

CHAPTER 2

THE FIRST WEEKS

The Parliament met on 3rd November 1640. “When this Parliament begun the eyes of all men were fixed upon him as their *Patriae Pater*, and the pilot that must steer the Vessel through the tempests and rocks that threatened it. And I am persuaded his power and interest at that time was greater to do good or hurt than any man’s in the kingdom, or than any man of his rank hath had in any time: for his reputation for honesty was universal, and his affections seemed so publicly guided, that no corrupt or private ends could bias them”¹. Hampden was elected for the County of Buckingham and the town of Wendover, and chose to stand for the County.² This resulted in a by-election, and Thomas Fountain was elected for Wendover.³

On 7th November Hampden was appointed to a committee to “peruse the journals and records of this House” and to consider a place to keep them safe⁴. On the same day Harbottle Grimstone rehearsed in the House the events of 1629 and May 1640 (see *John Hampden and the Short Parliament*); that their “privileges were violated, their studies and pockets searched and their bodies imprisoned”⁵. On 18th December a committee was appointed (not including Hampden) to consider “what reparations are fit to be granted to the parties grieved”⁶. But there the matter seems to have rested, there were more pressing matters to be dealt with.

THE DISSOLUTIONS OF 1629, MAY 1640 AND THE ARREST OF MEMBERS

On 7th November Hampden was appointed to the committee to peruse the Journals of the House¹, and to seek a place for the “constant keeping of them”. As noted in the Short Parliament, at its dissolution he was arrested and his person and study searched to find incriminating material, but none was found. But unlike the Short Parliament, there was little discussion of these issues, although on 18 December a further committee was appointed to consider them, especially the breaches of privilege and to consider reparations for those aggrieved². But there were far more pressing matters to consider, and the above subjects were quietly dropped.

THE CITY LOANS

One of the most pressing matters was the raising of money to pay for two armies, the King’s and the Scots, each consisting of about 20,000 men; the Scots were demanding £850 per day³, as agreed at the treaty of Ripon, and it was not known how long they would remain in Northumberland and Durham. The matter was debated for the first time on 13th November when it was agreed that a loan of £100,000 should be sought in the City. Hampden moved that “we might agree the way before we voted the sum and that he rather inclined to raise the sum by act of parliament than declaration, since there is danger in both, but most in a declaration since by act we may meet with most of the dangers in the penning of the act which cannot be by declaration”⁴. Then on the 16th November he moved “that a present consideration might be taken of what manner of security should be given to the City for the money [that] should be taken”⁵. It was intended that the money should be raised by subsidies: a subsidy being worth about £60,000. On the 21st Alderman Pennington, a London MP, announced that his constituents had volunteered £20,000 towards the loan with the result that some 70 MPs, including Hampden, offered £1,000 each and thus security for about £90,000 was raised. On 10th December the matter was again debated and it was decided instead of the loan two subsidies would be granted. Hampden’s opinion is not recorded⁷. On the 23rd two further subsidies were added but not before Hampden reminded “that it had always been the custom when we give monies to put the House into a committee”, so this was done.

The Loan was considered on 1st March 1641 when it was moved that the loan of £100,000 was an “acceptable service” and Hampden was one of a committee of six to collaborate with representatives of the City⁸. It is not certain when this sum of money was paid but on 7th June 1641 it was announced that it “would be advanced within one month of acceptance”⁹. What is certain is that Hampden played a major part in negotiating the loan with the City fathers.