



## Petition to the Earl of Pembroke

A memorial (petition) was last week presented to the Earl of Pembroke, from upwards of 200 of the artisans and labourers employed in the manufactories of Wilton, and many of whom are housekeepers, and pay to the poor rates of the town, setting forth the hardships they had endured by the long continued extravagantly high prices of all of the necessities of life, particularly of bread corn. The patience with which they had endured, those hardships, their detestation of rioting and disorder and determination to wait patiently the issue of the enquiry instituted into the state of the provisions by the Legislature. But humbly pointing out to his Lordship some of those evils which they conceive to have occasioned the ferocity, and without a remedy of which, instead of contributing to the support of others, they will be forced to ask for relief for themselves and families.

The monopoly of farms they consider as the first and greatest evil: for besides that the throwing a commodity into few hands will ever tend to advance that commodity, the man who by industry or the assistance of friends could command £50 or £100, cannot not now get a small farm to employ it in, and therefore turns jobber and subsists on the public by enhancing the prices of articles he heretofore laboured to produce: the great farmer finds it no object to send any little articles to market, which used to contribute to the general plenty, and they assure his Lordship, that on his own estate that there are not near the number of pigs and poultry bred, nor are half the number of cows kept, that used to be when it was let to smaller farms.

Another principal evil they state to be the felling of corn by sample, which deprives them of all opportunity of buying a bushel of corn in the market for their own use, and occasions the appearance of a great ferocity than really subsists.

The Noble Earl heard them with great attention, commended their orderly behavior, and promised to give every consideration to the hints they had given him, and to promote such measures as, on due deliberation, should be found best calculated to relieve the general distress.

**Salisbury and Winchester Journal, 30 November 1795**