

(No. 39.)



1897.

SESSION II.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

AGENTS ACTING IN LOCAL COURTS ACT
JURISDICTION:

PETITION FROM MERCHANTS, PROFESSIONAL MEN, AND
TRADESPEOPLE OF HOBART AND LAUNCESTON.

(*Mr. Mulcahy, July 15, 1897.*)

Ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed.

Cost of printing—13s.



*To the Honourable the Speaker and Honourable Members of the House of Assembly, in
Parliament assembled.*

The humble Petition of the undersigned Merchants, Professional Men, and Tradespeople
of Hobart and Launceston,

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH:

THAT, up to the passing of "The Local Courts Bill, 1896," it was lawful for the business of plaintiffs in Small Debts Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under £10 to employ as agents persons not practitioners of the Court, much to their convenience and saving of expense otherwise involved in the payment of law costs.

That, by the passing of the Bill referred to, the work was withdrawn from such lay agents, and placed entirely in the province of such practitioners, thereby increasing considerably the cost of proceedings to an amount often equal to, if not actually exceeding, the small sums sought to be recovered.

That a double grievance is hereby created, (1) to the plaintiffs who are thus mulct of sums greater than they were in the habit of paying for similar work to that for which legal practitioners charge so high a fee; and (2) also to the agents, who were practically deprived of an honourable and profitable occupation.

That, inasmuch as no inconvenience had ever arisen through any inexperience on the part of laymen so acting for plaintiffs, the forms to be complied with being very simple and easily understood, and that no charge of irregularity or malpractice had ever been brought against such agents, the change was quite uncalled for in the interests of either class, and the result was simply to throw work not strictly of a legal character into the hands of a profession who have many other sources of emolument and much more important functions placed exclusively in their hands.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray for a reversion to the old law on this particular point, to simplify once more the proceedings under an Act to which much resort is made by business people, and which it is, in the interests alike both of plaintiffs and defendants, desirable should be conducted with as little expense as possible.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

[Here follow 102 signatures.]