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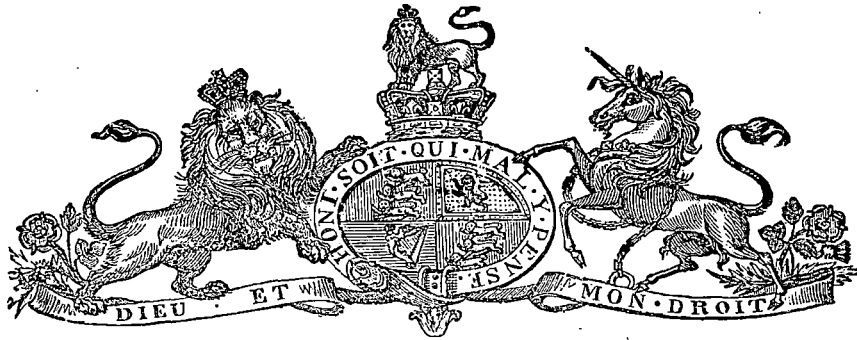
TASMANIA.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

HUON DISTRICT.

PÉTITION FOR REDUCTION OF LICENCE FEES OF SAWYERS
AND SPLITTERS.

Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands and Works, and ordered by the
House to be printed, November 28, 1871.



Unto His Excellency the Governor in Council.

The Petition of the undersigned Saw-millers, Sawyers, Splitters, Wood Carters, and others engaged in the Timber trade, and resident in the Huon District.

HUMBLY SHOWETH:

THAT your Petitioners are engaged in a very laborious business, in the prosecution of which they are exposed to many hardships and privations. Cut off from intercourse with their fellow colonists, and deprived of much of the comforts of a home, they have to pursue their calling in the recesses of the bush exposed to many variations of temperature, and almost always to the inconveniences caused by a superabundance of moisture and the impossibility of the sun's rays penetrating where they have to seek an uncertain livelihood.

That for a number of years past great stagnation has characterised the timber trade of the Colony, and your Petitioners have not only greater difficulty in finding a market for the produce of their labour, but they are not so well remunerated as they were.

That your Petitioners are therefore ill able to bear any special or additional taxes on their industry, and have been subjected to great inconvenience and no little actual suffering by the increased licence fees imposed upon them by an Order by the Governor in Council, published in the *Government Gazette* of 29th December, 1868, by which the licence to fell and remove timber from Crown Lands was increased from 1s. to 2s. 6d. a week. And in addition a licence fee of 5s. per week was imposed upon each person cutting timber on crown lands in connection with any saw-mill.

That by the same Order in Council carters using certain "Government slab roads" are subjected to a licence fee of 2s. 6d. for each horse engaged in carting on the said roads, with an extra fee of 5s. where more than two horses are used in drawing one cart or dray.

That consequent on the distressed condition of the Sawyers and Splitters strong representations were made to the Parliament of 1866, that the then charge of 2s. 6d. per week for the right to fell and remove timber from Crown Lands was exorbitant, and in consequence the fee was reduced to 1s. from and after the 1st day of October of that year.

That your Petitioners are less able to bear any increased burdens now than they were in 1866, when they received a much needed relief, and therefore the increased licensed fees imposed on them since the beginning of 1869 have proved very burdensome and oppressive to your Petitioners, many of whom have, in consequence, been at times stinted of food for themselves and families, the licence fees often amounting to the week's earnings.

That the licence fees charged your Petitioners not only far exceed those levied on persons engaged in other vocations, but are exacted on a different principle. While others paying a licence fee may employ assistants without extra payment to the State, each father of a family engaged in felling or removing timber from Crown Lands has not only to pay a licence fee for himself, but for each member of his family employed in assisting him.

That the annual licence fee charged each person engaged in the timber trade amounts to the enormous sum of £6 10s., while the fee on those connected with saw-mills is £13 a year each,—a burden which hampers the saw-miller and tends to deprive the feller and splitter of employment, the charge of 5s. a week in addition to wages checking enterprise.

That your Petitioners paying a licence fee for the use of the Government slab roads are liable in the duties falling on carters as a body, and also in road rates and other burdens exacted from their neighbours. That these Government slab roads have become in many places utterly unserviceable, and where they are not quite impassable it is because your Petitioners have been compelled to fill up gaps to let their drays over. That any charge for the use of such roads is impolitic, and in the circumstances unjust.

That your Petitioners have no desire to draw invidious comparisons with, or seek relief at the expense of, any other class of the community. But in justice to themselves, your Petitioners feel compelled to

point out to Your Excellency that the very heavy exactions imposed on them cannot be justified by representing the licence fees charged them as an equivalent for the value of the crown property appropriated by them in the timber they fell and remove, while far greater facilities and advantages are given the miner for a nominal fee, an annual payment of 5s. entitling him to enter on any crown lands he pleases, occupy certain areas to the exclusion of all others, and cut and remove such timber as he may require for domestic or mining purposes.

That the sum received by the Colonial Treasury from the licence fees exacted from your Petitioners is so insignificant as not to warrant so heavy an imposition on them; and the burdens that now specially affect your Petitioners may be swept away without injury to the public interests.

That your Petitioners respectfully submit that these circumstances entitle them to relief from the exactions that now press so hardly on them. And your Petitioners humbly pray that Your Excellency will be pleased to take the above circumstances into your favourable consideration, and relieve your Petitioners from the special licence fees and other exactions that are now levied from them. That Your Excellency will be pleased to place them on a level with the mining population, or grant them such other relief as to Your Excellency and your responsible Advisers may seem just.

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

[Here follow 269 Signatures.]