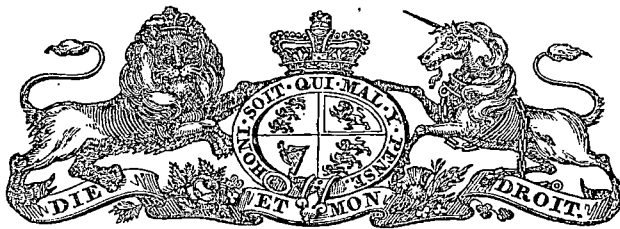


(No. 38.)



1861.

TASMANIA.

P E T I T I O N

FROM MR. CHARLES MEREDITH, PRAYING THAT THE LAW MAY NOT BE
ALTERED WHEREBY TOBACCO FOR SHEEP-DRESSING PURPOSES MAY
BE CLEARED THROUGH THE CUSTOM HOUSE AT A DUTY OF THREE
PENCE PER POUND.

Presented by Mr. Whyte, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
8 October, 1861.



To the Honorable the Legislative Council of Tasmania, in Parliament assembled.

The earnest Petition of Charles Meredith of Twamley, in the County of Pembroke.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT in the Year, 1855, your Petitioner was a Member of the Legislative Council of Van Diemen's Land, and on the 14th of August in that Year, presented to the Council a Petition, of which the following is a Copy :—

[COPY of Petition presented by MR. MEREDITH, and ordered by the Council to be printed, 21st August, 1855.]

To the Honorable the Members of the Legislative Council of Van Diemen's Land, in Council assembled.

The Petition of the undersigned Flock-owners in Van Diemen's Land.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT from the high duty levied on Tobacco, which is generally considered an article of luxury, your Petitioners, for the purpose of dressing their flocks of sheep, and keeping them free from scab, are compelled to use as substitutes for good Tobacco-liquor, *mineral poisons* and other *deleterious compounds*, which are expensive to your Petitioners,—hurtful to the constitution of the sheep,—and injurious to the shepherds who apply them,—so much so that many shepherds refuse to dress with poison the sheep entrusted to their care.

Your Petitioners further respectfully state that the crops of Tobacco grown in this Island are very uncertain, and can only be raised by a few individuals who are possessed of favourable situations. The above fact, in connexion with the duty upon imported Tobacco, prevents in a great measure the efficacious use of Tobacco as a remedy for the scab in sheep.

Your Petitioners further respectfully state that a good strong Liquor made from Tobacco is the best and safest dressing for the disease commonly known as the scab in sheep.

Your Petitioners further state that the Prices Current of London and Liverpool, dated January, 1855, show that Leaf and Negrohead Tobacco may be bought in those Cities at prices varying from 2*d.* to 4*d.* per pound, and good Brazilian Tobacco can be imported into the Colony from Rio at 4*d.* per pound.

Under these circumstances, your Petitioners entreat that the quantity of Tobacco absolutely required for sheep dressing may *not* be made a source of Revenue.

Your Petitioners further represent that, in South Australia, Tobacco is allowed to be taken out of bond for sheepwash in the following manner. Application is made to the Collector in writing, requesting to be allowed to destroy in bond such and such parcels of Tobacco for the purpose of sheepwash. The Warehouse Keeper having certified to the number of pounds weight according to his register, and having stated the quantities of Turpentine or Spirits of Tar and Sulphur to be used in its destruction,—namely, one gallon of the liquid and two pounds of the flour to every hundred pounds of Tobacco,—the Collector grants the application; and the Locker at the store sees the perfect destruction of the Tobacco by the Storeman, and certifies the same on the Warrant. Duty is then paid at 1*d.* per pound, and a Locker's order granted for its delivery. Much the same operation is carried on when the Merchant desires to destroy on first importation.

Your Petitioners most earnestly pray that your Honorable House will be pleased to take their case into your serious consideration; and allow Tobacco to be cleared through the Custom House for the purpose of sheep-dressing at a duty of 1*d.* per pound, under the same satisfactory system as at present carried out in South Australia.

William Hepburn.
James Amos.
E. Tilley.
George Fordyce Story, M.D.
John Mitchell.
Edwin Meredith.
Wm. O'Connor.
James Padden.
James Amos, Senr.
Robert Hepburn, J.P., Roy's Hill.
Henry G. Brock, R.N., Red Rock.
Simeon Lord.

F. W. Stieglitz.
John Story.
Robert Clerk.
Frederick L. Stieglitz, Killymoon.
Charles Alford.
Robert T. Owen.
Robert Cowie.
Edwin Boulton.
Samuel Horton.
Joseph Archer.
Philip T. Smith.
James Mercer.
James Pillinger.

G. C. Clark.
Adam Jackson.
W. J. Purbrick.
P. H. Gell.
John Meredith.
Edward Carr Shaw.
Adam Amos.
Edwin Allen.
Francis Cotton.
Adam Robertson.
W. Harrison.
Charles Evans.
Joseph F. Boulton.
T. Parramore.

Guided by his own conviction, and in accordance with the urgent desire of his Constituents, amongst whom will be seen the name of the present member for Glamorgan, and of influential Land-proprietors in adjacent Districts; your Petitioner, on the 4th September, 1855, (the Council being in Committee) moved the following Resolution:—

“It is the opinion of this House, that Tobacco for sheep-dressing purposes, should be cleared through the Custom House at a duty of One Penny per pound, under the same satisfactory system as at present carried out in South Australia.”

That on the 11th September, 1855, the Chairman of the said Committee brought up the following Resolution, which was adopted by the Council,—the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Champ, stating that he had consulted with the Collector of Customs, who thought that by the adoption of the Resolution the Customs would be benefitted, inasmuch as there would be more Tobacco used:—

“It is the opinion of this House, that Tobacco for sheep-dressing, should be cleared through the Custom House at a duty of Three Pence per pound, under the same satisfactory system as at present carried out in South Australia.”

That up to this period, the only means the Flock-owner had of dressing his sheep when his Tobacco crop failed, (as it so frequently does in Tasmania) was in the use of *mineral poisons*, imported chiefly from America, and *not liable to any duty*; thus not benefiting the Revenue *at all*, but proving hurtful to the sheep, and injurious to the persons employed in applying them; whereas the consumption of Tobacco, paying a duty of Three Pence per pound is a direct increase to the Revenue and admits the use of an innocuous article as a remedy against scab.

That Tobacco destroyed for sheep-dressing *cannot be* and *never has been* made available for purposes of luxury; and therefore the diminution of duty in this case, cannot, by unprejudiced persons, be considered as “class legislation.”

Knowing the interest of the whole community to be involved in the preservation of the Law as it now stands, inasmuch as the Revenue, directly and indirectly, is chiefly derived from the wool exported, whilst the Flock-owners are the most heavily taxed persons in the Island; and that deep injury would ensue, were the owners of sheep again driven to the use of mineral poisons.

Your Petitioner respectfully prays your Honorable House will not consent to alter the Law whereby Tobacco for sheep-dressing purposes may be cleared through the Custom House, at a duty of Three Pence per pound.

And your Petitioner as in duty bound, will ever pray.

CHARLES MEREDITH.