

(No. 33.)



1862.

TASMANIA.

P E T I T I O N .

MARINE BOARD ACT.

Presented by Mr. Button, and ordered by the Council to be printed, 19 August,
1862.



To the Honorable the Legislative Council of Tasmania, in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned Merchants, Traders, and Inhabitants of the Town of Launceston, and Shipmasters frequenting the Port thereof.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT, by an Act passed in the Twenty-first year of the reign of Her present Majesty, known as *The Marine Board Act*, the control and regulation of the Port and Harbour of Launceston was vested in a body, called the Launceston Marine Board, consisting of Five Wardens; Two of whom—viz., the Mayor and the Collector of Customs,—are Members *ex officio*, and the other Three are appointed by the Governor, on the nomination of the Launceston Chamber of Commerce; the Wardens electing One of their number as Master Warden, subject to the approval of the Governor.

That certain Ports on the North West Coast of Tasmania are placed under the jurisdiction of the Launceston Marine Board, producing complications unfavorable to the efficient working of the said Board.

That, although the Marine Board is constantly liable to be called upon to determine or adjudicate in cases requiring a considerable degree of nautical knowledge, there is no provision in *The Marine Board Act* that the Wardens, or any of them, shall possess any degree of such knowledge or experience.

That the said Act provides that the Master Warden may receive a Salary not exceeding Two hundred Pounds per annum, and each of the Wardens may receive a Salary not exceeding Fifty-four Pounds Twelve Shillings per annum.

That the Commerce of the Port of Launceston has greatly suffered from the obstacles which the high Port Charges have placed in the way of Vessels trading to the Port, or coming thither in search of cargoes; and that the interests of your Petitioners have grievously suffered in consequence.

That, in the opinion of those versed in nautical matters, and in the regulation of Ports and Harbours in other parts of Her Majesty's Dominions, the Expenditure of the Port of Launceston might be greatly reduced, and yet applied in such a manner as to secure greater advantages to Vessels visiting the Port, and at the same time lessening the charges on them in a very material degree.

That the Meetings of the Launceston Marine Board are not conducted with the publicity which is desirable in the Meetings of a body entrusted with such extensive powers.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your Honorable House will be pleased to amend *The Marine Board Act*, so far as it applies to Launceston, by the insertion of the following provisions:—

1. That the Ports on the North West Coast of Tasmania may be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Launceston Marine Board, and provision made for local management.

2. That it shall be incumbent on the Launceston Chamber of Commerce, in the nomination of persons to serve as Wardens, to nominate at least One person of nautical experience; or, failing to nominate such person, it shall be lawful for the Governor to appoint such a person, being a resident in the Town or Suburbs of Launceston, in lieu of any one of those nominated by the Chamber of Commerce.

3. That the Wardens shall receive no pecuniary compensation for their services, but that they shall be Justices of the Peace *ex officio*.

4. That the Marine Board shall be an open Court, and that it shall be lawful for any person or persons to address it, by Memorial, upon any subject connected with those matters over which the jurisdiction of the Board extends.

5. That the Board shall publish in the *Government Gazette* an Annual Return of Receipts and Expenditure, setting forth the total amount received during the year from every separate source of Revenue and the principal items of every such source, and the same with reference to every separate branch of Expenditure; and that such Accounts, before being published, shall be audited in detail by Two Auditors to be elected by Ballot by the Launceston Chamber of Commerce—any persons to be eligible for Auditors, except Members of the Marine Board; and that such Auditors may receive for their services a sum not exceeding Two Pounds Two Shillings each person for every such annual audit.

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

[*Here follow 175 Signatures.*]