

U DX/1

Speech by John Stuart Mill

[1825]

Historical background

John Stuart Mill was a philosopher and social reformer born in 1806. His father, James Mill (1773-1836), was a Benthamite philosopher and economist whose work 'Analysis of the phenomenon of the human mind' (published in 1829) provided a psychological rationale for the political principles of utilitarianism. His son went on to become the torchbearer for Bentham's ideas and published 'Utilitarianism' in 1863.

Between 1865- 1868 Mill was both Rector at the University of St Andrews and MP for the City of Westminster. In 1866 he became the first person to call for women to have the vote and was also an advocate for social reforms including labour unions and appears to have favoured a change of parliamentary voting to a system based upon proportional representation.

He died in 1873 and was buried in Avignon alongside his wife Harriet Taylor.

If this speech was written by John Stuart Mill (at the age of circa 19 years), it represents his early thinking on the British political system which later found expression in Considerations on representative government (1861). 'All I complain of is, that we are not well governed, and that from the manner in which the House of Commons is constituted, it is absolutely impossible we ever should be' [U DX/1].

Custodial History:

Donated by Professor Harold J Laski in 1928

Description:

Draft version of a speech relating to the British Constitution by John Stuart Mill

Extent: 1 item

Related Material:

Material is held at a number of institutions including the London School of Economics Archives, the British Library and the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Access Conditions:

Access will be granted to any accredited reader

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'Speech never spoken on the British Constitution'
Incomplete draft of a speech with annotations and corrections.
Dated from watermark '1825'
1 item

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