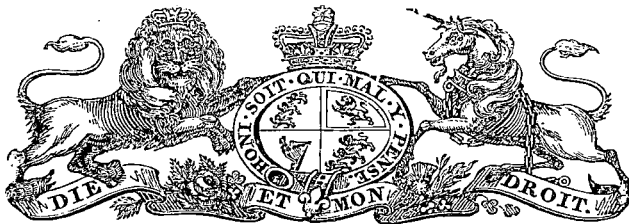


(No. 57.)



1895.

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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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TASMANIAN UNIVERSITY:

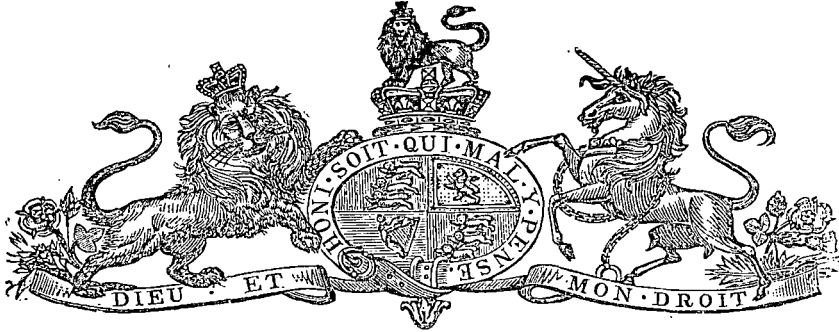
PETITION FROM RESIDENTS OF HOBART.

*(Mr. Crosby, August 27, 1895.)*

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Ordered by the Legislative Council to be printed.

Cost of printing—£1.



*To the Honorable the President and Members of the Legislative Council, in Parliament assembled.*

The Petition of the undersigned Residents in Hobart,

HUMBLY SHEWETH :

THAT your Petitioners view with apprehension the proposal to reduce the revenue of the University to such an extent as would cripple its teaching functions or abolish them. Recognising the need of the utmost economy consistent with efficiency, your Petitioners have acquiesced during the last two years in the curtailment of the amount secured by law, but to reduce the amount to the extent now proposed would be to lay an arrest on the good work now being accomplished, and seriously imperil the educational interests of the youth of Tasmania.

Your Petitioners would desire respectfully to ask the attention of your Honorable Council to the following considerations.

The Council of Education (established so far back as 1858) drew £2649 from the State in 1889. The University in 1895 draws £2800. It will be seen therefore that the establishment of the University has laid no increased burden on the taxpayer, while the results of its work have been of much more general benefit to the youth of Tasmania than the work of the Council of Education with its restricted scope.

The University began its work in January, 1890, and has from that time held annual examinations similar to the examinations held by the Council of Education.

During the five years of its existence the University has examined 300 students, of whom 137 have passed the Junior Public Examination, and 91 the Senior Public Examination. The University has, during the same time, awarded Junior Exhibitions of £20 per annum to 25 students under 15 years of age, and Scholarships of £50 per annum to 10 students under 19 years of age. These Exhibitions and Scholarships are held by students resident in various parts of the Colony.

In January, 1893, the University began its teaching with three lecturers selected from a large number of applicants. The choice of the Council has been amply justified by the capacity which the lecturers have shown in the work of teaching during the past three years. The lecturers give instruction in Classics and English, in Mathematics and Physics, and in Law, History, and Political Science. Assistant lecturers and readers give instruction in Chemistry, in Mathematics, in Mechanics, and in Law. Instruction is also given by the lecturers and assistant lecturers to students in Launceston every week.

In addition to the regular course of instruction for degrees the University has, during the past three years, established Extension Lectures on subjects of scientific, historical, and literary importance both at Hobart and Launceston.

By the Tasmanian University Act Parliament has reserved to itself the appointment of one half of the governing body of the University, including therein the Minister of Education for the time being, thereby securing to the Legislature an effective control over the policy of the University, and ensuring that it shall be conducted on lines which Parliament approves.

In addition to the control over the policy and management of the University exercised by the Legislature through its representatives on the governing body, the State has a further guarantee for the election of fit members for such governing body in the constitution of the electoral body of the

Senate, which comprises 68 members, graduates of the University and Associates of Arts, the majority of whom occupy responsible positions in the community, and fairly represent the instructed portion of the inhabitants of the Colony.

The advantages of education which are provided by the University are offered at a cost so small as to put them within reach of the poorest. Without a local University, which brings instruction to them at a cost within their means, the gates of knowledge are barred against them. No matter what their abilities, no matter how deserving they may be, they are precluded from obtaining the instruction which might make them a power in their native land.

The reduction of the annual grant as proposed would therefore, in the opinion of your Petitioners, inflict a serious injury on the youth of Tasmania at large; it would, moreover, do a great injustice to all those students who already have entered upon a course of instruction; it would deprive the poorer class of students of the means of obtaining a good education at all; it would seriously affect the efficiency of the Secondary Schools, and be not without a deleterious influence on the State Schools of the Colony; and finally it would be a disastrous and retrograde step, breaking with the traditions of the past, reversing the progressive policy of well nigh half a century, and declaring to the world that Tasmania has so little appreciation of the value of intellectual progress and so little notion of its necessity for national well-being that she deems these advantages too dearly purchased at the cost of the moderate endowment which is now claimed from the State. Such false economy would be injurious to the interests of the youth of Tasmania and most prejudicial to the progress of the Colony, not only in intellectual, but in political and material advancement.

Your Petitioners therefore ask your Honorable Council to take these reasons for the continuance of the University as a teaching institution into favourable consideration.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

[Here follow 339 signatures.]

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Petitions to the same effect were received—

By Mr. Grant :

From Teachers of Schools and Colleges in and about Hobart.

By Mr. Piesse :

From Head Masters of Educational Establishments in Hobart.