

(No. 53.)



1872.

T A S M A N I A.

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y.

M U N I C I P A L V O T I N G.

P E T I T I O N F R O M R O S S.

Presented by Mr. Keach, July 16, 1872; and ordered by the House to be printed.



*To the Honorable the Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly
of the Parliament of Tasmania.*

The humble Petition of the undersigned Ratepayers and Inhabitants of the Municipality of Ross.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT on the first introduction of Municipal Institutions into this Colony your Petitioners generally hailed the new scheme with satisfaction, as affording them the means of more efficiently managing their immediate local interests. At the time many of them feared that the measure would prove unequal and unjust, inasmuch as the powers conferred on the different classes of Ratepayers might enable the wealthier sections when combined to dominate over the poorer and more numerous.

Your Petitioners regret to state that those fears have proved to be well founded ; for it is well known that in every Municipality it is only necessary for some ten or twelve of the greater Ratepayers to unite, when their own votes of ten each, together with the influence naturally attendant on their social positions, enable them to rule at will their respective Municipalities, to the absolute exclusion from all share of power (if they so wish it) of the general body of their fellow-citizens.

Your Petitioners have long felt the evils consequent on the law as it stands. They feel themselves powerless to oppose in their own interests a combination only too certain to prevail ; they are thus rapidly lapsing into a condition of indifference, and a healthy state of public spirit is plainly becoming extinct among them.

Your Petitioners therefore pray that your Honorable House may introduce and pass such measures of reform as will place the Ratepayers of this and other Municipalities on a more equitable footing as to the scale of voting. They would respectfully suggest that every ratepayer of six months standing should be entitled to a vote, and not any one be allowed possess a greater number than five : they deem such a provision would afford ample security to the rights of property, which they fully recognise, while it would prove eminently conducive to the promotion of a proper and active interest in local and public subjects of general value and importance.

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

[Here follow 43 Signatures.]