

= Taunton by @-@ election , 1887 =

The Taunton by @-@ election of 1887 was held on 23 April 1887 in Taunton , Somerset , following the succession of the incumbent , Samuel Charles Allsopp , to the peerage upon the death of his father , becoming 2nd Baron Hindlip . One of Lord Hindlip 's brothers , Alfred Percy Allsopp , stood for the Conservative Party , while James Harris Sanders was the candidate for the Liberal Party . Allsopp was elected , with a majority of 536 votes ( 23 @. @ 1 % ) .

Although they had considered not contesting the election because the area was a Conservative stronghold , the Liberals decided to do so in order to generate a discussion on the issue of Home Rule for Ireland . Allsopp was in agreement with the Conservative policy , which was to maintain full governmental control over Ireland , and pass further Coercion Acts to reduce lawlessness in that country . Sanders , who had lost two previous elections for the Liberal Party , was in favour of devolution of powers to Ireland .

= = Background = =

= = = Vacancy and nominations = = =

At the 1886 general election , Samuel Allsopp held his seat in parliament unopposed for the Conservative Party . In April 1887 , his father , Henry Allsopp , 1st Baron Hindlip , died . As a result of this , Samuel Allsopp succeeded , entering the House of Lords as a peer . This left the parliamentary consistency of Taunton vacant . The Conservative Party offered Samuel Allsopp 's brother , Alfred Percy Allsopp ( commonly known as Percy Allsopp ) the chance to contest the vacancy . Initially it was reported that the Liberal Party would not contest the seat if Percy Allsopp was the only Conservative candidate , but a meeting of the local executive could not reach a consensus : some believed that as the area was so strongly Conservative , a large loss would be damaging to the party , while others wanted to generate a debate on Home Rule . Despite the Taunton executive of the Conservative Party selecting Percy Allsopp as their preferred candidate , the town 's Mayor , Samuel Farrant , declared that he would also stand for the Conservatives , which led to concern within that party that a split of the votes could result in a Liberal candidate being elected . Farrant later withdrew his candidacy , leaving Allsopp as the Conservative 's sole representative . After their initial uncertainty , the Liberals opted to give the Taunton electorate the opportunity to show their views on Home Rule , and chose James Harris Sanders , of London , as their candidate .

= = = Candidates = = =

Alfred Percy Allsopp was the seventh , and youngest , son of Henry Allsopp , 1st Baron Hindlip , and at the time of the election , was resident in Lichfield , Staffordshire . He often accompanied his brother during his time in office in Taunton , and had occasionally represented him in the town . The Taunton Courier noted that at one dinner , he " made a great impression by the perspicacity of his utterances , by the breadth of view they indicated , and by his fluency of speech . " He was a partner in Samuel Allsopp & Sons , which along with Guinness and Bass was one of the largest brewers in the world .

James Harris Sanders , commonly Harris Sanders , was born in Tavistock , Devon , the second son of Richard Sanders . Sanders had previously stood in the 1886 general election in Harborough , South Leicestershire , and in the King 's Lynn by @-@ election in the same year , losing both . The Western Times described him as " an unexceptionable candidate " , while the Taunton Courier elaborated on his past election performances , and commented that he was " becoming accustomed to acting as a political ninepin " .

= = = Home Rule = = =

Home Rule was the key issue in British politics in the late 1880s . The debate revolved around granting Ireland more powers to govern themselves . William Ewart Gladstone , the Liberal Prime Minister , proposed the First Home Rule Bill in April 1886 , aiming to devolve power to Ireland . The Conservatives were opposed to the Bill , and were joined by a number of Liberal members in defeating the Bill . This caused a split in the Liberal party , the creation of the Liberal Unionist Party , and a fresh general election , just a year after the last . At the 1886 general election , the Conservatives entered government with Lord Salisbury as Prime Minister . They formed a majority with the Liberal Unionists .

= = Election campaign = =

At the Conservative Assembly meeting at which Allsopp was formally nominated as the party 's candidate , one of his nominators , Mr J. Standfast , decried the situation in Ireland . He called upon the people of Taunton to show that they " disapproved of the murders , and robberies , and outrages which were so common in Ireland , and were not prepared to hand over to the instigators of those crimes the government of that island . " Allsopp did not initially campaign heavily , while he grieved for his father , but he did leave an advert in the Taunton Courier stating his support for the Conservative government 's position on the administration of Ireland . He noted that his views mirrored those of his brother , the previous MP . During his campaigning , Allsopp drew parallels between the 1881 Coercion Bill , which Gladstone had introduced , with the proposed Crimes Bill , which Gladstone and Sanders both opposed . He accused them of hypocrisy , and claimed that those in support of Home Rule did not understand what it meant . He spoke of his hope for the Crimes Bill to be passed , and his belief that it would end the " misery and distress " in Ireland .

At Sanders ' nomination , the Liberal candidate spoke of his " entire concurrence " with Gladstone 's proposals . At a meeting shortly thereafter , Sanders seconded a resolution raised by a fellow Liberal member protesting " against the attempt to impose coercion upon Ireland for ever . " Sanders then highlighted the Corrupt Practices Act , and appealed to the party members to not only avoid engaging in any corruption , but to remain honourable at all times . He spoke at length about the virtues of Liberalism , and what he described as the sad history of Ireland under English rule . The following Monday , which was Easter Monday , Sanders travelled to London to take part in demonstrations against the Perpetual Crimes Bill . As the election drew close , Sanders issued a statement that he had deposited £ 1 @, @ 500 in a local bank , of which £ 500 would be split as rewards if people presented evidence of bribery and corruption in the election that led to a conviction . The other £ 1 @, @ 000 was set aside for a possible petition against the election result .

The two sides both adopted mottoes during the election : the Conservatives called for people to " Vote for Allsopp and liberty " , while the Liberals used " No Coercion , vote for Sanders . " Cartoons were distributed by the Liberals , illustrating the recent evictions in Ireland . In reaction , the Conservatives posted pictures of " brutal outrages " that had been recently committed in that country .

= = Result = =

The vote was held on Saturday 23 April 1887 , with the booths open for twelve hours from eight in the morning . There were seven polling stations across Taunton , which was busy as it was market day . The Taunton Courier reported that party colours of both sides were on display , but that there was more " Conservative blue " than the tri @-@ colour and Union Jack of the Liberals . Campaigning continued throughout the day , but was conducted in a civil manner . Two hours into the voting it was announced that a third of the constituency had voted , and the Conservatives declared that they were leading by a ratio of two to one . Bad weather in the middle of the day caused a lull in the voting , but the polls were very busy throughout the afternoon when the weather cleared , as most of the town only worked half of the day . Based upon their polling on the day , the Conservatives continued to claim victory during the afternoon . The votes were counted in the

Municipal Office , and the results were announced at quarter @-@ past nine in the evening . Allsopp received 1 @, @ 426 votes to Sanders ' 890 , granting him a 536 majority . Both Allsopp and Sanders spoke briefly to praise the Returning Officer , and Allsopp was then called upon to give a speech . During that speech , Allsopp thanked the people of Taunton , and gently mocked Sanders for the money he had banked in case of corruption .

= = Aftermath = =

Despite initial suggestions that a petition would be lodged against the result by Sanders , including an strong assertion in the Pall Mall Gazette , such a petition was eventually abandoned . Allsopp entered parliament , becoming the 18th new Member of Parliament to be elected since the general election in 1886 . Allsopp served as the Member for Taunton until the 1895 general election .