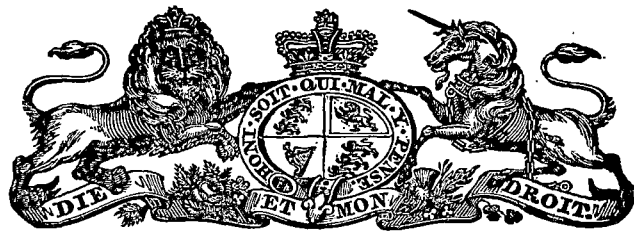


(No. 5.)



1875.

SESSION II.

TASMANIA.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

PUBLIC WORKS SCHEME.

PETITION AGAINST.

Presented by Mr. Gilmore, and ordered by the House to be printed, October 28,
1875.



PUBLIC WORKS SCHEME.

To the Honorable the House of Assembly of Tasmania.

The Petition of the undersigned Colonists of Tasmania, residing in the District of Launceston,

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH,—

THAT your Petitioners view with the strongest feelings of anxiety and disapprobation the Public Works scheme submitted to Parliament during the last Session, and which the Government have announced it is their intention to re-introduce during the approaching Session.

That Petitioners consider the Bills for the construction and carrying out of such works highly objectionable, and altogether unnecessary.

Because the legislation contemplated by these Bills is altogether of a retrogressive character—directly tends to centralisation of the most undesirable nature—would take out of the hands of the colonists that local action which it has been the object of Parliament for so many years to foster and encourage, and thereby educate the people into the principles of self-government—would discourage that local energy and independence which have hitherto been attended with such beneficial results—would also induce the colonists to look to the Government as it were to do everything for them, and so tend to unfit them for municipal and other legislation.

Because, whilst Petitioners recognise to the fullest extent the great importance of the construction of roads, bridges, and other public works which local requirements may indicate as necessary or desirable throughout the various districts of the colony, they also as fully recognise the important fact that the present Roads and Public Works Acts, with some modification and extension of their principle and application in favour of special localities, would amply provide for the construction and maintenance of all such works, including those contemplated by these Bills, with the exception of the Mersey and Deloraine Railway, and are founded upon a principle which commends itself to all right-thinking men—that of helping those who help themselves.

Because the said Acts have hitherto worked satisfactorily, the roads and many bridges constructed under them are a credit to the colony, and have been so constructed at a much less cost than they would have been by the central Government, as the inhabitants of any district must be best able to judge of what works are required, and for the sake of their own interests would endeavour to obtain their construction at a minimum cost.

Because to entrust to the Minister of Lands or the Government of the day the power to expend the very large sums of money contemplated by these bills, independent of any control, is in the highest degree dangerous upon the score of economy, and is upon every other consideration to be deprecated; and Petitioners believe would strongly tend to the demoralisation of the Legislature and the respective constituencies, and would be attended with other disastrous results to the colony.

Because a very large portion of the £100,000 said to have been expended, or rather lavished, a few years since by the Government of the day upon the so-called Reproductive Works has not only been utterly unproductive, but, to use a common expression, has been completely sunk or thrown away; as, for instance, upon the so-called roads and unnecessary or defective bridges in the north-eastern and north-western districts; and Petitioners are firmly persuaded that similar results upon a greatly extended scale would inevitably attend the expenditure of that very much larger amount now asked for by the existing Government; would in all probability involve the abandonment of works commenced, or a much larger—it may be two, or, as in the case of the Sorell Causeway, three times the amount of the estimated expenditure—results which would plunge the colony into the deepest financial embarrassment.

Because, were any confirmation of the opinions and apprehensions to which Petitioners have now given expression necessary, that confirmation is abundantly supplied by the fact that no reliable estimates,

or, as Petitioners are informed, no estimates or specifications whatever of the contemplated Public Works were furnished by the Government, who merely asked for arbitrary amounts for the respective works to be as arbitrarily expended.

Your Petitioners, therefore, pray that your honorable House will reject the said Public Works scheme submitted for your consideration in its present objectionable form, as so distinctly intimated by the Attorney-General in his place in Parliament on 28th September.

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

[*Here follow 177 Signatures.*]

Petitions to the above effect were received as follows :—

From 36 Residents of Carrick and Hadspen.
 From 66 Citizens and Electors of Hobart Town.
 From 98 Citizens and Electors of Hobart Town.
 From 5 Colonists.
 From 78 Citizens and Electors of Hobart Town.
 From 11 Landholders at Richmond.
 From 88 Colonists at Morven.
 From 177 Colonists at Launceston.
 From 60 Colonists at Longford.
 From 23 Colonists at Ringwood.
 From 45 Colonists of Tasmania.
 From 95 Landholders at New Norfolk.