

(No. 55.)



1889.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT:

PETITION TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

Laid on the Table of the House by the Treasurer, July 9, and ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed, July 17, 1889.



*To His Excellency SIR ROBERT GEORGE CROOKSHANK HAMILTON,
Knight Commander of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, Governor
and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony of Tasmania and its
Dependencies.*

The humble Petition of the Electors of Tasmania humbly complaining,

SHOWETH :

That Your Excellency's Responsible Advisers the Members of the Fysh Cabinet and their political supporters, in the month of March, 1887, succeeded in bringing about the resignation of the Agnew Ministry by securing the defeat of the Attorney-General in that Ministry on his appealing to his constituents for re-election, and thus preventing the reconstruction of the Ministry, although it had a working majority in the Assembly.

2. That the principal ground of the opposition to the said Attorney-General's re-election, formulated by the then Opposition, was that the Agnew Ministry had, by their neglect of the finances of the Colony, allowed a deficit of £73,000 or thereabouts to accumulate without making any adequate provision for its liquidation and the proper administration of the affairs of the Colony, and that in consequence thereof the public necessities imperatively demanded a change of Ministry.

3. That the Fysh Administration, upon their accession to power, announced their determination to adjust the finances of the Colony, and repeatedly proclaimed the absolute necessity for the readjustment of the system of taxation, the incidence of which, the Treasurer alleged, presented "iniquitous inequalities."

4. That your Responsible Advisers have submitted to Parliament three separate and distinct financial schemes, one of which, although passed by the Assembly, was rejected by the Council with the almost universal approval of the constituencies, and the other two, although passed by the Assembly with the disapproval of the great majority of your Petitioners, were never submitted to the Council.

5. That your Responsible Advisers have allowed a deficiency as estimated by them of £73,000 to increase to an amount variously estimated at sums varying from £164,000 to £183,000, to the great detriment of the public interest.

6. That your Responsible Advisers have, by their sudden and unexpected withdrawal of more than one-half of the annual subsidy to Road Boards, Road Trusts, and Municipalities, greatly embarrassed the working and endangered the existence of Municipal Institutions in the Colony.

7. That the Ministry have by irregular and unconstitutional means attained Legislative sanction for a loan of £1,000,000, and, it is believed, intend to attempt to place the loan on the London market at an early date.

8. That your Petitioners believe that an attempt to float the loan before the finances of the Colony have been placed on a satisfactory basis will be fraught with danger to the public credit and the public interest.

9. That the Parliamentary Representatives of many of your Petitioners in the Assembly have not represented public opinion during the last two years, and are not in accord with their constituencies on the important questions now awaiting solution at the hands of the Legislature, and have acted in defiance of public opinion, and that Ministers, whilst retaining a bare majority in the Assembly, have obtained that majority by means highly objectionable and subversive of the true principles of Parliamentary Government.

10. That your Petitioners are satisfied that the Administration, by the manner in which they have conducted the affairs of the Colony, especially in neglecting to equalise Revenue and Expenditure, and in allowing the deficiency in the Public Revenue to accumulate during the last two years, have forfeited the confidence of the great body of the electors, and are now holding office in defiance of public opinion, constitutional principles, and political propriety.

11. That your Petitioners verily believe that in order to place the finances of the Colony in a satisfactory state, to ensure a strong Government capable of passing measures to meet the public necessities, and to restore confidence in the Parliamentary Institutions of the Colony, a dissolution of the Assembly and an appeal to the constituencies is indispensable.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that Your Excellency will be pleased to take the premises into your favourable consideration, and grant to your Petitioners the relief set forth in this Petition.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

[Here follow 3313 Signatures.]