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THE  
CORRESPONDENCE  
OF THE  
REV. C. WYVILL  
WITH THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT.

PART II.

PUBLISHED BY MR WYVILL.

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1797.

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ADVERTISEMENT to the READER.

IF any person who may read the first ~~and~~ second <sup>43</sup> Papers in this Collection, should doubt the propriety of their publication, the Editor begs leave to refer him to the first Part of his Correspondence with Mr Pitt, not long published. In several of the Letters written to Mr Pitt by the Editor, particularly in that Letter which is marked Paper 19, the reader who is willing to form a just judgment on this occasion, will find a statement of facts to Mr Pitt, which down to the date of this Advertisement has remained unanswered, and as far as the Editor can learn, uncontradicted by that Right Honourable Gentleman. These facts therefore the Editor conceives he has a right to assume as facts granted by Mr Pitt to have been truly stated in the Letter alluded to. On this ground, the Editor professes he feels no doubt in his own mind, that he has a right to publish the Papers in question. He has also had the satisfaction to learn the sentiments

timents of a great variety of persons on this subject, to him so very interesting; and to find the opinion that he has a clear Right to publish these Papers is nearly universal. This has been the decision on the above-mentioned statement of facts, made by friends and strangers, by wise and worthy men in private situations, and by men of the greatest experience in political business, who have filled high official stations, and may fill them again; and last, but not least in weight and value, by some of the most respectable of our Journalists, who have joined their suffrage to the rest in affirming the Editor's Right to publish these Papers. Conceiving the Right to publish them to be unquestionably established, the Editor feels, that in times like the present, the Duty to publish inevitably follows the establishment of the Right. That some correction of political abuses is become necessary, seems now to be generally acknowledged; corruption, as a principle of Government, is more deeply execrated than it ever was; and the extinction of it is more earnestly pursued, by more numerous bodies of men, conducted by more powerful leaders than before. It is of much importance to the Public therefore, that what was proposed by the Minister in 1785, with a view to that necessary correction, should be made known, not indistinctly, through the medium of a Summary Explanation by another person, but from the exhibition of the Plan itself, in the very words of Mr Pitt.

It would indeed be a vain and fallacious hope, that

that the Plan sketched in the first Paper, if it were strictly and literally adhered to, would either be sufficiently extensive, or sufficiently prompt in execution, to meet the exigency of this crisis. By the immense expenditure of the War with France, the power of the Crown, in a corresponding degree, has been augmented; by their extreme sufferings, the minds of the People have been soured, and thence they have been taught to look for a more efficient and less dilatory Reformation than that which Mr Pitt proposed in 1785; and with which, at that time, they certainly would have been well satisfied. But the principles then laid down, and the measures then proposed by that able Politician, were calculated at once to secure the just authority of the Crown, and to restore the Constitutional Rights of the People. These were the salutary ends to which his Plan was directed; and it was fortunately capable also, by a more extensive application of its principles, to form a fit compromise for times, when a more effectual Reform has come to be expected.

In the Papers now laid before the public, it will be found, that Mr Pitt proposed to extinguish a certain number of the little venal and dependent Boroughs, to reinforce the Representation of the Counties and the Metropolis of England by the transfer of the Right of Representation from the extinguished Boroughs to them; and to augment the Constituent Body by imparting the Right of voting to Copyholders, to certain Leaseholders, and to Householders

holders paying taxes in certain Cities and Towns. If public spirit has not ceased to animate the Body of the Nation, if all regard to Prudence is not abandoned by the great majority of the Peerage, it will neither be difficult nor dangerous to extend these measures somewhat farther, and yet not beyond the bounds of a fair and moderate compromise. Let the Representation of the Counties and the Metropolis in each of the united Kingdoms be reinforced; let the Right of voting be imparted to Copyholders, certain Leaseholders, and Householders paying taxes throughout Great-Britain; and let these important improvements be effected, not in the slow and dilatory way proposed by Mr Pitt, but by the prompt and speedy execution of them as measures, judged by the Legislature, on due deliberation, to be fit without delay for these times, and necessary for the general weal. To fortify these improvements, the subsidiary measures which were intended by Mr Pitt, and which are nearly as important as the Reform in the Representation, ought to be adopted at the same time; viz. the triennial Election of Parliaments should be restored, better modes of Election of Parliaments should be established, and the Counties, &c. where necessary, should be subdivided into Districts; it would also be expedient, to renew the ancient rule of paying wages to the Representatives; and after these changes had been accomplished, some pecuniary compensation might be granted to persons who could substantiate any just ground of complaint from

from the operation of these acts; a sufficient fund for which expence might be found in the sale of that part of the Crown Lands, from which the Royal Family derives little income, and neither use, pleasure, nor security in any degree. Let such a mild and yet effectual Reform as this be granted, or let that similar and perhaps better Plan be adopted by Parliament, which Mr Grey lately offered, and which was supported by a band of generous men, to whom we are indebted for the defence of the Constitution on its just and genuine principles; and it may be pronounced certain, that the dangers which surround us will then be averted, that the fear of anarchy and arbitrary power will then vanish away; and that a firm and insuperable barrier will be then opposed to the alarming inroads of Despotism and Licentiousness.

It is but too evident that the fortress of our Constitution is in a dilapidated state, and ready to overwhelm us beneath its ruins. It behoves us to repair with speed the venerable pile; to labour in this work of Love with unwearied assiduity; and with the wise counsel and assistance of those *Master Builders* in political architecture, to whom we are already so deeply indebted, to fortify and complete the spacious Tower of the Constitution, in which we and our Posterity may then rest securely protected against every foe, and safe from those storms and tempests, which, in the course of ages, may assail us. The outline only of the Plan here alluded to has yet been given to the Public; when that outline is filled

filled up, it may be justly hoped it will be found to contain every mild regulation, every well-weighed improvement; which the most cautious prudence can suggest, and which, without impairing its superior efficacy, may give it the greatest probability of a quiet and peaceful execution. Under this impression, the Editor wishes to see the work of Reformation committed to the hands of men like Mr Grey and his coadjutors, many of whom are men rich in talents and virtues as in fame, and deeply interested, by their immense possessions, in the preservation of order and tranquillity.

C. WYVILL.

Burton-Hall, June 12th, 1797.

Paper I.

Heads of a BILL or BILLS for amending the REPRESENTATION; communicated by the Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT to the Rev. C. WYVILL; without a date, but supposed to have been in March 1785.

\* Probably somewhat above 1,000,000l.

These clauses relative to the application of the money ought perhaps to be in a separate Bill, as they may be considered as making the whole a money Bill.

(400)

THE sum of out of the supplies granted to his Majesty this Session of Parliament to be vested in certain persons to be named in the Bill, to be applied, together with the interest which may accumulate thereon, to the purposes, and in the manner specified in the Bill.

If any Electors of any Borough not containing above Houses, shall petition the House of Commons, stating their willingness to surrender the Right of

\* The notes printed in a smaller character in the columns of this Paper, were written by Mr Pitt; those in the 4th, 5th, and 6th Papers were written by the Editor.

[ 2 ]

of electing Representatives in any future Parliament on receiving a compensation for the extinction of such Franchise: The said Petition to be referred within a time to be named to a Committee of persons to be chosen in the same manner as the Committee under Mr Grenville's Bill, who shall proceed to consider the matter of the said Petition, and shall hear evidence touching the Right of all persons claiming to vote for the election of Members for such place, and their willingness or unwillingness to surrender such Rights for the future, and shall report to the House of Commons what proportion of such electors are consenting to such Petition, and willing to accept the compensation to be fixed in the manner hereafter directed.

The Bill must specify the rule by which the distribution shall be made in each species of Borough.

If two-thirds of the electors are willing to surrender their Rights, the Committee to proceed to fix the proportion and manner in which the whole sum to be allowed

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allowed by way of compensation shall be applied and distributed among the persons interested in such Franchise.

If the Committee shall report that two-thirds of the persons who, in their judgment, have the Right of choosing Representatives for such place, are consenting to such Petition, and willing to accept the compensation, such place to be *ipso facto* disabled from sending Members to Parliament from and after the end of the present Parliament, (if such report shall be made during the present Parliament) or from and after the time of such report being received, if the same shall be in the next or any subsequent Parliament, and in the latter case, the Members sitting for the same shall *ipso facto* vacate their seats.

A sum equal to the principal and interest which shall have occurred thereupon of part of the whole sum directed to be vested as aforesaid, to be

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paid and distributed to such person or persons as shall be named in the report of the Committee, to be applied and distributed to such person or persons as shall be named in the report of the Committee, and to be applied and distributed in such proportions as shall be therein recommended.

Addition to be made of Members in the proportion, order, and manner directed to the following Counties.

On the extinction of any Borough, the addition to be made in the order fixed in the schedule annexed to the County or District therein specified, and the name of such place as it becomes intitled thereto, to be certified by the Speaker of the House of Commons to the Clerk of the Crown during the continuance of the present Parliament, in order that on\* the calling of the next and every subsequent Parliament a writ should be issued to such County or District, instead

\* The word (on) is here inserted by the Editor.

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stead of the precept to the Borough on the extinction of which it becomes so intitled, or if during the next or any subsequent Parliament, then the Speaker to issue his warrant to the Clerk of the Crown for forthwith making out a writ for an additional Member to be chosen for such County or District in the manner herein directed.

Counties to be subdivided where necessary, into smaller Districts.

Copyholders of 40s. per annum to be admitted to vote in County Elections— Lease-holders where a certain term of the Lease is unexpired.

Different places of polling to be appointed in convenient parts of each County or District.

\* After the number of Boroughs  
A 3

Whether Counties in general or only the larger? Whether to take place while the addition is going on, or after it is compleat?

A plan for registering votes which will simplify the proceeding in taking the poll is supposed to be sufficiently provided for by another Act already moved for.

\* Thirty-six was the number of Boroughs intended to be disfranchised, in order to augment the Representation of the Counties and the Metropolis, and it was specified by Mr Pitt in his Speech to Parliament on the 18th of April 1785.—Note by the Editor.

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roughs before specified has been extinguished, and their Rights transferred to Counties, any remaining Boroughs to be in like manner disfranchised on Petition, in case a sum of \* shall have been set apart by Parliament for that purpose, and in case there shall then remain any town unrepresented of above houses, and the Right of election to be transferred to the town which shall appear to have the greatest number of houses according to the return from the tax office.

2. Neighbourhood of London.

2. Cricklade and Shorcham.

If the majority of electors in any Borough are proved guilty of corrupt practices at any election, the said Borough to be disfranchised, and the right of electing Members to be transferred to such County or Counties as stand next in order, while there remain any to which the addition has not been made, and in case such addition to every County shall have

\* Provision was intended to be made for the disfranchisement of four Boroughs, in order to transfer their Right of Election to Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, and Leeds.—  
Note by the Editor.

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have been compleated, to such unrepresented town as shall be next intituled according to the provisions of this Act.

Right of election in new Boroughs to be in Householders assessed at a certain sum.

2. Paying taxes.

Paper II.

Letter from the Right Hon. WILLIAM PITT to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

DOWNING-STREET, Friday, Half past Eleven, (supposed to be April 15th,) 1785.

My dear Sir,

I Enclose a sketch of words which seem to enumerate as shortly as I have found it possible, the several Heads of the Plan of Reform.—It seems impracticable to go into detail without making it much longer, and I have some doubts, whether even thus, the sentence is not too involved to be perfectly intelligible without more attention than is given by Common Readers. If any way occurs to you of correcting this defect, I hope you will have the goodness to alter it without reserve.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your's sincerely,

W. PITT.

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Paper



*Paper III.*

*The Sketch of a PREAMBLE to the BILL communicated by the Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT, in the preceding Letter, to the REV. C. WYVILL.*

**T**HAT a transfer of the Right of electing Members to serve in Parliament, from such small and inconsiderable Boroughs, as may from time to time voluntarily surrender the same on receiving a compensation to be properly distributed among the persons interested in such Franchise.—In the first place to the several Counties of this Kingdom and the Metropolis, according to a due proportion, until a sufficient addition shall have been made to that Part of the Representation.—And afterwards to such unrepresented Cities and Towns as may from their importance be best entitled to that Privilege and desirous of receiving the same. Together with the admission of Copyholders to the Right of voting in the same manner as Freeholders now may in County Elections. And also a reasonable extension of the Right of voting in such Cities and Towns where it is at present exclusively vested in small Bodies and Corporations, (such Corporation consenting thereto and receiving due compensation for the surrender of their exclusive Right) and proper regulations with regard to the Right of voting in Cities and Towns in future, will have a manifest tendency  
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to remedy the abuses and defects in the present State of the Representation, and will afford great additional security to the Rights of the People, and to the Principles of the Constitution.

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*Paper IV.*

*Corrected Clauses communicated probably in April 1785, by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.*

2. Whether the distribution of money to the Electors and other persons interested in Elections for Boroughs of this description might not be regulated thus, viz. in Boroughs where any one Proprietor has an estate whence a majority of voters derive their Right of Suffrage, the sum of sixty pounds to each voter, to enable him to purchase a Freehold estate of forty shillings a year, and the residue of the sum allotted, to the said Proprietor: In all other cases, the said residue to be divided among the Proprietors, in pro-

**1. W**HEREAS certain Boroughs possessing the Right to return Members to Parliament are small or decayed places, the extinction of whose said Right, by cession or voluntary surrender, and the transfer of such Right to certain larger or more populous places or districts, would be agreeable to the true spirit of the Constitution, and would tend to the preservation, and more equal enjoyment of the Right of Representation: And whereas the Right to return

portion to the number of votes which may be derived from their estates respectively.

2. And whereas the discontinuance of Corporate establishments by voluntary cession, in such small and decayed places, would be convenient to the public.

2. Whether the distribution of money among Electors of this description might not be regulated thus, viz. in equal proportions to Electors having equal Rights and Privileges respecting Election; in a duplicate proportion to each Elector having the Right of Suffrage, and also the Right of creating a Voter, and so on, *toties quoties?*

2. And also their Charter of Incorporation.

return Members to Parliament for several of the said small or decayed Boroughs is derived, or claimed to be derived in various modes, solely from certain estates within the same respectively:

2. And whereas the Right to return Members to Parliament for several of the said small or decayed Boroughs is vested, or claimed to be vested, by Charter or otherwise, solely in certain Corporate Bodies, within the same respectively.

If any Electors of any Borough in which the said Right is vested, or claimed to be vested, by Charter or otherwise, solely in certain Corporate Bodies within the same respectively, not containing above Houses, shall Petition the House of Commons, stating their willingness to surrender the Right of electing Representatives in any future Parliament, on receiving a compensation for the extinction of such Franchise.

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The said Petition to be referred within a time to be named to a Committee, who shall proceed to consider the matter of the Petition, and shall hear evidence touching the Right of all persons claiming to vote at Elections of Members for such place, and their willingness or unwillingness to surrender such Right for the future, and shall report, &c.

2. Together with their Charter of Incorporation.

2. Together with their Charter of Incorporation.

2. And such Charter of Incorporation.

If two-thirds of the Electors are willing to surrender such Right, the Committee

among the persons interested in such Franchise.

*Paper*

*Paper V.*

Corrected Clause *communicated probably in April 1785, by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.*

2. Whether the intended clause for disfranchising Boroughs proved guilty of corruption, and adding their Right of Representation to Counties, &c. would not properly follow the clauses respecting this third class of Boroughs; itself to be followed by the clauses for establishing the order of the addition, &c. After which, the provision for transferring the Right of Representation of such Boroughs as may be punished with disfranchisement, or voluntarily may submit to it, to unrepresented towns, when the whole addition specified in the schedule of this Act, shall have taken place, seems properly to follow:

Perhaps the other matter would be better thrown apart into one or more Bills.

AND whereas the Right to return Members to Parliament for several of the said small or decayed Boroughs is possessed by electors, to whom such Right is not derived, or claimed to be derived, solely from certain estates within the same; nor vested or claimed to be vested in them, by Charter or otherwise, solely as being Members of any Corporate Body within the same:

*Paper*

*Paper VI.*

Corrected Clauses *communicated by the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT.*

Or claimed to be derived in various modes.

WHEREAS the Right to return Members to Parliament for certain Boroughs is derived from certain estates within the same: And whereas several of the said Boroughs are small or decayed places, the extinction of whose Right to return Members to Parliament, by the voluntary surrender of the electors and other persons interested therein; and the transfer of such Right to certain larger or more populous Places or Districts would be agreeable to the true spirit of the Constitution, and would tend to the preservation and more equal enjoyment of the Right of Representation.

And also, touching the Right of all proprietors of estates,

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estates, within such place, claiming to be interested in the said election, by virtue of property whence a right to vote for Members for such place is, or may be derived to, or claimed by any person or persons.

And the proprietor or proprietors of estates within such place, by virtue of which a Right of voting for Members for such place is, or may be derived to a majority of the said electors.

Provided the inhabitants of at least 400 of the said houses shall have been assessed, and paid their assessment to the Poor's Rate within the said place, for

years immediately preceding the said transfer; and also provided a majority of the inhabitants so assessed, and having paid their assessment as aforesaid, shall have Petitioned Parliament for the said transfer.

Right

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Right of election in new Boroughs to be in Household-ers who for a year previous to any election of Members shall have been assessed, and paid their assessments to the Poor's Rate within their respective Boroughs.

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