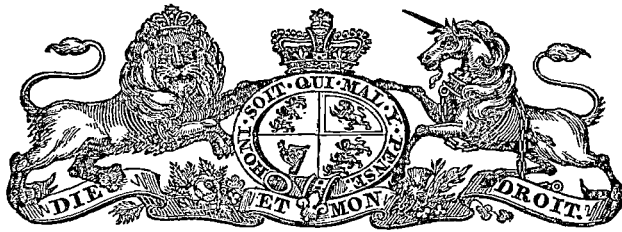


(No. 13.)



1866.

SESSION II.

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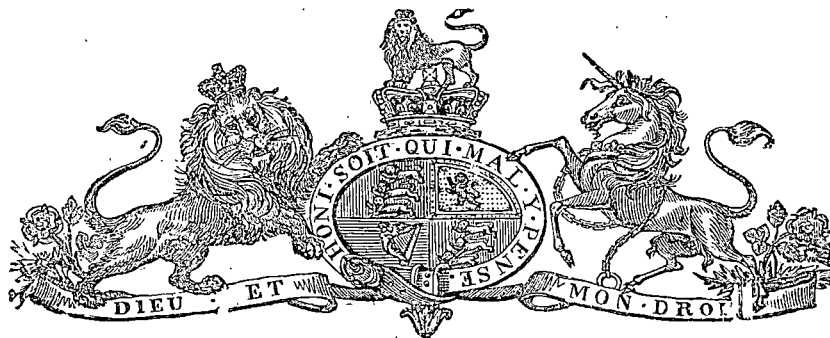
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

GRANTS IN AID OF MUNICIPALITIES.

PETITIONS AGAINST ALTERATION OF EXISTING LAW.

- (1.) From Municipal Council of Bothwell.
 - (2.) From A. M'Dowall.
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Presented by Captain Langdon, January 29; and ordered by the Council to be printed, January 30, 1867.



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

The humble Petition of the Municipal Council of the Rural Municipality of Bothwell.

SHOWETH :

THAT the Ratepayers of the District which your Petitioners represent were strongly opposed to take upon themselves Municipal responsibilities. That, when constrained to do so, in 1863, against their better convictions, they relied on the good faith of the Government to carry out and comply with; first, the maintenance of the boundaries of the District as originally defined; and, secondly, that part of the Schedule to 23 Vict. No. 28, which appropriated the sum of £750 per annum as a Grant in Aid, from the General Revenue and Land Fund, to Bothwell, in the event of that Police District becoming a Rural Municipal District; but that both of those obligations have been violated. The area of the District has been curtailed, and the Valuation Roll consequently reduced, by the Government, without an opportunity having been afforded to this Council to offer any opposition to the alteration; and that, although application was made by the Warden, the Governor in Council has declined to exercise the power conferred by the 175th Section of 29 Vict. No. 8, which provides for compensation being granted for loss of Rates under such circumstances.

That, by *The Rural Municipalities Act, 1865*, the Grant in Aid to this Municipality has been reduced from £750 to the sum of £531 per annum, which sum is secured by said Act until the first day of January, 1873, to which this Council had no objection to raise, as, by the exercise of the strictest economy, and reducing all unnecessary expenditure, this smaller sum would, (had it been regularly received) have sufficed for the wants of the District, and, at the same time, enabled the Inspector of Police to have granted his Certificate (which that Officer has never yet refused) as to the efficiency and sufficiency of the Police Establishment of the District.

That, by the published Financial Scheme of the Honorable the Colonial Treasurer, as brought down to Parliament on Thursday last, the 17th instant, it would appear to be part of the policy of the present Government to withdraw the Grant to this District, except as to the paltry sum of £79 a year.

That the withdrawal of all pecuniary aid from the various Municipalities at the expiration of the existing law, contemplated as a possible contingency, would have been infinitely less objectionable than the proposed scheme; for, while some of the minor Districts are to be preserved in the receipt of large sums from the Land Fund of the Colony, to which this District contributes, other Municipalities are to be cut off entirely, or left, as we are, with an insignificant allowance.

Your Petitioners most respectfully contend that many good reasons might be given against the proposed repeal of the present laws, of which, however, they will now only adduce the following:—

First, an uniform compulsory rate of assessment is not a just mode of taxing property, because the same standard of value has not been adopted in all the Districts throughout the Colony, and also because in compact Municipalities a greater amount of security and public protection is afforded in proportion to the rates levied than in outlying Districts, where the value is widespread, and seldom coming under the cognizance of the Police; and

Second, that while the Grant in Aid is to be withdrawn the office of Inspector of Police remains in force. When pecuniary assistance to Municipal Districts is withheld, should such a step ever be found necessary, the 7th clause of *The Police Regulations Act, 1865*, should be simultaneously repealed.

For the foregoing reasons, and others which want of time compels us to omit, your Petitioners pray that your Honorable House will be pleased to decline its assent to any alteration in the existing law affecting Grants in aid to Municipal Districts until it shall have expired by the effluxion of time.

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

A. M'DOWALL, *Warden.*

ALEX. REID.

E. NICHOLAS.

WILLIAM BEDFORD.

JNO. IBBOTT.

F. SYNNOT.

Dated at the Council Chambers, Bothwell, this 21st day of January, 1867.

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

The humble Petition of the Ratepayers within the Municipality of Bothwell, in Public Meeting assembled.

SHOWETH :

THAT this District undertook Municipal action upon the promise and pledge of the Government of that time; first, that the sum of £750 per annum should be granted in aid to this Municipality; and, secondly, that its existing boundaries should be preserved.

2. That, notwithstanding the pledge made by the Government to the contrary, the said boundaries have since been curtailed to the extent in value of £1423.

3. That, so late as 1865, an Act of Parliament was passed guaranteeing to this Municipality an annual grant of £531 up to January, 1873. That the expressed intention of the present Ministry to introduce a Bill into Parliament to further curtail the means of the District by the sudden reduction of the grant from £531 to £79 appears to your Petitioners so unjust that they cannot refrain from expressing their opinion that a clear breach of faith, tending to destroy all public confidence, would be thereby committed.

4. That, in your Petitioners' estimation, if these sudden reductions in the Grants in Aid are to take place, amounting in many cases to a total withdrawal of aid, and if the office of Inspector of Police should, nevertheless, be maintained, whereby a larger Police Expenditure may be forced upon the District than its Warden and Councillors may from time to time think necessary, a very unfair course will be taken.

Your Petitioners therefore pray that, viewing as they do with alarm the aforesaid proposition of the Government, your Honorable House will be pleased to disallow the said scheme, and to preserve good faith with the Municipalities in question.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

A. M'DOWALL.