• Once he pacified his critics among the senior army officers, he called Third Protectorate Parliament in Dec 1658 in attempt to deal with Protectorate’s deepening financial crisis.

• His powers as Protector were again defined in a constitutional document known as The Humble and Advice (1657).
• Electoral reforms introduced by Instrument under which the first two Protectorate Parliaments had been elected.
• Council decided to revert to pre-1653 franchise and arrangement of constituencies for the Third Protectorate Parliament – viewed with suspicion by opponents.
• Council decided to retain MPs sitting for Scotland and Ireland and the nominated Upper House, both of which were controversial.
• Unlike Second Protectorate Parliament of 1656-8, no attempt to exclude MPs hostile to the government.
• 27 Jan 1659: Parliament assembled.

• Protector’s party, headed by John Thurloe, was opposed by the republican “Commonwealthsmen” of the old Rump who wanted a return to the pre-Protectorate Commonwealth of 1649-53.
• Republican Sir Arthur Hesilrige led a campaign to delay discussion of Act of Recognition of the new Protector in hope that Richard’s authority would be compromised.
• Mid-February, House voted in favour of Richard, but stipulated that Protector’s powers should be more clearly defined before the Act of Recognition became law.

• Commons agreed to general principle that there should be a second chamber of Parliament, but much debate.
• Eventually Commons voted by a narrow majority to recognize the Upper House and also to accept the introduction of a limited number of MPs for Scottish and Irish constituencies at Westminster.

• Protector had authority over armed forced.
• By April 1659 it appeared Richard Cromwell was firmly established as Oliver’s successor.

• Republicans tried to spread disaffection in army by accusing Protectorate of moving towards monarchical style of government, of promoting religious intolerance and of planning the disbandment of the army.
• Richard convened a Council of Officers in the hope of defusing discontent but hostility between army and Parliament flared again when MPs attempted to impeach Major-General Boteler for actions he had carried out three years previously during the Rule of the Major Generals.
• Council of Officers led by Fleetwood and Disbrowe called for soldiers’ indemnity from prosecution of actions carried out during Oliver’s Protectorship.