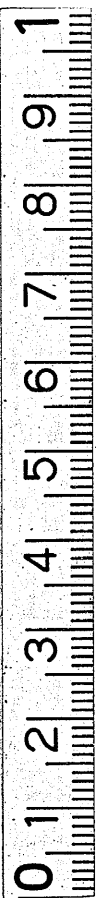


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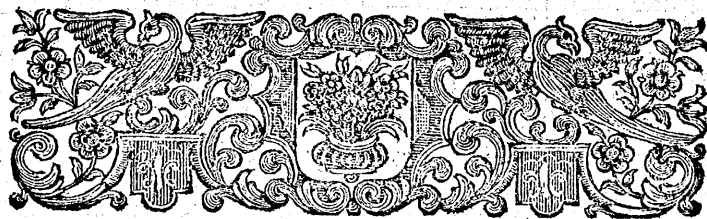


A
COLLECTION
OF
LETTERS
FROM SEVERAL
Counties, Cities and Boroughs.
CONTAINING,
Instructions to their *Representatives*
in Parliament to Oppose any
Extension of the *Excise Laws.*



LONDON:
Printed for J. WILFORD, behind *St. Paul's*
Chapter-house; and Sold by the Bookfellers
of *London* and *Westminster*, 1733.

(1)



A
COLLECTION
OF
LETTERS.

Coventry, January 20, 1732.



THE under-written Letter was this Day sign'd by the Mayor, and the rest of the Aldermen of this Place, (except Alderman *Kelsley*, who is Post-Master) and sent to each of our Representatives in Parliament, viz.

S I R,

WE being apprehensive that a Motion will be made during the present Session of Parliament, to convert some of the Customs
B into

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into an Excise on Home Consumption; and having duly consider'd the pernicious Consequences that will ensue, should the same take Effect, not only to the Trade of this Kingdom, but the Liberties of the Subject, thought it our Duty to let you know our Sentiments on this important Occasion, earnestly requesting you to oppose any new Excise, or any Extension of Excise Laws whatsoever.

Instructions given by the Corporation of St. Alban's, under their Common Seal, to their Representatives in Parliament, at the late Election of a Member for that Borough.

S I R,

WE have chose you to be our Representative in Parliament, which is the highest Trust we can repose in you; and in return for so great a Confidence, we expect you will have a constant Regard for the Interest of your Country, and especially of this Borough; but as this is a very critical Conjuncture, we think it necessary to give you more particular Instructions. In the first Place, Sir, as we are in profound Peace, we are surpriz'd to find no Reduction of the Land Forces, which we conceive to be dangerous to our Constitution, and we feel to be very burthensome and oppressive to us. In the next Place, we are alarm'd with an Attempt to be made this Session of Parliament, for extending the Excise Laws to Commodities not yet excis'd.

We

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We hope, however, that these Reports are false, and rais'd by the Enemies to our Constitution, and to his Majesty's Government. But if any one who calls himself an Englishman, should be so much an Enemy to his Majesty and us, as to propose such a Scheme, we expect, Sir, from you, the most vigorous Opposition to it; for we shall look upon the Continuance of so great a Body of Land Forces, and an Increase of Excise Officers, under our present Circumstances, as a sure Presage of an entire Subversion of our ancient Constitution, and all the valuable Privileges belonging to it, which have so long distinguish'd us from our neighbouring Nations.

A Constitution, Sir, that our Fore-fathers have, at the Expence of their Lives and Fortunes, deliver'd down safe to us, and which, we hope, we shall have the Virtue and Courage to deliver to latest Posterity, under a Succession of Princes issuing from his present most Sacred Majesty, whose Family came in on the Principles of Liberty, and who can be maintain'd on no other: whoever therefore tries to sap the Foundations of Liberty, is at the same time undermining his Majesty's Title to the Crown, which Thoughts give us the utmost Abhorrence; and we expect from you, Sir, a constant and steady Pursuit of such Measures as will keep our Constitution, as near as may be, in the same Situation under which it has long flourish'd, and we don't doubt but in such Conduct you will have the Assistance of our other worthy Member, and of all honest Englishmen.

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To

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To Sir John Stonehouse, Bart. and Winchcomb Howard Packer, Esq; Representatives in Parliament for the County of Berks.

The humble Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgeses of the Borough of Newbury in the County aforesaid, in Behalf of themselves and other chief Inhabitants of the said Borough,

SHEWETH,

THAT the present Excise upon several Commodities already excised, is vastly inconvenient and troublesome to the Traders in it; and that the least Increase therein will increase their Burthen, and a General Excise render Trade intolerable to them; which plainly appears from the Necessity there must be of frequently having their Stocks of Goods weigh'd and measur'd, and applying to Officers for Permits to send out the same; so that they would have but little Opportunity left for Trade. And further, it would subject their Customers and Consumptions to the Knowledge of Persons no way fit to be let into it, as well as bring Matters of too great Consequence to be try'd before Commissioners, who in reality are Parties, and so render'd quite unfit for Judges.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray, that you will, to the utmost, oppose any Attempt that may be made for burthening us with any new Excise,

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Excise, or any ways extending of the present Excise.

A Letter to one of the Representatives in Parliament for the Town of Nottingham, sign'd by most of the principal Merchants and Tradesmen of the said Town.

S I R,

THIS Day we (most of the principal Merchants and Tradesmen of this Town) met together to consult about the Consequences of a Bill design'd (as reported) to be brought into the House of Commons this Sessions for turning the Duty on Tobacco, Wine, and other Commodities, into an Excise; and having read and observed the Reasons publish'd in print against it, and well-weigh'd the ill Consequences of it, or any other Extension of the Excise, if pass'd into a Law, do think the same would infringe upon the Liberties we have hitherto so happily enjoy'd; particularly the subjecting our Houses to the Inspection of little Officers by Day or Night, when they please, we having frequent Experience of their being too troublesome and oppressive here already, and of the Difficulty of being heard and relieved against their Oppressions and false Representations, by those Gentlemen to whom only there is any Appeal, when moved for by even the best affected to his Majesty; we are therefore determin'd to exert ourselves against making such a Law, and do

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do earnestly intreat you, Sir, to use your utmost Endeavours to prevent the passing any Bill to subject the Traders to the Laws of Excise, or any further Extension of them, than what they are now subject to; or any thing that may be a Discouragement to our Commerce, or against the Liberty and Property of our Trade; and herein you will oblige the Tradesmen of the Nation in general, and particularly, worthy Sir,

Your most humble Servants.

The following Letter was wrote by the People of *Rippon* to their Representative in Parliament.

To the Hon. William Aislaby, Esq; Member of Parliament in Albemarle-street, London.

Rippon; Jan. 21. 1732.

S I R,

BY current Reports from most Parts of the Kingdom, we hear that a Bill is intended to be brought into Parliament for an Excise, and are apprehensive, that if it should pass, it would reduce the Trade of this Town to the lowest Extremity; our Situation is such, that we are circumscribed in Trade, being chiefly Retailers; besides, if the Management of such Duties should be under the Inspection of Officers, and the Duties intended to be laid on, should be

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be paid by the last Retailer or Vendor, the Trouble and Inconvenience would be insupportable to the Inland Trade in general.

Therefore, Sir, we most earnestly request you will be pleased to use your utmost Interest in opposing any such Bill; and that you will communicate this our Request to your Cousin *Aislaby*, and the rest of your Friends, in such a Manner as you shall think most proper. In this you will still add to the many Favours conferred on us, who are, with Esteem,

S I R,

Your most obedient,

and obliged Servants, &c.

Kent, Jan. 20. 1732.

AS the Advocates for the Extension of the Excise Laws have denied, that those Officers do, at any time, in the Execution of their Office, commit illegal Actions, or Attempts to invade the Rights and Properties of the Subject, and have called for Instances of any such Proceedings, I herewith send you a Case which you may depend is Matter of Fact, and do desire you to publish it for their better Information.

The latter End of the last Month, *on a Sunday*, when an honest Farmer in this Neighbourhood was at Church, the Supervisor of Excise came to his House, with an Officer of Excise, or two, and

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and two or three Dragoons, and searched his Barns, Stables, &c. moving his Corn, Fodder, &c. and doing him considerable Mischiefe, but were gone before the Man came home. In the Evening of the same Day, there came another Excise Officer, with a Cornet of Dragoons and two or three more Dragoons; it being pretty dark, and the Farmer within, and observing some People about his Door, he took his Fork and went to the Door; upon which they told him, they were come to search his House for uncustomed Goods; the Man told them he had none; they told him they must search; says the Man, have you a Warrant? they reply'd, No; but they must search; the Man reply'd, If you have a Warrant you shall search, but if you have not, not a Man of you shall enter my House: Upon this the Cornet of Dragoons cock'd his Pistol, and told the Man, that if he did not immediately give Way, and let them in, he would shoot him through the Head; the Man standing in the Door-Cafe, bid him be sure of his Fire, for if he miss'd, his Fork should be in his Guts; upon this they thought fit to withdraw.

The honest Farmer coming soon after to complain to a Justice of Peace, he sent to the Supervisor of Excise, that he might appear before the Bench of Justices at their next Sitting at *Askeford*, and order the other Excise Officer likewise to appear, to answer to this Matter: Upon his appearing (which was the 6th Instant) he at first insisted, *he could search any House by Virtue of his Office*, but being over-ruled in that, and being told, that no Officer could search any private House, but
by

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by a special Warrant for that Purpose, granted upon the Oath of the Officer, that he had some special Reason for suspecting the Person's House he would search, which Cause must be thought sufficient by the Justice who grants the Warrant; the Supervisor then said he had a Warrant at Home, which being sent for, appear'd to be to this Purpose:

Whereas I have received Information from A. B. that he hath Reason to suspect, that several Retailers of Brandy, Tea, &c. do secret Brandy, Tea, &c. in Rooms and Places not enter'd; these are to authorise you the said A. B. to enter into and search all Rooms and Places of such Retailers, &c. and other neighbouring Houses.

This Warrant bore an old Date; upon this the Supervisor was told by the Justices, that this Warrant, such as it was, could not justify him, or give him any Authority to search the honest Farmer's House; and as he had done so illegal an Action, he must answer for it, and they were obliged to do the Man so much Justice as to bind the Officer over to the Quarter-Sessions, which being in two or three Days after, the Supervisor, &c. were indicted, and the Bill being found by the Grand Jury, he travers'd the Indictment, which will be try'd next Sessions, unless it be moved by *Certiorari* to the *King's Bench*. This, I think, is a flagrant Instance of what would be done, and is evidently aim'd at, by the Ex-
cise

cise Officers, and the armed Force that is dispersed all over the Country to assist them.

I am,

Your humble Servant.

The following Letter, signed by a great Number of the principal Inhabitants of the City of Gloucester, was sent to each of their Representatives.

Gloucester, Feb. 2, 1732.

S I R,

A M I D S T loud Complaints at the low Ebb of Trade, and the general Apprehensions of new Excises to sink it lower; at a Time when the Situation of publick Affairs flatter'd us into Hopes, that Measures would be taken to raise it, you, as one of our Representatives in Parliament, could not but expect and desire our Sentiments and Instructions.

'Tis indisputable, that the Riches, Strength, and Glory of this Nation, are owing to Trade; which, for that Reason, is certainly entitled to all the Favour, Protection, and Encouragement of our Laws.

We are fully convinced that any Extension of Excise Laws, will be not only detrimental to Trade, but injurious to our Liberties; and think

think it hard these Liberties, for the Preservation whereof Taxes are paid, should be hurt by the very Means of Taxing; it therefore highly concerns us, by all justifiable Ways, to avoid and prevent, if possible, any such Extension.

You need not now be told the many particular Grievances and Inconveniencies inseparable from such Laws; so we shall forbear enumerating them, and hasten to request that you will, nay, the Importance compels us to insist that you do, according to the Trust reposed in you, use your utmost Efforts in discouraging and opposing all Attempts to lay us under the Bondage thereof, as you will answer it to God, your Conscience, and your Country.

February 15, 1732.

At a Court of Common-Council held this Day at Guild-hall, the following REPRESENTATION was resolved *Nemine Contradicente.*

The REPRESENTATION of the Lord-Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London, in Common-Council assembled, to Sir John Eyles, Mr. Alderman Parsons, Sir John Barnard, and Mr. Alderman Perry, their Representatives in Parliament.

T H I S Court doth apprehend, from the Experience of the Laws of Excise now in being, that extending those Laws to any Commodities

modities not yet excised, must necessarily be very prejudicial to Trade, both as it will probably diminish the Consumption of the Commodity to be excised, and subject the Fair Trader to the frequent and arbitrary Visitation of Officers, and the judicial Determination of Commissioners removable at Pleasure, from whom there is no Appeal.

That the Extension of such Laws must necessarily increase the Number and Power of Officers, which will be inconsistent with those Principles of Liberty, on which our happy Constitution is founded; and will farther deprive the Subjects of *England* of some of those valuable Privileges which have hitherto distinguished them from the neighbouring Nations.

Wherefore, this Court doth earnestly recommend it to you, their Representatives, to use your utmost Diligence in opposing a Scheme of this Nature, should any such be offered in Parliament, in any Shape, or however limited in its first Appearance; being fully convinced, that an Inland Duty on Goods now rated at the Custom-house, cannot be effectually collected even with an Extension of the Powers, or the severest Exercise of all the Rigours of the present Laws of Excise.

The

The following Instructions from the City of Rochester were last Week delivered to their own Members Sir John Jennings, David Jekhill, Esq,

A Just Concern for the Interest of our Country, and the general Uneasiness of the good People of *England* at this Juncture, occasioned by their Apprehensions of an intended Extension of the Excise-Laws, have moved us to represent to you our entire Disapprobation of any such Design. We had not so long deferred giving you our Sentiments on this Affair, could we have believed that such an O — n I — n of our Liberties established by *Magna Charta* would have been a — d at this Time.

Therefore we the Mayor, Aldermen and Common-Council of this City, in Common-Council assembled, do hereby make it our Request to you on Behalf of our selves, and the rest of our Fellow Citizens (in case any Motion should be made in order to bring in a Bill for a farther Excise, under what Title or Denomination soever the same shall be) that you will, with the utmost Vigour and Resolution, oppose the same, it being (as we conceive) so great an Infringment of our antient Liberties, so very detrimental to Trade, and so universally disliked by all impartial and disinterested People. When the Union of the two Kingdoms was under the Consideration of the Honorable House of Commons, our then worthy Mem-ber

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ber Sir *Stafford Fairborn*, requested the Mayor to call a common Hall, that he might have the Sentiments of his Electors on that important Affair. A noble Instance of our undoubted Liberties! We therefore expect (* agreeable to your former Conduct among our *Kentish* Worthies) that you will allow us a Right of applying to you on this important Occasion, especially as our only Motive is the Good of our Country, which we cannot but hope you have with us sincerely and solely at Heart. Given under our Common Seal the 5th Day of *February, Anno Dom. 1732.*

* Omitted in that directed to Sir John J—gs.

The following Letter, signed by the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgeses of *Wigan*, has been sent to Peter Bold, Esq; one of their Representatives.

S I R,

WE think our Representatives in Parliament, as Guardians of the Rights and Liberties of the People, are invested with a Trust of the highest and last Importance; and it is to be hoped, that if we did not apply to you, you would, in Return for the great Confidence we repose in you, on all Occasions, have a due Regard for the Preservation of that valuable Part of our Constitution whereby the Enjoyment of those Rights and Liberties have been secured to us.

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The Proposal for increasing or extending the Laws of Excise, that has been of late much talk'd of, has been the Cause of some Dissatisfaction here; and the Pamphlet handed about amongst us in favour of it, has rather increas'd than diminish'd our Apprehensions, by giving us a nearer Prospect of the Danger that seems likely to attend the Execution of it; we therefore think it necessary for us to communicate to you our Sentiments, and desire you will, to the utmost of your Power, oppose all Attempts that shall be made to introduce this, or any other, Scheme of the like Kind, on any Pretence whatsoever. We are, Sir,

Yours, &c.

Copy of a Letter from the Borough of *Sudbury* in the County of *Suffolk*, to John Knight and Carteret Leeths, Esqrs; their Representatives in Parliament.

February 19, 1732.

Gentlemen,

THE many gradual Advances that the Laws of Excise have made upon us, proves burthensome and discouraging to Trade; and the present Design, which we hear is on Foot, to extend them further, gives us too much Reason to fear, that they will increase to so great a Number, as will prove fatal to Trade and the Liberty of the Subject.

And

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And therefore, as you are our Representatives in Parliament, we earnestly request, nay, let us conjure you, by all the Obligations which the important Trust reposed in you, and your high Station, lays you under, that if a Motion for extending the said Laws any further, should be made in Parliament, you would strenuously oppose it, and thereby demonstrate you are acting becoming the Representatives of a Trading Borough, in the Honourable House of Commons of *Great Britain*, which will much oblige many of the Electors of the Borough of *Sudbury*, and,

Your humble Servants.

Canterbury, February 20, 1732.

S I R,

WE the Mayor and Commonalty of this City of *Burghmore* assembled, having taken into Consideration the Consequences of extending the Laws of Excise to any Commodities not yet excised, and being fully persuaded that the Extension of such Laws must not only be very prejudicial to the Fair Trader, by subjecting him to many grievous Vexations from Officers, and a Multitude of other Inconveniences too obvious to be repeated; but also may in Time be very dangerous to those Liberties and Properties of the Subjects of *Great Britain*, which they, in a most distinguish'd Manner, enjoy beyond

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beyond all other Nations of *Europe*, under the present happy Establishment, are come to a Resolution (*nemine contradicente*) earnestly to recommend it to you, one of our Representatives in Parliament (having by a like Letter requested the same of your Colleague) that you do, to the utmost of your Power, oppose any Bill or Bills that shall be offer'd in Parliament for extending any of the present Laws of Excise, or making any new Provision whatsoever, for excising any Commodities, not as yet liable to the Laws of Excise.

S A W K I N S,

By Order of the Court of Burghmote.

The following Letter from the Town of Rye, in the County of Suffex, was sent to Philip Gibbon and Matthew Norris, Esqrs. their Representatives in Parliament.

Honour'd S I R S,

WHEN first we heard the Report of a new or additional Excise to be attempted this Session of Parliament, we look'd upon it as a Story invented to create Uneasinesses in the Minds of the People, not supposing it could enter into the Heart of any *Englishman* to impose such a Burden upon the Nation, or that (at a Time when we have Peace with all the World) we should become subject to an infamous Me-

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thod of raising Taxes, unknown to our Forefathers, even in their greatest Necessities; we could not imagine this to be the Reward of so much Blood spilt, and Treasure spent in the Defence of our dear Liberties; that it was for this the Subjects of *Great Britain* had raised such Numbers of brave Men, and such astonishing Sums of Money; that this was to be the Reward of so many glorious Campaigns and Victories, and the Fruits of Treaties lately concluded with all the Powers of *Europe*, and said to be so much for the Honour and Advantage of this Kingdom. Our Zeal for his Majesty, and the Blessings we hope from the Succession in his illustrious House, would not suffer us to entertain a Thought of so dangerous a Step from any one in his Service; nor could we suspect a *British* Parliament would suffer a Scheme so plainly tending to the Ruin of Trade, and Subversion of our excellent Constitution, even to be proposed with Impunity to the Author: These Considerations, this great Confidence in our Governors, prevented our Belief of any Danger, till we now see the Design own'd, and Books dispers'd from the publick Offices endeavouring to prepare our Minds quietly to suffer ourselves to be fetter'd: what a surprizing Grief must this be to all true Lovers of their Country! how shocking! at a Time when they justly hoped to be eas'd of such of those heavy Taxes as most sensibly affect their Trade and Manufactures, to be freed from that abominable modern Practice of trying Causes betwixt the Sovereign and the Subject without Juries, by Persons employ'd and entirely dependant on the

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the Crown, when they expected a Reduction in the Military Forces, and the National Expences gradually lessened: These pleasing flattering Hopes vanishing, we now, alas! see the Monster ready to devour us. To you, therefore, our worthy Representatives, after the Example of many other Towns and Places, we fly for Protection; with you we have entrusted our All, and from you we expect the utmost of your Endeavours for our Security; to you we recommend our Interest, and that of our dear Country, desiring, to the very best of your Power, you'll oppose any Extension of the Excise Laws, under what Pretence, or in whatever Shape or Dress it may be presented; let it extend to no one Species of Goods not yet excis'd, for there is no Room to doubt the same Measures now used to establish an additional Herd of Officers all over the Country will prevail hereafter to find them Employment, by granting one Duty after another 'till the Excise be General and the Nation's Misery compleat.

From your known Affection to his Majesty, his Family and Government, from your Love of your Country, we promise ourselves you'll heartily struggle to render abortive a Scheme equally injurious to both; we are sensible his Majesty places his chief Happiness in the Affections of his Subjects, and would not impose on them any thing grievous; it is well known the Extension of the Excise Laws is what the Nation in general hath a Dread and Abhorrence of, and would (it is to be feared) create a

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Murmuring and Dissatisfaction amongst many Well-wishers to the present happy Establishment; to prevent which, every good Subject ought to contribute his Endeavours; we therefore again and again beg you'll exert yourselves at this critical Juncture, and do every Thing in your Power to secure us from the impending Danger, by which you'll render an important Service to your Country, and for ever oblige,

Given under the Common Seal of Rye, the 15th Day of February, 1732.

Honoured Sirs,
Your most obedient,
And most humble Servants,

The Mayor, Jurats, and Commonalty of the ancient Town of Rye.

A Copy of a Letter sent by the Corporation of Colchester to their Representatives in Parliament, in Relation to the Excises.

Gentlemen,

IN Consequence of that Right we undoubtedly have to apply to our Representatives in Parliament on all Occasions, we take this Opportunity of complaining that Trade has long labour'd under many Discouragements, not to call them Oppressions, in respect of the Laws of Excise, and particularly an undue and partial Execution

Execution of them; which Practice is become so odious and burthensome, that nothing less than the Animadversion and Correction of Parliament can redress such a growing Evil.

During this melancholy Situation, and whilst the Mischiefs of the Laws that are already in Being, touching Excises, are universally felt and complain'd of, we can scarce give Credit to the Surmises of new ones of the like dangerous Tendency being propos'd; but lest, contrary to the concurrent Sentiments of Persons of all Denominations, any one should be so forgetful of his Duty to his Country, as to attempt the Laying on any new Excise on any Branch of Trade, in any Form, or on any Pretence whatsoever, we hope, nay, we expect, you should oppose it to the utmost of your Power, as an Affair dangerous to the very Being of Parliaments, and our excellent Constitution.

We are, Sirs,

Yours, &c.

To the Mayor, Aldermen, Common-Council, and Burgeffes of * * * *

The Answer of a Member of Parliament to a Letter lately sent him from the Borough of —.

Gentlemen,

Feb. 6, 1732.

I Have received the Letter you have lately been pleas'd to honour me with, wherein you seem to be under great Apprehensions, that something

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something will shortly be offer'd to the House, injurious to Trade, and dangerous to the very Being of Parliaments, and our excellent Constitution.——Should that be the Case, I flatter myself you will never entertain so disadvantageous an Opinion of me, as to think I can be regardless of the Trust which you have reposed in me, or of that Duty which I owe my Country.

As to the Trade, I have ever thought it a Matter of such Consequence, as to deserve the more immediate Care of the Representatives of a Trading People, almost preferable to every other Consideration, as the surest Basis of the Riches, Strength, and Prosperity of these Kingdoms.

You are pleas'd however to own, that your Apprehensions, on this Occasion, proceed from Surmises which you can scarce give Credit to; and I hope you will very soon be convinced, that they are without any real Foundation.

But as I am not acquainted with what is intended to be propos'd, I think it would very ill become me to be so far guided by implicit Faith, as either to approve or condemn what at present I am a Stranger to.

Should it tend to what Jealousy may possibly suggest, should it appear detrimental to Trade, dangerous to the Constitution of Parliaments, or the Liberties of my Fellow Subjects,

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jects, I hope it is not in my Nature to forget that I am an Englishman.

But if, contrary to the Sentiments which are at present entertained by many Persons, who wish well to their Country, it should prove a Benefit to Trade, by pointing out a Remedy for the Frauds which are so universally practis'd, to the great Discouragement and Prejudice of the Fair Trader; if, without creating any new Duties, or increasing those which are already establish'd, it should so considerably improve the Revenues, as upon any Emergency to supply the Necessities of the Publick; if the Government should be thereby enabled to lessen the National Debt, or give Ease to those Branches of Trade which are most burdensome to our poor Manufacturers; if this should be the Tendency of the Scheme, I am sure my Assent to it cannot fail of your Approbation.

In Confidence of which, acting upon these Principles, and upon this Foundation, I can have no reason to doubt the Continuance of your favour, which it will always be my Endeavour to deserve.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your most Faithful, and

Obedient Humble Servant,

* * * * *

Sam. J.

A

*A Reply from the Corporation to the Letter from
one of their Members.*

Colchester, Febr. 28, 1732.

S I R,

I HAD the Favour of yours, and communicated the Contents to many of those who lately troubled you with their Sentiments on the important Subject of Excise Laws; and I have Authority to assure you, that nothing in your Answer has in the least altered our Thoughts; and if you vote for a Bill of that Nature, even in the Shape you seem to be pleased with, or in any other, you can't reasonable expect our Approbation, since we are fully convinced that all Excise Laws are destructive to Trade, Innovations on our antient Rights, and altogether inconsistent with the true Interest of a free People.

The spacious Pretence of serving the fair Trader can no longer amuse us, when we too often see those very Laws, which were calculated for their Protection, used against them, nor can it be otherwise expected, whilst the Execution of those Laws is under the Management of such as by their ill Conduct have render'd themselves justly odious in all Parts of the Kingdom, by often making it a Part of their Duty to be troublesome, in Hopes of meriting by their Activity and Vigilance.

If

If you would act agreeable to our Wishes and Inclinations, before you think of improving or extending the Revenues, make it a Preliminary, that the Laws of Excise be first regulated, and Trade and the poor Manufacturer eased; and when this is done, assure yourself nothing will be more grateful to us than to see the Necessities of the Government fully supply'd, as well as proper Provisions made to answer all National Engagements, so as they are annual, and repeated no oftener than Occasion requires, and the Manner of Collection be made easy to the Subject. Acting on these Principles, you cannot fail of having the Approbation and Thanks of us, and all true Lovers of their Country.

I am, S I R,

Your most humble Servant,

The M A Y O R,

To Sam. Tuffnel, Esq;

To the Honourable Mr. John Spencer.

Woodstock, Feb. 23. 1732.

S I R,

WE are greatly alarmed here with a Report, that there will be a Proposal made this Session of Parliament for laying several new
D Excises,

Excises, which obliges us to have Recourse to you, who are one of our Representatives (and the only one whose Health will permit him to serve us) to desire you will, to the utmost of your Power, oppose any thing of that Sort if it is offered; and we think it our Duty, on so extraordinary an Occasion; to put you in Mind of yours, which is to serve us. We are, with Reason, afraid that an Increase of Excise Officers may, in time, endanger our most valuable Privilege of chusing freely our own Representatives, and when that is done, we know we can be no longer a free People; as long as we are so, we shall always chuse Men of good Families and Fortunes; when we are not, we must for Form's sake send some body, but it will be whom we are ordered; for that Reason it is highly your Interest to oppose any Project that may take away our free Choice, expecting you will follow our Instructions.

*We are your
most humble Servants.*

*Given under our Common-Seal the
23d Day of February, 1732.*

A Letter

A Letter from the Inhabitants of Hindon in Wilts, to their Representatives in Parliament, Townsend Andrews and George Heathcoate, Esqs.

S I R S,

AS we have good Reason to apprehend, that there is an Intention of converting some of the Duties, now payable at the Custom House, into Excises, or Inland Duties, to the great Prejudice of the Trade of this Kingdom, and Danger of the Liberties of the People, we the Inhabitants and Traders of this Borough of *Hindon*, have thought it our Duty to let you know our Sentiments upon it; and we intreat you (as you value the Interest of the Inhabitants and the Good of your Country) to oppose and vote against any new Excise, or any Extention of the Excise Laws that may be offered on any Pretence whatsoever; and we hope you will not be induced, for any Considerations, to give your Consents that any customable Duty should be converted into any Inland Duty, by which there may be an Increase of Officers, who have been already found a great Grievance to the People, tho' Policy may oblige the PROJECTOR of such Schemes to say otherwise.

Signed by us the Inhabitants and Traders of the Borough of Hindon, this 16th Day of February, 1732.

F I N I S.

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