

(No 18.)



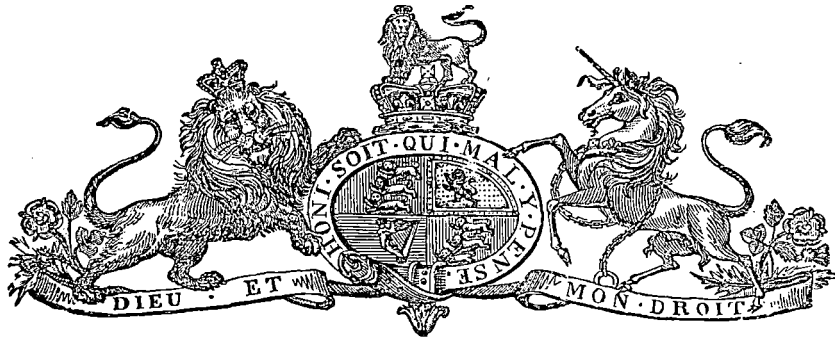
1862.

TASMANIA.

P E T I T I O N .

REFORMATORIES FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS.

Presented by Mr. Wilson, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
24 July, 1862.



To the Honorable the President and the Members of the Legislative Council.

The humble Petition of the Undersigned.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT your Petitioners constitute a Committee, appointed on the 30th January, 1862, at the Annual Meeting of the Benevolent Society of Hobart Town, to obtain "The establishment of an Industrial School or Asylum, for the numerous neglected and destitute Children in this City, and urging the Committee not to relax their exertions, but adopt such measures as may procure the speedy establishment of such an Asylum."

That your Petitioners would respectfully remind your Honorable Council that, during the last Session of Parliament, a Petition was presented, signed by nearly One thousand Householders, praying that a Bill might be introduced similar to "Dunlop's Act."

That your Petitioners feel assured that, until a Reformatory has been established, there is little hope of the Industrial Schools meeting with any success.

That the Magistrates have had, from time to time, before them a number of juvenile offenders of both sexes, charged with larcenies, and other breaches of the Law.

That the Laws of this Colony make no special provision for dealing with cases of this description.

That the Magistrates have, in consequence, felt themselves greatly embarrassed as to how to treat these unfortunate Children. They could not pass over their offences entirely without punishment, and the only penalty they could inflict was imprisonment.

That imprisonment in the Houses of Correction does but expose them to be still further depraved, by contact with old and hardened criminals; and at the expiration of their sentences they return to their vicious homes and evil associations, rather deteriorated than improved, to be again encouraged in the commission of all kinds of crime, until they are again detected, and again appear with deplorable unconcern before the Magisterial Bench.

That there are thus growing up in the Towns of the Colony a number of Boys and Girls, even now doing no slight mischief, and threatening to become in after years a pest to society and a most expensive burden upon the community.

That your Petitioners would earnestly represent the absolute necessity of providing a remedy for this increasing evil without delay.

That, in England, Reformatory Schools have been established throughout the Kingdom; and special powers granted by Legislative enactment to Magistrates with reference to juvenile criminals.

That thus, whenever a person under Sixteen years of age is brought before a Magistrate, charged with any offence subjecting him to imprisonment for more than Fourteen days, the Justice may, instead of imprisonment, order his detention in a Reformatory School for any period not exceeding Five years.

That, by this course, the youthful offender is at once cut off for a very lengthened period from all vicious associations and contaminating influences, and is transplanted into a new and healthy atmosphere, where he is subjected to a course of religious and intellectual training, and where he is taught some honest trade as a future means of self-support.

That your Petitioners, from the Statistical Returns before them, believe that the system of Reformatories has been eminently successful, not only in England and Scotland, but throughout the whole of Europe. That juvenile crime has diminished Fifty per centum, and in some cases Seventy per centum, as can be seen by the official Returns of 1860. Moreover, in the Twenty-five District and separate Pauper Schools in England, a very large proportion of the Children subjected to the combined influences of moral, intellectual, and industrial training, apart from the Workhouse contamination of adult associates, when sent to situations have become useful citizens, and permanently emerged from the pauper class.

That the Reformatory system for Male Children usually adopted throughout Europe is the formation of Schools mainly of an agricultural character; and your Petitioners are of opinion that such a system would work well here, where a School, in the first instance, might be established in connexion with the Southern Agricultural Association. And in the establishment of the Reformatories for Girls, the industrial training should be principally directed to those avocations which would fit them for domestic service.

That the immediate benefit to the Government would be a considerable saving in the sums now paid for the correction of the juvenile offenders; and that the ultimate benefit to the Colony would be to make those who are the pests of society, industrious hard-working Men and Women, brought up either as Gardeners, Agriculturists, Mechanics, or Domestic Servants.

Your Petitioners therefore pray your Honorable Council to pass such an Act for the establishment of Institutions for the reception and reformation of Juvenile Offenders and Vagrant and Begging Children, and giving such authority to the Magistrates to issue Judicial Orders in reference to the same, as to your Honorable Council may seem good.

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

R. R. DAVIES, Archdeacon of Hobart Town, *Chairman*.

W. TARLETON.

T. J. CROUCH.

HENRY COOK.

ALFRED KENNERLEY, Mayor.

J. R. BATEMAN.

JOHN STORIE, Minister of St. Andrews.

E. SWARBRECK HALL, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Benevolent Society.