

(No. 67.)



1882.

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AMENDMENT BILL,
(No. 22):

PETITIONS FROM MINISTERS, OFFICE-BEARERS, AND
OTHERS.

Presented by Mr. Maclanachan, August 15; and ordered by the Council to be
printed, August 17, 1882.



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

The humble Petition of the undersigned Ministers and Office-bearers of the Presbyterian Church of
Tasmania,

MOST RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

That whereas there is now before your Honorable House a Bill, entitled "A Bill to amend the
Presbyterian Church Act,"

We, the undersigned Ministers and Office-bearers of the Presbyterian Church of Tasmania,
having had it submitted to our consideration, concur in its provisions, and are impressed with the
necessity of such a measure being passed into law.

Owing to distance and other causes, the Members of the Synod are unable to meet and
formally adopt the measure, which, however, has the hearty approval of the Presbyterian Church.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Bill may receive the sanction of your
Honorable House.

[Here follow 31 Signatures.]

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

The Petition of the undersigned,

HUMBLY SHOWETH :

THAT they have been Members and Office-bearers of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church,
Hobart, many years, and some of them connected with it as members for nearly forty years. And
we now view with alarm a proposal to amend the "Presbyterian Church Act," by which increased
and arbitrary powers will be conferred upon the Governing Body of our Church.

We have heard that this proposed legislation does not emanate from the Synod,—the Supreme
Court of our Church,—but, so far as we can gather, the Rev. James Scott, and others pecuniarily
interested, are the prime movers in the matter. The abuse of the power granted under the "Pres-
byterian Church Act" by that Rev. gentleman and a few persons around him, by which he became
Minister of St. Andrew's Church, has brought the denomination in the City and Colony into
contempt. And we now fear that to grant the power contained in the proposed Bill, at least one
half of our property in the city and suburbs will be disposed of to form a revenue for the remainder.

About two years ago your Petitioners, together with the entire Congregation of St. Andrew's
Church, numbering 70 families, were prepared to call and support their own minister; two members
of the Congregation were ready to give a guarantee that the necessary funds for the minister's
stipend and current expenses would be provided. Yet in the face of this guarantee our congrega-
tional rights were ignored, the Minister of St. John's Church was forced upon us, and we were
compelled to amalgamate with the Congregation of that Church or cease connection with the
Presbyterian body. The Church of St. John's, Macquarie street, has been closed against us, and the
Presbyterian body at large, for nearly two years. Your Petitioners are now prepared to call and
support a minister if we were permitted to occupy the Church that is closed up. We believe,
however, that it is kept closed in order to provide a revenue for St. Andrew's, and to enable those
who incurred a considerable debt while there to recoup themselves and meet their liabilities.

We believe that when your Honorable House passed the "Presbyterian Church Act" there was no intention to deprive congregations of the privileges hitherto enjoyed of choosing their own minister and having local control of their own property. St. John's Church was originally built to accommodate the residents in that locality, and for population it is now better situated than when first erected; and your Petitioners feel that to keep a church closed when there are people willing to attend it and support ordinances, was never intended by the Legislature, is a gross violation of the principles upon which the Church was built, and does not tend to the morality of our city.

Your Petitioners would humbly pray that your Honorable House will not grant the power to sell, or in any way to permit the alienation of the property of our body in the city and suburbs, and that you will be pleased to dismiss the Bill now before your Honorable House to amend the "Presbyterian Church Act."

And we will ever pray.

[Here follow 7 Signatures.]