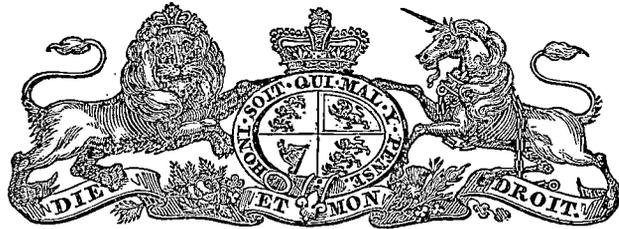


(No. 90.)



1865.

T A S M A N I A.

P E T I T I O N

FOR REPEAL OF STATE AID DISTRIBUTION ACT.

Presented by Mr. Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed,
7 September, 1865.



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

The humble Petition of the undersigned Inhabitants of Hobart Town.

SHOWETH :

THAT by an Act of the Tasmanian Parliament (26 Victoria, No. 17,) intituled "The State Aid Distribution Act," provision has been made for the annual payment of a large sum of money to different Religious Denominations.

That very valuable Grants of Land are also frequently made to various Religious Denominations in this Colony.

That your Petitioners respectfully submit that all such Grants of money and land are wrong in principle, inasmuch as they are given to Bodies of Religionists holding contradictory creeds and doctrines.

That your Petitioners also respectfully submit, that it is not the duty of a Civil Government to interfere in any way in religious matters, or to provide for the maintenance of the religious opinions of its people.

That such Grants also exert a demoralising influence on the members of the Churches receiving them, depriving such members of that feeling of independence and spirit of self-reliance which should characterise a free people,—and in proof of which your Petitioners refer your Honorable House to the fact, that a very large proportion of the amount thus annually granted is applied in the payment of the Stipends of Ministers in Hobart Town and other important places, where the Inhabitants are well able to sustain their own Clergymen, and who doubtless would do so if thrown on their own resources.

That your Petitioners would refer your Honorable House to the condition of several of the Australian Colonies in which the Ordinances of Religion are well sustained without the aid of the State.

That it is lamentably evident that the system of State Aid to Religion in this Colony has also signally failed in exciting an interest on the part of the people in the Ordinances of Religion; and hence the system of an Ecclesiastical Police (the only ground on which it can be in the least justified), has proved a failure, and is a fearful waste of the rapidly decreasing public resources of this Colony.

Your Petitioners, therefore, humbly pray your Honorable House to repeal "The State Aid Distribution Act," except in so far as the interests of the Clergymen named in the said Act may be concerned, so long as they may live or exercise their office in this Colony.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

[Here follow 336 Signatures.]

JAMES BARNARD,
GOVERNMENT PRINTER, TASMANIA.