

(No. 51.)



1868.

T A S M A N I A.

COMMUTATION OF STATE AID BILL.

PETITION OF MESSRS. VALENTINE AND ISAAC RICHARDSON.

Presented by Mr. Attorney-General, and ordered by the House to be printed,
August 13, 1868.



To the Honorable the House of Assembly of Tasmania, in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned Members of the Church of England in Tasmania.

SHOWETH :

THAT a sum of Fifteen thousand Pounds is reserved for Public Worship from the General Revenue.

That a Bill has been submitted to your Honorable House by the Government for the Commutation of the said Reserve.

That the question of State support is, and ought to be, within the power of the people through their representatives in Parliament; and that it will be a violation of the principles of constitutional government to deprive succeeding generations of this right.

That this Commutation is proposed mainly because its abettors believe that the growth of opinion will almost certainly lead the people, before many years have passed, to revoke this Reserve; and its commutation is now proposed with the intention of forestalling and defeating the exercise of their just right.

That the proposed Commutation, based as it is on the State Aid Distribution Act, is unjust to the Protestants of this community, because many who conscientiously refuse State Aid are made to contribute to the support of religious opinions which they abhor; and further, because it is not true, as stated in the *Church News*, that "no member of any religious body named in the Distribution Act really contributes anything, as is sometimes represented, towards the support of any other worship than that which he professes to approve," inasmuch as the Protestant members of the community, in consequence of their greater wealth,—which wealth is due entirely to their emancipation from the blighting influence of an idolatrous worship,—are much larger contributors to the General Revenue of the Colony in proportion to their numbers than the Romanists, and consequently by the proposed arrangement they are made to contribute, in violation of their consciences and their duty as loyal subjects, to the perpetual endowment of a religion which they believe to be designated in Scripture as that of Antichrist, and whose followers they know profess a higher allegiance to a Foreign Potentate who is hostile to the religion and institutions of the Empire than to the Sovereign and laws whose subjects we all are.

That now in these latter days when we are distinctly warned by the Word of God that Antichrist shall greatly prevail in the world, of which there is such abundant and increasing evidence even, with sorrow and shame be it said, in the very bosom of our own branch of Christ's Church, it will be in defiance of God's warnings if we do aught to promote or encourage that which we believe from the concurrent testimony of History and God's Holy Word to be destructive of the highest interests of mankind and hateful to God Himself.

Your Petitioners therefore pray that your Honorable House will be pleased not to pass this ungodly Bill; and that you will—for the promotion of God's glory, the good of His Church, and the welfare of the country—leave us to our faith in His most gracious protection, trusting in His most sure promises that He will provide for His own Church, and more especially confiding in our Saviour's Ordinance that "they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel,"—abolish at once all State Aid to Religious Worship (always protecting vested rights).

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

WM. VALENTINE.
ISAAC RICHARDSON.

Campbell Town, 12th August, 1868.

JAMES BARNARD,
GOVERNMENT PRINTER, TASMANIA.