

(No. 48.)



1870.

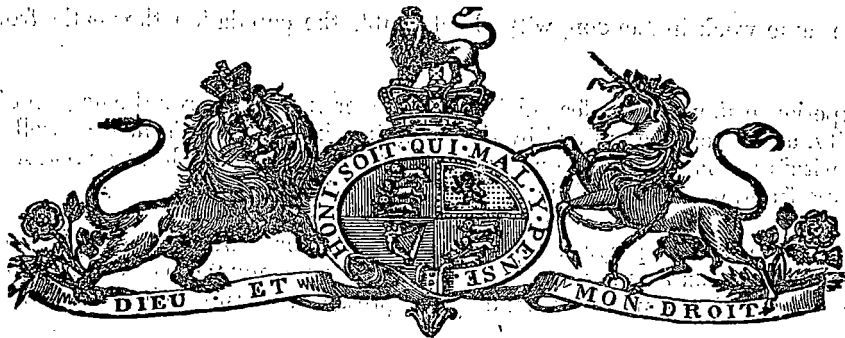
T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

VACCINATION.

PETITION FROM DR. HALL.

Presented by Mr. Whyte, September 6; and ordered by the Council to be printed,
September 9, 1870.



*To the Honorable the President and Members of the Legislative Council of Tasmania,
in Parliament assembled.*

The humble Petition of the undersigned.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT your Petitioner during the sittings of Parliament last year petitioned your Honorable House to pass an Amended Compulsory Vaccination Act based on those which have achieved such satisfactory results in Ireland and Scotland, and embodying such administrative arrangements as the peculiar condition of the Colonists require; the spirit of the British Vaccination Laws being, that thoroughly good vaccination provided at the public expense under proper and well-notified arrangements should everywhere and gratis be within reach of all persons who may choose to avail themselves of it, not as a pauper provision, but as a wise precaution of State medicine for the general welfare of the people.

That your Petitioner at the same time showed that the existing Compulsory Vaccination Act of Tasmania was inoperative and useless; and that the measures adopted to effect the vaccination of the children of the Colony before attaining the age of six months, as that law requires, had utterly failed, leaving an enormous proportion of the Colonial-born undefended by that well-proved prophylactic against the possible invasion of an epidemic of small-pox.

That, since the panic caused by the existence of small-pox in Victoria in the early part of 1869 died away, vaccination, either by public provision or by private Medical Practitioners, has nearly ceased altogether, there not having been a single vaccination performed at the Hospitals of Hobart Town, Launceston, and Campbell Town since the 1st July, 1869; and your Petitioner is only aware of a single one performed by any private practitioner in Hobart Town or any other part of the Colony.

That the Detachment of the 2-14th Regiment had to leave this Island for England, having many children in it unvaccinated, the Medical Officer having failed to procure in Tasmania efficient vaccine lymph to vaccinate with.

That it has been proved by the inspection of Parishes in England and Wales, caused to be made by the Privy Council, that no private Medical Practitioner can possibly keep up a supply of fresh and selected vaccine lymph, so as to conduct arm to arm vaccination in an efficient manner; and that public weekly vaccination by one qualified Public Vaccinator should be provided for every 25,000 to 50,000 inhabitants in Towns, and periodical vaccinations elsewhere.

That since the 1st July, 1869, at least 3000 more children have been added to the 27,000 persons in the Island at that time computed to be unvaccinated,—so that at least one-third of the inhabitants of Tasmania are now in this unprepared condition against small-pox.

That all the adjacent Colonies employ paid Public Vaccinators.

That small-pox has never been annihilated in any country where compulsory vaccination was not rigidly enforced.

That France stands alone of European nations in not enforcing vaccination by compulsory laws.

That since November, 1869, an epidemic of small-pox has raged in Paris afflicting every class of society, and in the 26 weeks ending 16th July of this year causing the deaths of 3239 persons, the last week being the most fatal of all, 267 deaths having been returned from that cause, showing that the epidemic is not yet on the decline.

That in the same week in London, with about double the population, the deaths from small-pox were only 19.

That all experience shows that a fearful Nemesis sooner or later follows the neglect of vaccination in any community, as is well exemplified by the foregoing instance in France, as well as in many English Towns within the last twelve months; and which Tasmania can have no reasonable grounds to expect to escape from, under the existing neglect and apathy.

That your Petitioner again prays that your Honorable House will take steps to provide against such a visitation of small-pox as may carry fearful suffering and numerous deaths in to a great proportion of the families of the Island, by amending the present useless Vaccination Act.

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

E. SWARBRECK HALL, *Medical Practitioner, late Superintendent of Vaccinations in Tasmania, and Public Vaccinator for the District of Hobarton.*