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**REFORM—WITHHOLDING THE SUP PLIES.**

*HC Deb 17 May 1832 vol 12 cc1032-5* [1032](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1832/may/17/reform-withholding-the-sup-plies" \l "column_1032" \o "Col. 1032 — HC Deb 17 May 1832 vol 12 c1032)

[§](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1832/may/17/reform-withholding-the-sup-plies" \l "S3V0012P0_18320517_HOC_3" \o "Link to this speech by Colonel Robert Torrens) [*Colonel Torrens*](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/colonel-robert-torrens)

presented a Petition from the inhabitants of Great and Little Bolton, praying the House to withhold the Supplies until the [Reform Bill](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/bills/reform-bill) should have become a law. He had, on former occasions, advocated the rights and privileges of the inhabitants of Bolton; and on the present occasion he need not say much to induce the House to give to this petition its best consideration. There was not a town to be found in the kingdom where a greater progress had been made within the last few years, in wealth, population, and intelligence, than Bolton. This petition had emanated from a simultaneous meeting, collected not by artifice or contrivance, but by a spontaneous feeling generally pervading that great town. On hearing the news which disappointed their best hopes respecting Reform, so strong was that feeling that a meeting immediately took place, and this petition was proposed, considered, carried, and signed by 20,300 individuals in two or three hours. This was only an indication of the spirit which prevailed generally throughout the kingdom: it was the indication of a spirit which [1033](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1832/may/17/reform-withholding-the-sup-plies" \l "column_1033" \o "Col. 1033 — HC Deb 17 May 1832 vol 12 c1033) showed that the supporters of the cause of Reform were rapidly on the increase, and were alive to the subject. The petitioners had heard with dismay that the former Government had withdrawn from office, and were to be replaced by Ministers, the known and declared opposers of the measure of Reform. They declared that nothing but Reform of the most extensive description would satisfy them; and he was convinced that nothing but the carrying the measure which had passed that House, without alteration or delay, could or would avert the imminent danger with which, at present, this country was threatened. The petitioners also expressed their ardent hope, that a Reform founded on the principles of Universal Suffrage would be granted, which would give to all classes of the people in this country equal rights and equal privileges; they considered the Bill, as introduced by his Majesty's Ministers, a measure by which those privileges would be restored of which they had been, by degrees, deprived. Here he did not agree with them; but this petition showed what would be the inevitable consequence of the passing of the great Bill being delayed any further; for it was the rejection of the Bill which had induced these petitioners to go further in their prayer than they otherwise would have done. It showed to the House how much the occurrences of the last few days had excited the feelings of the people, and that disappointment had given to their ideas a new direction. With that part of the petition which prayed for the stoppage of the Supplies, so far as it was applicable to the measure which had passed the House, he most fully concurred; but he hoped that arrangements would be speedily made for the return of Ministers to their official duties, with full powers to carry that measure. This would immediately have the effect of suppressing the present angry feelings of the country, and restore that harmony amongst the people which was at present so dangerously and seriously interrupted. He must say, that if, by any misfortune, an interference should take place to defeat the principles of the [Reform Bill](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/bills/reform-bill), it would destroy the confidence of the country in the beneficial tendency of that measure; and, would induce the people to demand other, and more extensive measures, tending in their results to revolutionary acts, and revolutionary proceedings, the extent of which could not be calculated. It was extraordinary that any person should possess so disordered an [1034](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1832/may/17/reform-withholding-the-sup-plies" \l "column_1034" \o "Col. 1034 — HC Deb 17 May 1832 vol 12 c1034) imagination, as to conceive that it was now possible to deny to the people a measure of Reform less efficient than that which had passed that House; if such a person existed, he was fit to become a resident at St. Luke's or Bedlam, rather than to take his seat in that or in the other House of Parliament.

[§](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1832/may/17/reform-withholding-the-sup-plies" \l "S3V0012P0_18320517_HOC_4" \o "Link to this speech by Mr Henry Hunt) [*Mr. Hunt*](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-henry-hunt)

had been requested by the men of Bolton to support the prayer of this petition, and he would do so, although he was not a candidate for the Representation of that town. Twenty thousand of that intelligent and brave people had signed the petition in a few hours. He would relate an anecdote illustrative of the good temper and spirit of the people of Bolton. He was addressing about 15,000 of them just about the time that the Bishops were in bad odour, shortly after the caution given them by Lord Grey to "put their houses in order," a caution, by the way, which was enforced by a mob burning a Bishop's palace very shortly after. He was just in the middle of his address to the people of Bolton, when the carriage of the Bishop of Chester happened to come suddenly amongst them. He advised them to open a road for the carriage, and upon no account to be guilty of the dastardly cowardice of attacking a single individual. A passage was accordingly made by these brave men, and the Bishop passed without a single insult being directed towards him, still less an attack. He stated this to show that the men of Bolton were not easily to be led astray, and to show that they were not like the people of the parish of St. Bride's, who assaulted a Bishop when he was in the pulpit, and about to preach a charity sermon. For his part, he was for stopping the Supplies, in accordance with the prayer of the petition altogether. This ought to have been done long ago. If the late Administration were to come in again, he was afraid they would not be for stopping the Supplies, but he would be for that course, whether the Whig faction or the Tory faction were at the head of the Government. Until they had good and cheap Government he would adopt this course. He had no confidence in either faction. In the Whig faction he could have no confidence, after having settled 100,000l. a year on the Queen, a personage who, a week ago, was cried up by the Whigs as an angel, and now, in one week, was cried down by them as almost the reverse of an angel. This was a sample of the costliness of monarchy. In America [1035](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1832/may/17/reform-withholding-the-sup-plies" \l "column_1035" \o "Col. 1035 — HC Deb 17 May 1832 vol 12 c1035) it was very different. He did not mean to say he was for a Republic altogether, but if they could not otherwise have cheap gevernment, then he would declare that he was for a Republic.

[§](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1832/may/17/reform-withholding-the-sup-plies" \l "S3V0012P0_18320517_HOC_5" \o "Link to this speech by Mr Robert Ferguson) [*Mr. Robert Ferguson*](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-robert-ferguson-2)

trusted that the House would grant a short indulgence to one of the Members from Scotland on such a momentous occasion as this, in which the interests of that country were, perhaps, more deeply involved than any other part of the empire, He naturally took an opportunity, in such a crisis, of communicating his feelings and the feelings of those with whom he was more immediately connected; and he would assure the House that he did not indulge in hopes, or in slumbering expectation for the success of Reform, but that he was certain that the people must obtain it, whatever Administration might be in power. He would recommend the people to pursue a steady, determined, tranquil line of conduct, to respect the laws, and fear not to stand by the House of Commons, and the House would not fail to stand by them, and bestow upon them their privileges through constitutional means. But this advice was not even necessary; the people knew it must be so; the people of Scotland were too loyal, too intelligent, to resort to violence, unless driven to despair; and they would wait with confidence in the firm expectation that they were soon to enjoy their constitutional rights through constitutional means. Not a day, not an hour, if possible, should be lost in letting the people know that their wishes were to be granted, so that the industry and the peace of the country might be saved from a violent shock. This was not the expression of a headstrong, short-sighted, and riotous mob, but of the united feelings and energies of the great mass of an enlightened people.

[§](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1832/may/17/reform-withholding-the-sup-plies#S3V0012P0_18320517_HOC_6) Petition to be printed.