

0055

137-71



COINAGE.

Copy of a Letter transmitted to Mr. Perceval on the subject of his intended Bill to prevent the circulation of local Tokens.

SIR,

1st May, 1812.

“OBSERVING that you are about to bring a Bill into Parliament which will considerably effect many, as Issuers of local Tokens; we beg permission to submit to your consideration the following particulars on that subject.

“In the beginning of August last, finding it absolutely impossible to carry on our respective businesses as shop-keepers, from the want of silver change, and being under the necessity with the rest of our neighbours of either giving credit to many persons who were not trust-worthy, or of sending them away from our shops without supplying them with the articles they wanted. In order to remedy the inconvenience so severely felt by ourselves and others, we determined upon issuing silver Tokens of the value of four shillings each—which we denominated “*Tokens*” with the value expressed on one side and the following inscription on the reverse, “*A Pound Note given for 5 Tokens, by*

For this timely supply of silver change, we received the public thanks of many of our fellow-citizens on account of the very great accommodation it afforded them. And so great has been the demand, that we have issued to the amount of many thousand pounds worth. We beg also to observe, that our Tokens have been analyzed by Dr. Wilkinson of this place, and have been pronounced to be a very fair article for the value; it having been ascertained by that gentleman, that if the names of the Issuers should be blotted out of existence, any holder of five of their Tokens would be able to sell them for more than fifteen shillings for old silver. We have therefore to hope Sir, that it is not your intention to bear hard upon the Issuers of respectable Tokens like ours, or some of our neighbours, whose Tokens we believe to be equally valuable with our own. And we beg leave to submit to your superior judgment, whether it may not be compatible with the wisdom of Parliament, to admit of some clause in your intended Bill in favour of persons like ourselves, who have issued Tokens for the sole purpose of facilitating the local trade of the country, and of quieting the public mind during that scarcity of silver change which existed at the time we began to issue.

We are, &c. &c.

Hon. Spencer Perceval, &c.

15th May, 1812.

“The minds of the people are much agitated about the local Coin, the circulation of which it appears to be the intention of Government to suppress. If the Bill against the Token business should pass into a law without any exception in our favour, Mr. and myself expect to be upwards of a thousand pounds out of pocket, only what we have paid for coining and carriage from Birmingham. The Bill as now printed goes even to prevent the issuing of copper Tokens, of which we have also issued several tons of Penny Pieces, equal in weight to Mr. Boltons last coinage, and which if encouraged would tend to drive the base halfpence of Birmingham out of circulation. I seldom trouble any body about my affairs, but I thought it not altogether improper to make you acquainted with these circumstances.

It may be likely that some one of your very respectable Parliamentary friends may be on the Committee when the Bill against local Tokens comes under discussion, who will be kind enough to introduce a clause in the Bill in favour of those respectable Issuers of Tokens, who are at all times ready, and able to perform what they have promised the public on the face of the coin they have circulated, and who would most willingly give security for that performance. Whereas now, by one sweeping clause in the intended Bill, the Jew of Rathbone Place, and the most responsible Issuer of Tokens is placed on a level—the knave and the honest man will share the like fate.”

MEMORANDUM

TO : [Illegible]

FROM : [Illegible]

SUBJECT : [Illegible]

DATE : [Illegible]

[Illegible body text]

[Illegible signature]

DATE : [Illegible]

[Illegible body text]