

(No. 25.)



1863.

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TASMANIA.  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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SUPREME COURT, OATLANDS.

PETITION.

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Presented by Mr. Bisdee, and ordered by the Council to be printed, July 16, 1863



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

The humble Petition of the undersigned Inhabitants of the Rural Municipality of Oatlands.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT your Petitioners have learned with great regret the intention of the Executive to discontinue the Criminal Sessions, and also to abolish Her Majesty's Gaol at Oatlands, on the ground that the measure will effect a large saving in the Public Expenditure of the Colony.

That the cessation of the Supreme Court Sittings in the Township of Oatlands will, in the judgment of your Petitioners, lead, in the long run, to very considerable public inconvenience, if not to enlarged expense.

That the present commodious and substantially constructed Gaol has been established ever since the year 1836, and has been found to be essentially necessary to meet the requirements of an extensive and growing tract of country, comprising the Municipalities of Oatlands, Green Ponds, Bothwell, Ross, Spring Bay, and Glamorgan, as well as the District of Campbell Town, from which several places committals of prisoners for trial have heretofore been made, and which, upon the score of economy, and the general convenience of Prosecutors and Witnesses, has been found up to the present to work satisfactorily to all parties concerned, so that your Petitioners believe that the contemplated change ought not to be made.

That it has always been the decided opinion of the highest authorities, that the Supreme Court and Gaol Establishment would be continued in so central a position as the Township of Oatlands for all time ; and upon the faith of that patent fact, Capitalists have been induced to embark in building enterprises, and Tradesmen have likewise, at much cost, improved their places of business, to meet the necessities incident to a Town in which the Administration of Criminal Justice has taken place three or four times a year before one of the Judges.

That your Petitioners respectfully beg to assure your Honorable Council, that the entire withdrawal of the Judicial Establishments in question will result in a considerable depreciation of property, which must necessarily operate disadvantageously to the rate-payers of the Municipality.

That a public meeting influentially attended was held at the Court House, Oatlands, on the 27th day of June, 1863, when an unanimous opinion was expressed in opposition to the Government Scheme for doing away with the Supreme Court Sittings and the Gaol.

That your Petitioners think that, as the object of the Executive is retrenchment in the public finances, the Supreme Court might be still held at Oatlands, as their Honors the Judges have to travel through to the north, and the annual expense of maintaining an established Gaol under the auspices of the Government might be judiciously curtailed by effecting a reduction in the existing Official Staff, and thereby prevent the centre of the Island from being deprived of the immense benefits, in a national as well as a local point of view, of the upholding an excellent Gaol in the salubrious Municipality of Oatlands.

That your Petitioners would, with all deference, submit to your Honorable Council whether the small and, at best, very uncertain annual sum likely to be saved by the proposed alterations in question should justify their being carried into execution.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your Honorable Council will be pleased to refuse its assent to the proposition for discontinuing the Supreme Court Sittings and the abolishing of the Gaol at Oatlands, and take such other steps in the premises as to your Honorable Council may seem just and meet.

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

[Here follow 136 Signatures.]

JAMES BARNARD,  
GOVERNMENT PRINTER, TASMANIA.