



## *In The News*

### **SALISBURY AND SOUTH WILTS SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURE**

The first public dinner of this body was held in the Assembly-rooms, Salisbury, on Friday, and was attended by about 130 of the members, amongst whom were many of the principal agriculturalists of the district, several of the Corporation and Magistracy of the city, &c. The dinner was excellently served up by Mr Figes, of the Three Swans Inn.

The Chair was occupied by A. POWELL, Esq., of Hurdcott, who was supported by A. Hussey, esq., M.P., J. H. Campbell Wyndham, esq., M.P., Col. Campbell Wyndham, Colonel Hulse, J. H. Jacob, esq., E. Hinxman, Esq., J. Ravenhill, esq., of Warminster, R. Duke, esq., S. Mills, esq., of Elston, Rev. Dr. Thring, Rev. Messrs, Awdry, G. Powell, F. Eyre, Rigden &c. &c. R. HETLEY, Esq., officiated as Vice-Chairman.

After the usual toasts, the CHAIRMAN proposed *Prosperity and Protection to Agriculture*.

A. MILLS, Esq., returned thanks, and in the name of the agriculturalists expresses himself very much indebted to the inhabitants of Salisbury for the bold stand they had made against the League. That body had endeavoured, upon false pretences, to tamper with the agricultural labourers; but they could not hold meetings of the working classes in the manufacturing districts without being covered with defeat and disgrace. The true interest of the labourers was opposed to the abolition of agricultural protection, and this was gradually becoming known amongst them.

In the course of the evening, A. HUSSEY, Esq., observed, that it was not by tumultuous meetings that the Agricultural Association proposed to carry out their objects; but by perseverance and firmness; by standing on the defence, and by using every peaceable means to exercise that power which their wish would produce.

The CHAIRMAN exhorted them to continue their exertions, and to remember the active body to which they were opposed – comprising men with a great command of money, and other means for promoting their designs,

Mr MILLS said, although slow to action, it would be found the British farmer, when once roused, possessed the predominant feature of the English character. Mr Mills then alluded to an attack which had been made in the House of Commons on the agriculturalists of this county, as paying insufficient wages to the labourer; and observed that circumstances were so different in different counties, that it was utterly impossible to assimilate the rate of wages; but he should be proud to meet Mr Cobden, or any other League manufacturer, once a month, and to let him see what he (Mr Mills) paid his labourers, and what he charged for his wheat, &c.

Mr BLEEK (of Warminster) said he would venture to offer the present company a word of advice. Let the League say – “Agitate, agitate!” he would say, “Cultivate, cultivate !” – Let them go on with their peaceful

occupation, until native cultivation was rendered fully sufficient to supply all the wants of our increasing population.

J. RAVENHILL, esq. (of Warminster), observed, that the best proof that this Association was not considered to be limited to Salisbury, was the circumstance that many gentlemen had come more than twenty miles to attend the present meeting. In further corroboration of this view, he would mention that Mr Phipps, who resided at the extremity of the Southern Division, was only prevented from attending by indisposition.

Mr HEARN observed, as this Society had united itself with the Central Association, it became necessary that they should strictly adhere to the objects of the latter body. These objects appeared to be, to unite, to direct, and to sustain all local efforts; the parent society and its branches must render mutual assistance to each other, whereby the one would be strengthened and the other informed, so as best to carry out the principle of agricultural protection. It would be useless to construct large machinery for this purpose, if a proper supply of engineers and fuel were not constantly furnished to keep it in motion. With respect to the registration question, to which frequent allusion had been made that evening, it appeared to him that when the League proclaimed their intention to invade the Registration Courts, as Leaguers – to endeavor to deprive individuals of the franchise who were entitled to exercise it, and to invest with that franchise others, whom the Constitution had, for wise purposes, excluded from it – that unless these Associations opposed the League on that ground, they would stultify all their proceedings; for surely they might adhere to their own plan, not to interfere with election matters, without allowing the League to sap the very foundation of freedom of election in the Registration Courts. Gentlemen entertaining Liberal principles could hardly be desirous to prolong a state of affairs which led to such results as the recent elections for Devizes, Exeter, &c., in which the interference of the League had placed them in such a false position, that it was notorious they could not bring up many of their voters to the poll; while those of Conservative principles would have no just ground to regret the non political character assumed by the Central Association, when they reflected that the great and lasting basis of their principles in Church and State – the Agricultural interest – was the object of protection and support.

*(Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette – 6 June, 1844)*

---