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**SUPPLEMENT**

TO THE PRECEDING

**ADDRESS.**

TO THE  
LANDOWNERS OF THE UNITED EMPIRE.

GENTLEMEN,

I had scarcely closed the Letter I addressed to you in February last, when I was taken ill, and was unable to attend my duty in Parliament, or I should have endeavoured in the course of the debates, which occurred in the early part of the Session, to have urged with all the little power and influence I possess, the same arguments on the attention of the House, which I had addressed to you. I have recently taken my seat; and last week, having a petition to present from Lancashire, and there being several others presented by other Members, I availed myself of the moment to make a statement of what I believed to be the actual condition of the Farmers, in the County I have the honour to represent. I did unhesitatingly declare my conviction, that two-thirds of my Constituents, being Farmers, were, if compelled to make up their accounts at that moment, insolvent. I declared it in the presence of my Honourable Colleague, and called upon him to contradict me, if he thought I was wrong; or stated my readiness to submit my opinion to the decision of

a County Meeting. I observed that such a case never before occurred in the history of any civilized country. I called upon Ministers to tell me if such a calamity had ever visited the *Cultivators* of the soil in any age or nation. No revolution, no civil war ever made such havoc in the property of that class of the people, as has already taken place. It is the class which even an invading enemy pays the greatest respect to, on account of the superior importance of their occupation to society; I asked how this could happen in a moment of profound peace, after a period too of seven years of undisturbed tranquillity, when if nations can ever expect to be prosperous and happy, they have a right so to indulge their hopes.

*The causes of this phenomenon appear to me daily more distinct and evident; so indeed they do to every body who devotes any serious unbiassed attention to the subject.* IT INDISPUTABLY HAS ARISEN ALTOGETHER FROM THE OPERATION OF THE ACT OF 1819; BY WHICH OUR ENORMOUS BURTHENS ARE LEVIED, AND ALL PECUNIARY ENGAGEMENTS CHARGED IN THE OLD STANDARD OF VALUE PRIOR TO 1797, INSTEAD OF THAT IN WHICH THEY WERE IMPOSED AND CONTRACTED. It is clear, by what is passing under our eyes, that such a change must be attended with fatal consequences, that the industry of the country cannot sustain it; that the re-

lative situations of individuals and classes will be entirely altered; and that the progress of that alteration will create a convulsion that will be dangerous to all.

I urged the House to reflect particularly upon what *your* situation would be, and I call upon *you* now to reflect a little more deeply than what you have hitherto done, upon the fate that awaits you. Can you doubt, that after having established a fixed price of gold at the standard of £3 17s. 10d. which existed prior to the Act of 1797, that the price of corn and rent of land, which had doubled since that period, will fall back to their former amount? can you fail to see that in the same period all your charges of every kind, public and private, increased in the same proportion—that the national debt increased from £230,000,000 to above £800,000,000—that the interest is now £31,000,000, considerably above the actual rental of Great Britain—that the establishments are £31,000,000 more, inclusive of the five millions in sinking fund—and that you will be now called upon to sustain your share of these burthens out of the same means you possessed 25 years ago?

What must the effect be, I say, to *you* especially who form one branch of the Legislature? I ask *you* for one moment, to make an estimate of your net

incomes after a reduction of one half of your present rentals; and which reduction, corn being reduced one half, *must* take place; can there be sufficient for you to sustain your rank, dignity, situation, and independence? You will be thrown from your exalted station, and in your fall the equilibrium of the constitution will be destroyed. I ask *you* who are principal Commoners, the gentry of the country, to make the same investigation into your affairs; and permit me to observe, by the bye, that though you have hitherto drawn largely upon the capitals of your Tenants, the time will soon come, *when Rent will take last*. The State, Church, Poor, and Tenant will all have the priority. You that are small Landowners I need not solicit to give ear, for *you* are sensible of the condition you are in. What must be the state of all, who have debts and charges upon their estates, or charges upon their Commercial or Manufacturing concerns? They must, I say, be unavoidably ruined; for the highly increased value of money, and reduced value of all products of industry, will, in truth, make the debt swallow up *all* the property. What will be the condition of Labourers? In some instances the price of labour has not yet proportionably fallen, but nobody doubts it must ere long, and then the Labourer has to pay his share of taxes, earning only eight shillings per week instead of sixteen. But what is worse,

there *will be no adequate demand for labour*; so that it will fall even lower than we at present contemplate. In truth, is he not in many districts already destitute of employment, and driven from necessity into acts of horrid outrage, which he would never have contemplated, but under such circumstances of peculiar distress?

I implore you to consider well the state of the country and the danger that threatens, and *do not believe* that a *remedy* is impossible. Nothing exists *necessarily* to impede the retracing our steps, if a false pride does not prevent those who were the authors of that measure; it is now almost universally considered to have been a hasty proceeding, in which the capacity of the country to bear such a shock was by no means fully considered. I feel so confident I am right in the view I have thus adopted—confident indeed, not upon my own judgment alone, but upon the opinions I have gleaned from others, and upon the unprecedented painful results I see before my eyes, that I have pledged myself to bring before the House, in some form or other, a *consideration of the effects of that Act*, and perhaps shall move a repeal of it, with the view subsequently and *gradually to adjust the standard of value in proportion to the rate of prices, and the value of money since the year 1797; and ac-*

*according to which, public and private debts, taxes, monied engagements and contracts have been made and imposed; and for the purpose of regulating the same according to the medium price of corn and other essential articles, as well as labour during that period.*

The proceedings of the Ministers and the House of Commons, since the opening of the Session, plainly show, that they are by *no means* aware of the extent of the distress and danger that await us. The labours of the Agricultural Committee evince the same want of information; their advice and recommendation are worse than futile in one respect; inasmuch as the reduction of the import price must leave us permanently more exposed to that unavailing conflict with foreign countries, in which, with a millstone round our necks, we must perish. We can have no confidence in the duties proposed; if there were any hope of their adequacy, it is not a time to make such an experiment.

It is important to remark, that this proposed reduction of the *import* price of foreign corn is founded upon a *declaration* of the *effect* of the altered value of the currency; and it is *admitted* also, that such alteration must press severely upon the industry of the country; the *degree* of injury, therefore, we sustain by

the act of 1819, *alone* remains the subject of dispute. I cannot help giving here an extract from Mr. Locke's considerations upon the *lowering* the *interest*, and *lessening* the *quantity*, and *raising* the *value* of *money*, though I believe it has been recently quoted by one or two writers upon the currency question.

It is so accurately descriptive of our present situation, that it cannot fail to strike forcibly the mind of every reader, and I shall be pardoned the repetition by those who have observed it.

“ The exigencies and uses of money *not lessening* with *its* quantity, and it being in the same proportion to be employed and distributed still, in all the parts of its circulation; so much as its *quantity* is *lessened*, so much must the share of every one that has a right to this money, *be the LESS*; whether he be landholder for his goods, or labourer for his hire, or merchant for his brokerage.—If *one-third* of the money employed in trade, were locked up, or gone out of England, must not the landholders necessarily receive *one-third* less for their goods, and consequently rents fall? a *less* quantity of *money* by *one-third* being to be distributed amongst an *equal* number of receivers? Indeed people not perceiving the money to be gone, are apt to be jealous one of another; and each suspecting another's

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inequality of gain, to rob him of his share; every one will be employing his skill and power, the best he can, to retrieve it again, and to bring money into his pocket, in the same plenty as *formerly*. *But this is but scrambling amongst ourselves*, and helps no more against our wants, *than the pulling of a short coverlet* will, amongst children that lie together preserve them all from the cold; *some will starve, unless the father of the family provides better, and enlarges the scanty covering*. This pulling and contest is usually between the landed man and the merchant, for the labourer's share, being seldom more than a bare subsistence, never allows that body of men, time or opportunity to raise their thoughts above that, or struggle with the richer for theirs, (as one common interest,) *unless when some common and great distress, uniting them in one universal ferment, makes them forget respect, and emboldens them to carve to their wants with armed force, and then sometimes they break in upon the rich, and sweep all like a deluge.*"

It is almost miraculous to find so faithful a representation of our present condition drawn in the year 1691, and that too, by the hand of such a master. How illustrative of the causes, as well as descriptive of effects? If we cannot learn wisdom from such a lesson, we deserve to suffer.

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Once more, I entreat you, exert your powerful influence, call forth an effort of that native good sense and sound principle which distinguish every class of the people of this country, and none more than that which is most severely injured; speak out plainly to the Government, and to your Representatives what your real situation is, and what the interest of the community at large, as well as your own particular interests indispensably require. *Tell them that the currency must be placed upon such a foundation as shall allow to industry the means of sustaining our existing national burthens*, or, that they must be *forthwith proportionably* reduced. Be assured we *might* reverse the awful picture that now presents itself to our immediate view, and place ourselves in that situation to which our national industry, patience, and fortitude, so eminently entitle us.

I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient humble servant,

CHARLES C. WESTERN.

Felix Hall, April 12, 1822.

