

## P R O P O S A L

FOR ERECTING

## G R A N A R I E S

IN THE

CITY OF DUBLIN,

And other PARTS of the

K I N G D O M,

To prevent any

SCARCITY OF CORN

FOR THE FUTURE.

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# PROPOSAL FOR ERECTING GRANARIES, &c.

**T**IS impossible to reflect without the utmost compassion, on the Miseries which the lower rank of People among us underwent, in the last two years by the great Dearth of Corn, and exorbitant price it was raised to by the avarice of those who hoarded it: Multitudes perished for want of the necessaries of Life, and thousands were carried off by fluxes and fevers, the fatal consequence of unwholesome food; and though supplies out of all Proportion larger than at any other times were then charitably distributed for the relief of the Poor, yet famine stared us every where in the Face, and the bodies of those who died of sickness, or want, lay in the ditches and high-roads and propagated the distemper. But it is of much more importance to think of preventing the like misfortunes for the future, than to lament those that are past.

This we are particularly encouraged to do at this juncture, from the tender concern, which his Grace the Lord Lieutenant has been pleased to express for our Sufferings in his Speech from the Throne: he has not only earnestly recommended to the Parliament to think of some method, which may prevent the same calamity for the future, but has been graciously pleased besides, to point out to us the only effectual means from which we may expect relief, promoting Tillage and employing the industrious Poor: And if in consequence of such recommendation, measures shall be taken, and carried into execution as will effectually answer the valuable purpose of securing us against the fears of famine, this instance of his Grace's Goodness, and of the tenderness and wisdom of the Parliament, will be ever gratefully remembered by all ranks of people in this Kingdom.



The best course to guard against scarcity, is to encourage Farmers to raise large quantities of corn yearly, that the redundancy of plentiful crops may be sufficient to answer the deficiencies of bad ones. And this can no other ways be done, than by affording them a constant and reasonable Price for the quantities of corn they shall raise. The discouragement to Tillage in this Country is the low price, to which all sorts of grain are reduced in years of Plenty; the Farmers are obliged to sell to pay their rents, and many lying under the same necessity, they so overstock the Market, that their corn either lies unsold upon their hands, or sells at a price so low, that they cannot live by their labour. Hence they quit their Tillage or lessen it considerably; this in the course of a few years brings about a new scarcity of corn and all the miseries attending it: By these means the blessing of an abundant harvest becomes in the event, and by our unhappy management, a Curse, the real cause of succeeding want and famine.

It has been observed already that the farmer will be encouraged to enlarge his Tillage, if he can be secure of getting a reasonable price for his corn in years of plenty, in years of scarcity he of course will have a high one; and this may be easily effected. If proper measures were taken to buy up large quantities of corn in plentiful years, and to lay it up in store for scarce years, that purpose would visibly be answered. Buying up, whatever exceeds the ordinary consumption, and would otherwise glut the market, will prevent corn from sinking too low in years of plenty, and give the farmer an opportunity of getting a price he can live by; and besides, that very corn kept up in store will supply our wants in bad seasons, and prevent any exorbitant rise at the market.

It will easily occur to every one, that Granaries under proper regulations would answer all those intentions; the only thing wanting is to find out means for erecting those Granaries, and a fund for buying and keeping constant stores of corn in them to answer the occasions of the public; for this purpose the following scheme is proposed.

That the Parliament cause two Granaries to be built in *Dublin*, and one in the principal city of each province,

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at the charge of the public ; those in *Dublin*, one upon the Quays to lodge the corn imported by sea, the other towards *James's-street* to receive all that shall be brought by land, and each sufficient to contain above 20000 barrels, and those in other cities in the most convenient situations there.

As the building of those Granaries will be plain, the walls of brick, and the floors of deal, without plastering or cieling, each of those in *Dublin* may be built for 1500 pounds, and those in other places for less, in proportion to their size ; for that price they may be raised six stories, each story seven feet high, furnished with a kiln for drying corn, and provided with conveniencies for letting the grain down from one story to another, and raising it up again.

That a fund be subscribed by private persons, formed into Companies by act of Parliament, sufficient to fill those Granaries with corn, and that the Companies so formed have the use of the public granaries under the following regulations.

1<sup>st</sup>. That they keep the said Granaries in repair, and provide servants to attend them, both at their own charges.

2<sup>d</sup>. That the said Companies respectively enter into contract with the Lord Chief Baron on behalf of the public, and oblige themselves, under such penalty as the Parliament shall think expedient, to have a certain fixed quantity of Corn of the growth of this kingdom lodged in their granaries on or before the first day of *April* in every year.

3<sup>d</sup>. That whenever the middle price of wheat shall rise in the respective markets, where such Granaries shall be erected, to one pound three shillings a barrel, the barrel of twenty stone, they shall be obliged to supply the said markets respectively with such quantities of wheat weekly from the 1<sup>st</sup> of *April* to the 1<sup>st</sup> of *September* following, as shall be required and demanded, by the magistrates of the respective places, or such persons as shall be appointed by Parliament for that purpose, and to sell the same at that price in such proportion to the several buyers as the said persons shall direct.



These are the principal conditions requisite to answer the purposes of Granaries; but if other regulations are thought necessary, they may be such as follow, or others equivalent to them.

1<sup>st</sup>. That at whatever time of the year wheat shall fall to 12 shillings the barrel, the said Companies be obliged then to buy, and give that price for such merchantable corn as shall be offered to them, till they have made up their complement, which will effectually prevent corn from falling lower.

2<sup>d</sup>. That whenever the price of wheat rises to above 18 shillings the barrel, the said Companies be restrained from buying corn in *Ireland*, till it falls, to prevent an excessive rise.

3<sup>d</sup>. That the said Companies be not allowed to sell their corn at any market in *Ireland*, when wheat is under 15 shillings a barrel.

4<sup>th</sup>. That when the said Companies cannot make up their complement in *Ireland* under 18 shillings a barrel, they be then allowed and obliged to import from foreign countries such quantities of corn, as they want, to make up their quota; and in case the corn so imported shall cost them 20 shillings a barrel or more, that then the said Companies shall be allowed and obliged to sell such corn at a profit of 10 *per cent*, clear of all charges, and no more.

5<sup>th</sup>. That if any of the months between the 1<sup>st</sup> of *April* and 1<sup>st</sup> of *September* shall elapse, without any demand made on the companies for corn, they may then be at liberty to sell out so much of it as would answer the demands of those months; and if wheat be under 18 shillings a barrel, they may dispose of such farther quantities during the remainder of the said months, as shall be allowed of by the Lord Chief Baron; and that other times of the year, they may sell without such consent.

6<sup>th</sup>. That some vacant rooms be reserved in every Granary, where Corn may be lodged gratis for a short limited time, by any farmer or importer, who cannot have an opportunity of selling the same at market.

7<sup>th</sup>. That whereas several sorts of grain are used in the consumption of the common people beside wheat, they be  
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allowed to make part of the stock to be lodged in the Granaries, and that the value of the several kinds be regulated, as follows, *viz.* That a hundred and half of flower, 30 stone of barley, 36 stone of oats, and two hundred and half of oatmeal be reckoned equal to a barrel of wheat of 20 stone.—But this allowance in respect to *Dublin* should not be farther extended than to one fifth of the whole complement, the other four parts of which should consist of wheat alone. In the other provinces, where the consumption of the common people is less confined to wheat, the proportion may be altered, and leave given to the Companies to lay up a third, or even, perhaps an half of their whole stock in barley, oats, or oatmeal.

That to execute this scheme, it would be necessary that the sum subscribed for *Dublin*, should amount to 26,000*l.* at least; 40,000 barrels of corn at 13*s.* a barrel will cost that sum, and 13*s.* is rather below the middle price than above it: This subscription may be raised by shares at the rate of 50*l.* for each share or debenture, and if such debentures be regularly numbered, and registred, and made transferable at pleasure, it would forward the subscription.

As *Dublin*, when regularly supplied from its Granaries, will be no longer a drain upon the country in times of scarcity, which it now is, to all places within fifty miles of it, and even to *Ulster* and *Munster* in times of great distress: 'Tis not likely there can be the same dearth in the other provinces as there has been in times past, and therefore the granaries in *Cork*, *Belfast* and *Galway*, need not be so capacious, as might at first sight be imagined. Ten thousand barrels would supply the city of *Cork* abundantly, and five thousand barrels, each of the other towns, the subscriptions therefore would be less; 6500*l.* in *Munster* and half that sum in each of the two other provinces; they should however be regulated as those in *Dublin*, raised by debentures and made transferable in like manner.

In all Granaries registers should be kept of the quantities of corn bought, and sold, the times when, and at what prices, and the accounts of the respective companies should be stated at *Michaelmas* in every year.

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The greatest difficulty in the execution of this scheme, is to prevail on private persons to subscribe the money, necessary to purchase so large a quantity of corn. It may be strongly urged on their part, that Granaries will require many officers with considerable salaries to discharge the trust reposed in them; that in so moist a climate, several hands must be constantly employed in turning and screening the corn, that corn is subject to be destroyed by vermin and other accidents; that kiln-drying or keeping the corn dry and sweet for any length of time, will lessen the weight and consequently the value of it at market, that all Companies are more liable to suffer by the dishonesty and neglect of their servants, and are at greater expence, than single persons, who look more carefully into their own affairs; and lastly that if several years of plenty should follow one another, their corn may lie as a drug upon their hands, without a possibility of selling but to their loss. They may add, that in fact these considerations have been of so much weight with all the traders of this kingdom, that none have at any time attempted to buy up corn in cheap years, and reserve it in store against a dear one, or if any have attempted it, they have been so soon discouraged that the attempt has died, and been forgotten as soon almost as made. However private merchants were under no restraints, and might buy cheap, and sell dear, as opportunity favoured them; whereas the companies herein mentioned are debarred from the chance of a high market, must sell at stated rates, buy at stated times, and be furnished with stated quantities, let the price run high or low. From these restraints, besides the several other obligations they lie under, which have been already mentioned, and are all of them additional restraints, and from many other reasons which might be suggested; it becomes necessary, to give suitable encouragement to those, who shall be willing to advance the money, for the benefit of the public.

It is therefore humbly proposed, that the Parliament be pleased to allow 4 *per cent.* yearly, to the several Companies, for so much of their capital stock, as they shall have laid out in corn, lodged in their respective stores; that this interest be paid at *Michaelmas*, after due proof made before  
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Record Chief Baron of the quantity, and value of the corn lodged in the said stores the precedent session.

Such an allowance will be requisite to encourage the subscription, and will cost the public a very inconsiderable sum: 1040*l.* a year for *Dublin*, and for the four provinces together but 1560*l.* supposing that all the Granaries are full, and less, if they are not: Should it be thought proper, as probably it will, to make it a condition of the contract, that the Companies shall not only, not receive the interest, but besides pay a penalty of 4 *per cent.* for the value of so much corn as they shall fail to lodge in their Granaries, then the public will still be a greater saver, and if the Companies don't perform their contract, a gainer in the end.

It might be an improvement on this scheme, and greatly encourage tillage, if the Companies were obliged to buy a new stock of corn every year, and allowed a farther consideration on that account. Or even, if 4 *per cent.* were allowed them, for any quantity of corn they shall lay up in store, in times of great plenty, above their complement.

As Granaries under proper regulations, tend visibly on the one hand, to the advantage of the Farmer, by securing to him a reasonable compensation for his labour; and on the other to the Manufacturer, by preventing the immoderate rise of corn; every rank and order of men among us, is concerned in the present scheme, and interested in the success of it. It offers an effectual, and an easy method of keeping the markets from the two extreams, by which we suffer, and if once it should take place, they can never rise too high, nor fall too low.

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