

(No. 60.)



1880.

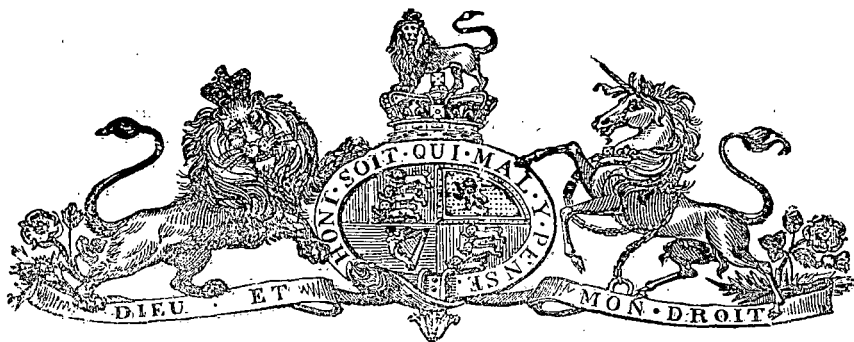
TASMANIA.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

LIEUT.-COLONEL ST. HILL:

PETITION.

Presented by Mr. John Lord, August 31; and ordered by the Council to be printed, September 3, 1880.



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

The Petition of the undersigned, Windle Hill St. Hill, a Lieut.-Colonel in the Army, belonging to the 19th Regiment of Foot, and holding from Her Majesty the local rank of Colonel in Tasmania.

HUMBLY SHEWETH:

THAT your Petitioner, when the Russian war scare of 1878 was at its height, was solicited by the then Premier of the Colony (Mr. Giblin) to undertake the task of organising Local Forces for the defence of this Colony. The sanction of the Governor of the Colony, whose Private Secretary Petitioner was, having been obtained, your Petitioner proceeded to carry out the wishes of the Government in this respect, and Petitioner was officially thanked by the Government for his "valuable and gratuitous exertions" (*vide* Memorandum to the Governor, dated 4th June, 1878). And on the Local Forces being inspected for the first time after their embodiment by the Victorian Commandant, that Officer's Report to the Government was an exceptionally favourable one, special reference being made to those entrusted with the "command and supervision" of the newly raised Local Forces as mainly conducing to their having attained so high a standard.

Your Petitioner resigned the Private Secretaryship in December, 1879; but the Premier, Mr. Giblin, at a subsequent personal interview in the Colonial Treasurer's office, informed Petitioner that the Government had decided to retain Petitioner in the service of the Colony as Commandant and Inspecting Field Officer of the Local Forces until the 30th June, 1880: and such determination was announced to the House of Assembly by Mr. Giblin on the 29th January, 1880, Governor Weld being a consenting party to this arrangement, and expressing himself to that effect in a letter to a mutual friend, dated 31st December, 1879, the contents of which His Excellency desired should be communicated to your Petitioner, and it was accordingly handed to him to read. At the interview with Mr. Giblin he also spoke of Governor Weld's Memorandum to Ministers, of the 16th January, 1880, a communication which made the Premier officially acquainted on the day he received it, viz. the 17th January, of the charge Governor Weld had preferred against Petitioner to the Secretary of State. The Despatch to the Secretary of State transmitting this charge Governor Weld subsequently withdrew by telegram before it reached the Colonial Office, and this charge was substantially the same as the subsequent one brought by Governor Weld against your Petitioner before Executive Council held on 25th and 30th March, 1880, at which Petitioner was directed to present himself, no fresh matter having arisen in the interim.

That your Petitioner requested, having regard to the magnitude of the charge, that the forty-eight hours' notice given him might be extended to one week, as the Easter holidays intervening made four out of the seven days solicited *dies non*; that no objection should be made to counsel being present on Petitioner's behalf; and that a full Cabinet, and not an incomplete one, might be assembled for the occasion: requests which eleven members of the Legislature joined in addressing the Premier to grant.

To each of these requests the Premier returned an answer in the negative.

That there being but two out of the four Ministers of the Colony officially responsible to Parliament (*viz.*, the Colonial Treasurer, the Honorable W. R. Giblin, and the Minister of Lands and Works, the Honorable C. O'Reilly,) present in Hobart Town,—the Colonial Secretary, the Hon. W. Moore, and the Attorney-General, the Hon. J. S. Dodds, being absent,—your Petitioner, on receipt of the Premier's refusal to accede to Petitioner's requests, was advised not to present himself before so incomplete a tribunal. And as it was publicly stated by the leading journal of the Colony two days afterwards (on the 2nd April)—a statement which has never been called in question—that "the Governor and the Premier knew they had not the approval of the other two Ministers," it was manifest that the advice tendered to your Petitioner was not without reason.

That your Petitioner was informed by letter from the Colonial Secretary's Office, signed "W. R. Giblin, for Colonial Secretary, absent," dated 30th March, 1880, "that in consequence of your (Petitioner's) failure to attend the meeting of the Executive Council held this day, Ministers have been compelled to recommend, and the Governor has approved, that your (Petitioner's) services, as Commandant and Inspecting Field Officer of the Local Forces of Tasmania, be dispensed with from this date.

That your Petitioner respectfully submits to your Honorable House that faith has been broken with him by the Premier of the Colony, in summarily dispensing with Petitioner's services in March, 1880, he having been engaged until the 30th June, 1880, with the full knowledge by the Premier of the Colony at the time of engagement of the charge preferred by Governor Weld against Petitioner, and no fresh matter having arisen.

May it therefore please your Honorable House to take this matter into earnest consideration, and cause such steps to be taken as may be deemed advisable to see justice done to your Petitioner for the treatment he has experienced at the hands of the Premier of the Colony, in summarily dispensing with Petitioner's services before the termination of his engagement.

And your Petitioner will ever pray, &c.

W. H. ST. HILL.

August 30th, 1880.