



Liberal Candidate Bishopstone 1892

Liberalism in North Wilts Mr. Husband's Candidature Successful village meeting

This week Mr. John Husband, the Liberal candidate for North Wilts, has been holding a series of most successful village meetings, being the first of a series which are to be held between now and the dissolution of parliament. The previous meetings which have been held were only meetings of the North Wilts Liberal and Radical Association, but at each of the present series votes of confidence in Mr. Husband have been passed unanimously, and his speeches received with much enthusiasm.

Bishopstone

Mr. Husband visited Bishopstone on Tuesday evening, and met with an enthusiastic reception. In consequence of preparations being made for the annual village meetings, the use of the schoolroom could not be obtained, and the meeting had to be held in the open air near the schoolroom. Here a large audience assembled composed chiefly of working men. A wagonette was used as a "platform" and the "chair" was taken by Mr. Alfred Bond. The evening was beautiful and fine, and all circumstances were favourable to an open air meeting.

After a few opening remarks by the Chairman, Mr. F Russell of Swindon, gave an address, referring to Mr. Maskelyn's action in voting with the Tory Government, and said that the coming election, which was near at hand, the Liberal party in North Wilts would do their utmost to oust the Liberal Unionist and send to parliament as their representative a true Liberal in Mr. husband (applause).

The Chairman remarked that so far as regards the support Mr. Maskelyne would get from Bishopstone, he would get from Bishopstone, he had delivered his "dying speech", as might be judged from his recent meeting in the village. There Mr. Maskelyne had a meagre platform of three, and an audience of 25; and the meeting was of a very disappointing character.

Mr. E. Rider Cook, the late Liberal candidate for this division, was the next speaker. He referred with regret to his being compelled, owing to ill health, to give up the seat. He had wished to have the honour of sitting in the next parliament, and voting with the "Grand Old man" (applause) to do justice to Ireland. And he had desired to represent such a sterling constituency as North Wilts. He believed he should have made a very good member (hear, hear), but now he believed Mr. husband would make a better one

(applause). Passing on to general politics, Mr. Cook reviewed the Home Rule question, and the numerous measures of reform which had been brought forward supported by the Liberals, but strenuously opposed by the Tories, backed up but the few existing Unionists,. Amongst these measures he mentioned the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, the Religious Disabilities Bill, the Enfranchisement of Places of Worship, reforms in the registration laws, reduction in the hours of labour of railway servants, taxation of ground rents, popular control of schools receiving Government grants, and for the use of village schools for political meetings. After such experience as they had had of the work of the present Government during the past six years, he should imagine the electors of North Wilts did not want to be governed by the Tories any longer. Wiltshire had always been Liberal, and in the van of progress, and he hoped to see good Liberal men, such as Mr. Husband, returned to Parliament at the forthcoming election (applause). Mr. Husband would go to the House of Commons to look after their interests, and not his own. The Tories had ever been seeking the interests of the privileged classes, whilst the Liberals cared only for the interests of the labouring classes; they wanted to see fewer workhouses, and fewer people in them. By returning Mr. Husband to Parliament they would be promoting the happiness and good of the people of this country (applause).

Mr. Husband was greeted with applause on rising to speak. He said he was glad to have an opportunity of speaking to his constituents in Bishopstone for the first time. He fancied they had heard something about him before. He had read in the papers that they had a political meeting in the village last week, and one of the speakers was kind enough to speak about him (Mr. Husband). He did not think he was of sufficient importance to be talked about at other meetings; but nevertheless one of the gentlemen at the political meeting at Bishopstone last week spoke about him (Mr. Husband), and said something which was grossly unfair, for he imputed motives to him which he ought never to have done. He said that in all probability he (Mr. Husband) sought to have "M.P" after his name in order to "make a name" by it, because he was, or might be connected with some public companies. Now, the speaker in question knew absolutely nothing about him (Mr. Husband), and therefore, to insinuate anything of that kind was what he might call "a stab in the dark" (hear, hear). And it was that kind of thing in politics he hoped to prevent as far as he possibly could. For while he would not permit anyone so say an untrue thing about himself, he would not say an unfair or unkind thing about his political opponents. They each had the interests of the country at heart, but they worked by different methods, and each thought his own the best. It was for the electors to choose between the two parties, and see by which their interests would be best served. The speaker he had already referred to at Bishopstone described himself as a "Progressive Conservative" (laughter), but he (Mr. husband) did not know what that was. He should imagine that the gentleman who had thus described himself had been a Tory, and had progressed till he became a Conservative. But he was still progressing, and he (Mr. Husband) could only hope that the time would come when he would progress from a Conservative to Liberalism, and, it may be, go on to Radicalism – the politics which most of them present that evening professed. That gentleman was preserving one of the true elements of Tory mind and thought, for while suggesting reasons why he (Mr. Husband) was seeking to become a member of Parliament, he could only be thinking of the reason why in years gone by men sought that position – not to pass good laws, but to put money in their pockets. The insinuation which the gentleman made that what he said "might be true" was a matter of fact utterly false, for he (Mr. Husband) was not connected with any public company. He should not make money by going to Parliament; on the other hand, he should lose some. His sole object in seeking a seat in Parliament was that he might be of service to his countrymen. Therefore, he wanted to ask Mt. Arkell, if he read these words in the public Press, to make ample apology for what was a false insinuation, and ought never to have been made (applause). If because a gentleman was a director or was connected with some public company he was not fitted to become a member of Parliament he had to ask Mr. Arkell one of two questions; and the first was, Did he mean to support Mr. Maskelyne at the next election?. At any rate, he appeared at the meeting to support him. But what were the facts of the case ?. Whilst he (Mr. Husband) was not connected with any public company, Mr. Maskelyne was a director of four public companies. So that if Mr. Arkell could not support him (Mr. Husband) because he differed from him in politics, and may not support Mr. Maskelyne because he was a director of four public companies, then who in Heaven's name was he to support?. He was somewhere between the devil and the deep blue sea (laughter and applause). He (Mr. Husband) was glad to know when that inuendo had been made against him Mr. Maskelyne reprovved the speaker, and said he believed Mr. Husband had no other than honourable motives in seeking a seat in Parliament (hear, hear). Mr. Maskelyne had acted like a gentleman, and he hoped to observe the same spirit in the coming conflict.

Passing on to general political topics, Mr. Husband referred to free education as a measure the Liberals had been working for over thirty years. Alluding to the rural situation, he said the labourers life was too often one of hard work and small pay, with death in the workhouse in the end. The fault of this was the land laws, which required altering so that there should be more small landowners and fewer larger ones. In conclusion, Mr. husband said he only wished to go to Parliament if in going there he could be of service to his country, and to help in uplifting the masses who made up the English nation (applause).

Mr. S. Wentworth moved a vote of confidence in Mr. Husband, which was seconded by Mr. J. Stratford, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Husband acknowledged the same, and the meeting terminated.

Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle, 28 May 1892