

(No. 83.)



1884.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

EDUCATION:

PETITION FOR PAYMENT BY RESULTS.

Presented to the Legislative Council by Mr. Dodery, July 3; ordered to be printed, July 16.



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

The humble Petition of the Roman Catholics of Tasmania,

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH:

1. That the system of Public Education as by law established in Tasmania is of such a nature that your Petitioners cannot, under its provisions, bring up their children according to the tenets and teaching of their Church in the all-important question of Education.

2. That, whilst recognising for all other denominations in this Colony the fullest liberty in the education of their children, your Petitioners deem it a hardship that they cannot avail themselves of the Public Funds which they contribute to, and which are set apart for the purpose of Public Education, without contravening those principles in virtue of which Roman Catholics conscientiously believe that Education, to be worthy of the name, should be based upon and guided by Religion.

3. That the hardship in question is aggravated by the fact that, by Section 6 of "The Public Schools Act," 37 Vict. No. 11, it is in certain cases rendered compulsory on parents to send their children to Public Schools, conducted though they be on a system so opposed to the religious convictions of your Petitioners.

4. That in view of these premises, your Petitioners trust your Honorable House will in its wisdom adopt such measures as will enable the Roman Catholics of Tasmania, who represent about one-fourth of the population of the Colony, to benefit by the provision made for Public Education, and to bring up their children, as their Church so strictly enjoins upon them to do, as good Christians and useful members of society.

5. That your Petitioners would respectfully suggest a practical remedy for the grievance complained of by the Roman Catholics of Tasmania, who are obliged to pay their share of the Education expenses of the country, while receiving in return a system of Education which is opposed to the dictates of their consciences.

6. That the remedy your Petitioners propose is the adoption of a system fair to all sections of the community, familiarly known as "Payment by Results" and "Capitation," whereby, on the just principle of equal remuneration for equal work, your Petitioners' schools could be visited by Government Inspectors, and the children therein examined in the same subjects of secular instruction as are the children in State Schools, and upon the Inspector's report and certificate as to the required standard of proficiency having been reached, payment to be made accordingly.

7. That, by the principle in question being adopted, your Petitioners would be enabled to participate in the provision Parliament may deem fit to make after the Report of the Royal Commission, appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the system of Public Education in Tasmania and the neighbouring Colonies, and the manner in which provision for the same is made, in order to secure increased advantages to the Public of Tasmania in the matter of Education.

8. That the principle referred to is in harmony with the spirit of the Constitution, which guarantees ample civil and religious rights to all classes, and in harmony also with our Court of Equity, which upholds the parent's right to determine the character of the education of his children; and in harmony, moreover, with the principles of justice, which entitle us to receive from the State, in return for our portion of the taxes, some advantage which we could avail ourselves of without violating conscience.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that, in the distribution of the grant in aid of Education in Tasmania, the principle of "Payment by Results" be not only recognised but be carried into effect, in order that the Roman Catholics of Tasmania may not be required to send their children to State schools where religion is excluded, or, as it were, be enforced to tax themselves a second time by sending their children to schools where, together with instruction in the secular branches of knowledge, religious training can also be combined.

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

[Here follow 90 signatures.]

WILLIAM THOMAS STRUTT,
GOVERNMENT PRINTER, TASMANIA.