

(No. 50.)



1856.

T A S M A N I A.

P E T I T I O N.

FROM CERTAIN LICENSED HAWKERS AGAINST RAISING THE
FEE FOR A HAWKER'S LICENCE.

Presented by Mr. Adye Douglas, and ordered by the House to be printed,
11 February, 1857.



To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly of Tasmania, in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of certain Hawkers duly licensed within the Colony of Tasmania.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

1. THAT your Petitioners approach your Honourable House with deep respect, and temperately urge the following reasons for the re-consideration of the very severe tax proposed to be laid by the existing Government upon so poor, hard-working, and deserving a body as your Petitioners.
2. That your Petitioners generally commence business with very small, and often insufficient resources, scarce ever more than Ten Pounds, in many cases Five Pounds, and sometimes as low as Two Pounds and even One Pound ; while the contemplated tax proposes an increase from the former fee of One Pound, which was never found by your Petitioners to be too much, up to no less a sum than Ten Pounds, being Nine hundred per cent. increase.
3. That the burthens upon the poorer classes of the community, already sinking into despondency under the gloomy forebodings roused by impending taxation, are thus increased, inasmuch as your Petitioners more properly rank with, and directly gain their living among, such classes. This tax being therefore another added to the many grievous imposts already laid upon the poor.
4. That the difficulty of gaining a livelihood under hard circumstances and in depressed times will compel your Petitioners to raise the price of the commodities which they vend, to the injury of very many poor persons, who are prevented by one circumstance or another from buying in other ways, and who in many instances are in the hands of the Hawkers for their trifling credits, which under contemplated alterations would have to be discontinued.
5. That thus, in effect, such tax would be an impost upon tapes and bobbins, pins and needles, matches, cottons, calicoes, and other small matters of nursery and housewife consumption among the very poorest and most indigent classes of the community,—matters altogether beneath the dignity of your Honourable House, and in every way unworthy the genius of a great financier as sources of revenue.
6. That the tax is therefore, impolitic.
7. That your Petitioners, from their vocation and station in life, fall necessarily within the scope of other severe, grievous, and excessive imposts, such as the taxes on tea, sugar, coffee, rice, rum, tobacco, and what is equivalent to a beer tax, namely the imposts on malt and hops, and the increase from Ten to Fifty Pounds of the Brewer's Licence, and also the tax on beef and mutton,—many of the foregoing articles being necessaries of life.
8. That, besides the direct partial and excessive nature of this exorbitant and most monstrous tax, it also contemplates a direct act of *prima facie* injustice for One hundred and seventy-seven, being the number of existing Hawkers. The tax is estimated to yield Eight hundred Pounds, which at Ten Pounds gives Eighty, leaving a balance of ninety-seven. Thus it is contemplated to deprive a majority of your Petitioners of their living for the sake of gaining about Six hundred Pounds to the General Revenue.
9. That thus, independently of the direct injustice speculated upon, the public also stand indirectly affected, inasmuch as the trade are scattered all over the Colony, and their occasional visits are gladly looked for in remote parts, these, from the diminished number of your Petitioners, will necessarily be fewer, and made at more uncertain intervals.
10. That beside the direct and indirect taxation to be thrown upon your Petitioners, and the direct injustice pointed out as contemplated, the two and a half per cent. auction impost forms in itself a tax that would be ruinous to your Petitioners, as the Hawkers almost make their living by buying at the marts, being the most constant buyers there, and turning their money over repeatedly, perhaps in a week upon each transaction, suffering this oppressive charge. This charge is also calculated to diminish the business transacted at the marts, and thereby still further narrow the sources of your Petitioner's trade.
11. That the tax therefore is also unjust.

12. That your Petitioners, being in many cases in very poor and indigent circumstances, follow a precarious and uncertain vocation,—a trade always struggling, necessitous, and dependent upon the exigency of the moment, and under the altered circumstances of the Colony scarce affording a bare living. Thus it is contemplated still further to grind down a poor and struggling trade by this very impolitic and unjust tax.

Your Petitioners therefore pray that your Honourable House will take the premises into your kind and favourable consideration, and come to some resolution to reconsider with a view to rejecting the proposed increase from One to Ten Pounds in the Hawkers Licensed fee.

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

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