straight away, stating that "I and some others, perhaps only a few, on this side, and a large number of persons outside, cannot receive with a very hearty welcome the proposals of the Government".<sup>157</sup> He argued that the people didn't demand it and he couldn't support the bill on the principle because he and other MP's "dislike the proposals of the Government, that we are as much opposed to them now as when we denounced them to the constituencies in seeking election".<sup>158</sup> An interesting statement because rather than using the franchise to argue for the abolition of fees, Howorth uses it to argue against the principle unlike his fellow Conservative MP's later in the debate who did the opposite. However, John Talbot did agree with him also arguing that he did "not believe that the working classes over the country demand this measure, nor am I sure they will be grateful for it."<sup>159</sup> Meanwhile Richard Temple was more cautious stating that "on this preliminary occasion" he would not be quick to judge it until he had examined it in more detail but feared creating free education alongside fee-paying schools would create a system of "humbler education" and "better education".<sup>160</sup> Finally George Bartley was of the opinion that free education would "not be beneficial" as it would do nothing to "improve attendance".<sup>161</sup>

Despite this fairly strong opposition, the majority of the Conservative MP's that spoke in this Parliamentary Session fully supported the Bill. In addition, the arguments they used in this Parliamentary session produced the most explicit quotes referencing the franchise in this study and provide a large body of evidence to show that the franchise was significant in the establishment and development of elementary education in England and Wales being very much part of the political culture. One MP to pledge his full support to this Bill was Joseph Chamberlain who came to the "conclusion that it has become a social and educational necessity to

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<sup>155</sup> W.H Dyke, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1845-1846.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 1845-1846.

<sup>157</sup> Henry Howorth, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1849-1850

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 1855-1856.

<sup>159</sup> John Talbot, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1910-1911.

<sup>160</sup> Richard Temple, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1859-1860.

<sup>161</sup> George Bartley, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1862-1864.

release the parents of the children attending elementary schools altogether from the payment of fees”.<sup>162</sup> He came to this conclusion after realising “there will be a demand for free education”, making free education “inevitable”.<sup>163</sup>

Henry Eyre ridiculed those who used laissez-faire principles to argue against free education by arguing

*“it is said that education is a parental duty, and that if we free a child's education we might as well free its clothing and food. I think there is a vast difference between the two. Food and clothing are necessities of existence; we cannot say that of education, which is for the benefit of the body corporate”.*<sup>164</sup>

Or in other words, education shouldn't be regarded in comparison to other parental duties because it also benefits the State. Eyre also directly referenced his agricultural constituents by stating that “I believe this grant will be an enormous boon to the agricultural population, and I speak more especially for that portion of the agricultural population I have the honour to represent.”<sup>165</sup> This shows that the enfranchisement of the agricultural population in 1884 had started to affect politics and their opinions were more recognised. In the previous Parliamentary sessions there had been little evidence of this. Roper Lethbridge also made clear and overt democratic arguments for abolishing school fees by acknowledging that when he stood for Parliament “free education was a burning question during the election of 1885”, leading him to offer his “heartiest support” to the Bill.<sup>166</sup> Likewise Edward Birkbeck and Sydney Gedge used unambiguous references to their constituents and the franchise to support the Bill. Birkbeck said

*“I believe that only a very small number of Members on this side of the House will oppose the Bill on the Second Reading, and that those who do so will, when they come to consider the matter with their constituents, find that they are in the wrong box.”*<sup>167</sup>

He then finished, stating:

*“Members who differ in regard to the measure will find that their views are not in accordance with the wishes of their constituents, and those who oppose the Bill will probably find, whether the General*

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<sup>162</sup> Joseph Chamberlain, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1873-1874.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 1877-1882.

<sup>164</sup> Henry Eyre, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1886-1887.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 1887-1888.

<sup>166</sup> Roper Lethbridge, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1891-1892.

<sup>167</sup> Edward Birkbeck, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1898-1899.



*Election comes next year or a year after, that they will not be sent back by their constituents to this House.*<sup>168</sup>

Sydney Gedge, as the last Conservative to speak in this Parliamentary session, was also just as explicit pointing out that he had once “undoubtedly opposed free education” but after meeting with his constituents who were all “satisfied” with the idea he was “sure they will be still more satisfied with the Bill itself”.<sup>169</sup>

While the Conservatives were arguing that making elementary education free was the right thing to do because their constituents demanded it, the Liberals, while in principle supporting the idea, questioned this motive. For example, A. H Dyke Acland thought they were not giving enough time to debate the Bill as in the previous year they had been told “there was so much important business to be done that the House could not deal with the education question” he argued “we could have given better attention to it than we can now, at the fag end of a Session, and on the eve of a General Election.”<sup>170</sup> James Stuart also argued along similar lines by telling the house “I have looked up the record in Hansard, I have found, that speeches, were directed in 1885 against free education in any form” so then wondered why the Government were suddenly in favour.<sup>171</sup> While Sydney Buxton was even more forthright calling what the Government had just offered on the eve of an election a “bribe”.<sup>172</sup> These comments are significant to this study because they directly criticise the Government for using free education as a bribe just before a general election, again suggesting the franchise did indeed have influence on the establishment of education. Secondly, this is evidence of the Conservative Party offering free education before the Liberals did to secure power, just as some authors such as Gertude Himmelfarb, Alessandro Lizzeri and Nicola Persico suggest they did before the 1867 General Election thus, giving more credit to the political competition theory.

Other Liberal MP’s were slightly more cautious in their arguments, mainly again stating that the Bill did not go far enough. William Harcourt for example, wanted to know for certain if “there shall be free schools in rural parishes?”, implying that rural areas had been marginalised in regard to education in recent years<sup>173</sup> Similarly Samuel Smith, argued it didn’t go far enough, saying, “I regret the Government have not had the courage to take, raising the age for compulsory attendance”.<sup>174</sup> Or in other words, while free education was a

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid, column 1899-1900.

<sup>169</sup> Sydney Gedge, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1914-1915.

<sup>170</sup> W.H Dyke Acland, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1849-1850.

<sup>171</sup> James Stuart, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1904-1905.

<sup>172</sup> Sydney Buxton, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1862-1863.

<sup>173</sup> William Harcourt, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1904-1905.

<sup>174</sup> Samuel Smith, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1885-1886.

good idea, Smith was concerned that there should be free education for those aged ten and over as well. James Picton was the most vocal in this regard passionately stating,

*“has he never heard of the Kindergarten system? Has he never read any of those interesting works in which it is shown that children obtain a very large part of their education before they are five years of age? I suppose his idea of education is cramming a child with multiplication tables, and spelling, and other such dry details.”*<sup>175</sup>

This is another very significant statement with regard to this study. It not only because it demonstrates that certain Liberals wanted more extensive legislation but also makes a comparison with another country's educational system and suggests that elementary education should be properly established in England and Wales because politicians felt the country was falling behind its European competitors.

This Parliamentary session certainly produced the most explicit evidence suggesting that the franchise did have a significant impact on the establishment of elementary education in England and Wales. This is evidenced by the fact the Conservatives justified establishing free elementary education because their constituents were in support of it and because the Liberals accused the Conservatives of rushing the Bill through to win votes rather than because they actually supported the idea in principle. I will now move onto the final Parliamentary session used in this study to see if this theme continued.

#### The Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Bill.

Only two weeks later, the Second Reading of this influential Bill took place and the initial results are presented in the Table 7 as in the previous two chapters. Four Liberals in this Parliamentary session made significant quotes including: James Picton, George Trevelyan, John Logan and Francis Channing. While four Conservatives also made significant contributions including: George Bartley, Charles Young, Edward Hulse and James Fulton. Their views have been presented in Table 7 and the following analytical commentary.

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<sup>175</sup> James Picton, Elementary Education [ Fee Grant]. Considered in Committee in The House of Commons, 8 June 1891. Vol 353, column 1893-1894.

Table 7: Hansard references for each instance a chosen franchise theory or a direct link to the franchise was attributable to either a Conservative or Liberal MPs argument for abolishing fees in the Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Act.<sup>176</sup>

<p align="center"><b>Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Act.</b></p> <p align="center"><b>(22<sup>nd</sup> June 1891, House of Commons. Vol 354, cc 1099-1157)</b></p>									
Motives/Reasons									
Enlightenment Theory/ Moral Case		Political Competition		Middle Class Pressure		Threat of Revolution		Direct link to the Franchise	
Party									
Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal
1130-1131	1121-1112	1113-1114	1099-1100					1112-1113	1099-1100
1131-1132	1145-1146	1114-1115	1117-1118					1128-1129	1103-1104
1143-1144		1141-1142	1120-1121					1132-1133	1120-1121
1146-1147		1143-1144	1121-1122					1141-1142	1134-1135
									1144-1145
Frequency									
4	2	4	4	0	0	0	0	4	5

In terms of the frequency at which MP's drew influence from either the middle class or threat of revolution remained the same as in the First Reading. A similar number of instances also occurred in terms of using political competition to further their cause as well as arguments that were based on morality. Moreover, there was also a fall in the number of times an MP directly referenced the franchise or made an argument based on

<sup>176</sup> Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Act. 22<sup>nd</sup> June, House of Commons. Vol 354.

(<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1876/jun/15/bill-155-second-reading>). First Accessed, 07/08/2016.

democratic principles. As in the First Reading, the comments that were made in this regard were very explicit, providing further evidence that the franchise had a significant impact on the debate.

Picton opened proceedings, straight away acknowledging the “peculiarity of this Bill” was “that both sides of the House seem to compete in eagerness to get it passed.”<sup>177</sup> Going on yet again to question the Conservative Party’s motive, he stated “the Tory Party have had so many changes of skin lately that they have become almost like eels”.<sup>178</sup> He then made his viewpoint on the matter clear, stating that he objected “to the retention of fees in any form, or in any class, or with any age limit in elementary schools” arguing that there needed to be free education for those under the age of five when “the child’s mind is most plastic”.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, he made his case again by comparing the current Conservative plans to exclude under-fives from free education to the educational systems in Switzerland and Germany.<sup>180</sup> George Trevelyan supported Picton in regard to extending free education to the under fives by using the moral argument that “In the towns especially it is of the greatest importance to take them away from that amount of evil which the tenderest children can pick up before five playing about in the street ”.<sup>181</sup> In other words, if education was not made free for children under the age of five and their parents could not afford to pay, there would be many children exposed to the dangers of the street.

Liberal John Logan although concerned by some aspects seemed to support the bill and suggested he would still vote for it by saying,

*“As a practical man, I recognise the uselessness in this Parliament of attempting to clothe that skeleton without at the same time running the risk of breaking it; and, therefore, while I shall endeavour to improve the Bill, I accept it as embodying the principle that it is the duty of the State to place a proper system of education within the reach of its poorest citizen.”*<sup>182</sup>

A viewpoint echoed by fellow Liberal Francis Channing who stated he would give the Bill his “heartiest support”.<sup>183</sup> Yet he was still slightly critical and asserted that “It cannot be claimed as a Conservative victory” because in his view it was something that the Liberals had been promoting for some time and the Conservatives were opportunistically taking advantage of.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> James Picton, Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 22 June 1891. Vol 354, column 1099-1100.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, column 1100-1101.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid, column 1103-1104.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, column 1104-1105.

<sup>181</sup> George Trevelyan, Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 22 June 1891. Vol 354, column 1134-1135.

<sup>182</sup> John Logan, Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 22 June 1891. Vol 354, column 1145-1146.

<sup>183</sup> Francis Channing, Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 22 June 1891. Vol 354, column 1110-1111.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, column 1120-1121.

The Conservative George Bartley was the first Conservative to reply, still insistent that free education was irresponsible because “although education may be silver, self-reliance is golden”.<sup>185</sup> He also cited the concerns of the “bottom of the middle class”, arguing that the increased taxation required to provide free education would make them poorer than when they had to pay fees. He also doubted the political advantage that the Conservative Party would gain from this and claimed that “both sides of the House think they are getting political advantage out of it”.<sup>186</sup> Charles Young supported Bartley, arguing that free education “was a step towards State Socialism”.<sup>187</sup> These statements are indicative of the laissez-faire principles that existed in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain. This suggests that while the middle classes may have been responsible for pressure to extend the franchise, their similar laissez-faire principles may have been an obstacle in the establishment and development of free public education.

Conservative Edward Hulse on the other hand, supported the Governments’ proposal stating, “in the city I represent the question of free education is one of great importance”.<sup>188</sup> James Fulton echoed Hulse using democratic principles in his argument to support his fellow Conservative MP while also using an argument based on political competition to place the opposition Liberal members in a conundrum. He said if the Liberals

*“opposed free education when they went to their constituents the results would not be doubtful; if on the other hand they supported it, it would be said they were supporting a measure produced by a Conservative Government”*.<sup>189</sup>

This adds further evidence to the idea that increased political competition, the franchise and the establishment of elementary education in England and Wales were linked. The ruling Government could now implement popular policies in regard to education as well as other social programs on the eve of an election to try and hold onto power. It is clear that the political influence of enfranchisement was not the sole or most important factor in the establishment of elementary education. If anything this paper should have conveyed that the reasons behind the establishment of a public education system were incredibly complex and to say one factor is more important than the other is a bold statement. It should, however, certainly be clear that the extended franchise certainly influenced political thinking and actions. Having analysed the final Parliamentary session, I will now move onto my conclusions in greater detail.

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<sup>185</sup> George Bartley, Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 22 June 1891. Vol 354, column 1110-1111.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, column 1113-1115.

<sup>187</sup> Charles Young, Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 22 June 1891. Vol 354, column 1117-1118.

<sup>188</sup> Edward Hulse, Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 22 June 1891. Vol 354, column 1141-1142.

<sup>189</sup> James Fulton, Second Reading of the 1891 Elementary Education Bill. House of Commons, 22 June 1891. Vol 354, column 1141-1142.

## Conclusion

This paper has shown that the reasons and motivations politicians had for establishing elementary education in England and Wales were multifaceted and incredibly complex. The paper includes references to a range of arguments put forward by MP's, including the well established theories that elementary education was needed to promote national prosperity and stop Britain falling behind its competitors. As well as economic arguments, social arguments were well voiced such as the need to develop compulsory elementary education to reduce crime and idleness. There can be little doubting the importance of these arguments at this time. Yet, I would argue, based on the results of this paper's analysis that the qualitative impact of the franchise should be given more credit than it currently is in the historiography. However, these arguments were often implicitly, or as seen later in the paper, more explicitly connected to the franchise or democratic principles by the MP's themselves. Thus, it may be that while factors such as the need to reduce crime were more important to MP's and Government, what the franchise did in relation to education was to change their way of thinking and giving them another reason to justify establishing education. As seen towards the end of this paper's analysis this also provided them with extra motivation to establish elementary education because they realised that establishing education was popular with the public and by improving it they could win extra votes. This was very clear in Chapter 3 with numerous quotations from MP's reflecting the demands and wants of their constituents. For this reason, I disagree with Gillian Sutherland's view that the extension of the franchise happened too recently before the establishment of education for it to have had a significant effect on political thinking.<sup>190</sup> It is clear that enfranchisement was not a novel concept in 1867, it had been debated for many years before hand so it is more than plausible that it changed politicians' ways of thinking as indicated in my research.

This is illustrated through the use of tables that were employed in this paper as they demonstrate that throughout each Parliamentary session, arguments with direct links to the franchise or that were based in democratic principles were prevalent throughout nearly the entire length of every Parliamentary session. In regard as to whether the chosen established theories which explain the extension of the franchise still had influence in the establishment of education, the results were less clear. In Chapter 1, the tables do however indicate that there was a genuine moral campaign by MP's to establish education as they recognised that the current state of education which existed in the country was unacceptable. This was reflected in the chapter's analytical commentary of the Parliamentary sessions. This gives some credit to the idea that politicians did go through an 'enlightenment' phase or, at the very least, shows their social values changed and thus saw the need to not only extend the franchise but also establish a functional system of elementary education. However, it should also be noted that the number of arguments based on morality seemed to diminish through the study's time period.

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<sup>190</sup> Gillian Sutherland, *Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century*, 111

The tables also show however, that same cannot be said of the theories relating to middle class pressure or the threat of revolution. As acknowledged in the methodology the threat of revolution was unlikely to be argued by MP's as a reason to establish education but it was still kept in the analysis to keep the study systematic. Having said this, it is not to say that the theories of Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson in regard to the extension of the franchise are incorrect. Firstly, and quite simply the threat of revolution is recognised as a factor influencing the extension of the franchise but is simply not one which can be transferred into the educational debate. Secondly, their theory also states that franchise extension which helped negate the threat of revolution led to the unexpected effect of increased public spending.<sup>191</sup> This establishment of elementary education is certainly a very clear example of this increased spending and the debates often make reference to costs although this is not a real focus of this paper. The reason there was so little middle class pressure for the establishment of education as evidenced by the tables may have been because of the strongly held laissez-faire principles that existed at the time, something which Andy Green also asserts by saying that middle class attitudes "were arguably a braking factor on educational development".<sup>192</sup>

Political competition as a factor furthering the cause of education was also indicated in the tables frequently throughout this paper and actually increased through the time period. Analysis of the last two Parliamentary sessions in this paper highlight explicit quotes from MP's who argued the Conservatives were only abolishing fees for their own electoral success. Thus, this paper indicates that the arguments of Gertrude Himmelfarb, Alessandro Lizzeri and Nicola Persico who claim politics gradually became more competitive during this era of British history were correct and clear evidence of this can be seen into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and affected the development of elementary education.<sup>193</sup>

The trends identified in this paper could arguably have more validity if it had been possible to analyse a larger number of Parliamentary sessions however due to the exhaustive nature of analysis employed for each of these sessions, this was not possible within the scope of this paper. It is also acknowledged that while Parliamentary sessions indicate the reasons politicians give to Parliament, they are not always indicative of the outside pressures that may have led to them to do so. For example, this thesis was not able to accurately evaluate the influences of the various Education Leagues and mass popular movements which existed during this time in British history which were increasing influential. Nevertheless, through the detailed analysis of the Parliamentary sessions I did choose, this paper does contribute to our understanding of the qualitative link between enfranchisement and the establishment of elementary education in England and Wales. Evidence from the debates show that it is clear that while many arguments were put forward in favour of establishing education, they were often intertwined in democratic principles or on many occasions simply linked the wishes

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<sup>191</sup> Acemoglu and. Robinson, "Why did the west extend the franchise? Democracy, Inequality and growth in historical perspective", 1168.

<sup>192</sup> Green, *Education and State Formation, The Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA*, 31.

<sup>193</sup> Alessandro Lizzeri and Nicola Persico, "Why did the Elites Extend the suffrage? Democracy and the Scope of Government, with an Application to Britain's Age of Reform", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 119(2004): 2, 708.

of their constituents to justify establishing elementary education in England and Wales. The voice of the newly enfranchised made itself heard in the development of public education.



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