

(No. 23.)



1858.

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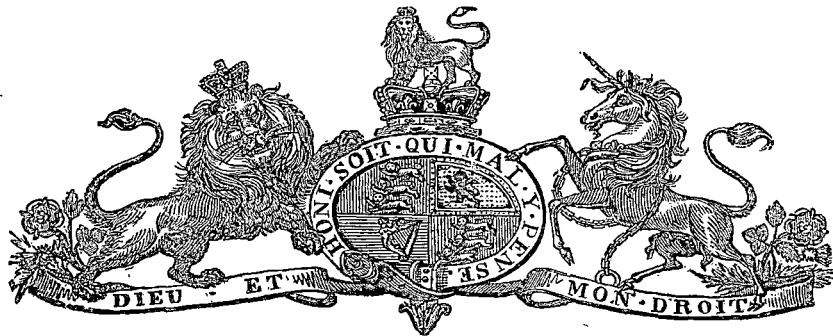
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P E T I T I O N

FROM RATEPAYERS OF PORT SORELL DISTRICT.

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Presented by Mr. Button, and ordered by the Council to be printed, 29 September,  
1858.



*To the Honourable the Members of the Legislative Council of Tasmania,  
in Parliament assembled.*

The Petition of the undersigned Ratepayers of the Western Portion of the District of Port Sorell, County of Devon.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT so much of the "Cross and Bye Roads Act," and of the "Rural Municipalities Act," as relates to the qualification for voting thereto,—also that portion which regulates the plurality of votes,—are most unjust in their nature, and injurious in their tendency.

They are unjust, inasmuch as they deprive the small owners and occupiers of property of one of the dearest rights of British Citizens—that of having a voice in the Elective Institutions of their District—from which they are cut off by the present franchise, although they are forced to contribute by direct taxation to those Local Institutions.

They are injurious in their tendency, inasmuch as they confer an arbitrary power upon property; a qualification which has never yet failed to secure to its *worthy* representatives that preponderance in Council necessary to its protection without the help of class legislation. Hence it is, your Petitioners submit, that the Rural Districts hesitate to avail themselves of the principles of self-government as accorded to them by your Honourable House,—a feeling which will become more intense when those principles are more widely illustrated in the future results of the plurality of votes enjoyed by a few individuals in each Road District.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly, but very earnestly pray, that your Honourable House will be pleased to amend the said Acts in such manner that all Ratepayers may have *one* vote,—that no man may have more than *five* votes,—and that the same may apply to all Rural Municipalities and Road Districts throughout the Colony.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

[*Here follow 107 Signatures.*]