

There is, then, no reason to suppose that Cobbett wanted office, or that he would have accepted it even if it had been offered. He must have realised that he was a man entirely unsuited to be fettered by the traditions of any administrative department. Popular with the people, with the governing classes he was already vastly unpopular, his attack on pensions in the *Political Register* of July 27, 1805, having been a blow too direct to be overlooked or forgiven. As his letters show, however, while he asked nothing for himself, he certainly thought more attention should have been paid to his recommendations by Windham, and that when in what he thought to be the public interest he demanded the dismissal of Freeling, that official should have been removed from his post. In no department of state were there greater abuses than in the War Office, over which Windham now presided, and against these in March Cobbett tilted with great vigour in his paper, being careful, however, to display no animus—and, in truth, he felt none—against Windham. The last reference to Cobbett in Windham's *Diary* is on February 19, 1809, and thus runs: "Nearly the whole time from breakfast till Mr. Legge's coming down, employed in reading Cobbett. More thoroughly wicked and mischievous than almost anything that has appeared yet."

Cobbett was able to address a vast audience through the medium of the *Political Register*, but he was desirous to do more than promulgate opinions: he desired to be able to take a leading part in the making of laws that should enforce his views, and he had for some time cast longing eyes at Parliament. A chance offered in June 1806, when Cavenish's Bradshaw, one of the members for Honiton, vacated his seat by accepting an office of