

(No. 61.)



1873.

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS:

EMIGRATION FROM BIRMINGHAM.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Chapman, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
October 1, 1873.



Birmingham, 15th May, 1873.

SIR,

I AM requested to forward to you the enclosed Memorial with reference to the Emigration of the Agricultural Labourers.

I have to ask you to give this matter your kind attention, and trust you will be enabled to recommend the Memorial to favourable consideration of your Legislative Assembly.

I remain, Sir,
Yours most respectfully,

JOHN SKIRROW WRIGHT.

*The Hon. the Colonial Secretary,
Hobart Town, Tasmania.*

To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of the Colony of Tasmania.

THE undersigned, being Members of the Committee of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, are authorised to address you in the interest of the Association. The condition of the farm labourers of this country, as you are doubtless aware, has for some years been one of poverty and privation. Their homes have in many cases been wretched in the extreme, their wages insufficient, and their food scant and unwholesome. It has been impossible for them to educate their children, to avoid the miseries of debt, or to make provision for old age; and the result has been that after years of hopeless toil, during which they have had largely to appeal to public charity, they have been compelled to end their days as paupers in the Union Workhouse. Of late the sorrows of their unhappy position have been aggravated by the increased price of provisions, coals, and other necessaries of existence, and it has become absolutely essential to take steps towards redressing the grievances from which they suffer. The National Agricultural Labourers' Union has been formed with this view, and so far has to some extent realized its end. It is found, however, that emigration affords, perhaps, the speediest solution of the many difficulties which lie in the way to real and lasting improvement; and already many labourers have gone forth to Brazil and other countries to which free passages are given. The Committee we represent cannot but regard it as most undesirable that their fellow-countrymen should settle amongst people who are alien in customs, language, and religion, and should enrich other soil by their labour, when there is urgent need for them in land where their own tongue is spoken and their own Government and customs prevail. It is, however, vain to expect that the labourer will, unaided, find his way to the English Colonies; and we therefore appeal through you to the country you represent, urging that free passage from an English port, if not from their homes, be provided for all eligible labourers and their families who are willing to seek your shores; and further, that provision be made for their reception, and for their transfer to fields in which their labour may be most in demand. Should it be possible for your Government to meet our wish, and so to attract to its own land the tide of Emigration now flowing to Brazil and other countries, our Committee will do all in their power to see that only proper parties are allowed to avail themselves of your privilege.

Dated at Leamington, this 15th of May, 1873.

JOSEPH ARCH, *Chairman.*

HENRY TAYLOR, *General Secretary.*

FREDK. S. ATTENBOROUGH, *Congregational Pastor, and
Treasurer of Warwickshire Labourers' Union.*

JOHN SKIRROW WRIGHT, *Chairman Birmingham Liberal
Association.*