

(No. 123.)



1878.

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

INVALID DEPÔT, LAUNCESTON:

PETITION AGAINST REMOVAL.

Presented by Mr. Aikenhead, May 27; and ordered by the Council to be printed,
May 29, 1879.



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

The Petition of the undersigned inhabitants of Launceston and elsewhere.

HUMBLY SHOWETH :

THAT your Petitioners have heard with surprise and alarm that the Executive have announced their intention to close the Invalid Depôt at Launceston, removing all the inmates to New Town, and then to sell the land.

That your Petitioners believe that such a step would not be attended by any reduction of expenditure, but, on the contrary, that it would lead to an increase. The cost of food and clothing would be quite equal to what it is in Launceston; indeed, as a large proportion of flour and meat required would have to be obtained from the northern side of the island, it is probable that the expense of provisions would be greater.

That the present Depôt is beautifully situated, healthy, and cheerful, and, owing to the excellent management of Mr. Jones, the cost per head of the inmates is very small: in 1877, an exceptionally expensive year, it was only £13 18s. 7½d., whilst at New Town it was £14 19s. 1½d. It is a fact, that can be demonstrated by statistics, that all the eleemosynary institutions of the state—hospitals, prisons, and pauper asylums—cost considerably less per head at Launceston than on the southern side of the Colony.

That the supervision of the Depôt really costs nothing, as its contiguity to the Penal Establishment enables the Governor of the Gaol to take the general oversight, for which he receives no special pay; and if the Depôt were broken up his salary would still be the same; and the subordinate officers would be required to attend to so large a body of men wherever they may be located.

That the cost of removal would in the first instance be several hundred pounds; and it is more than probable that alterations and additions to the new quarters would soon be required, thus still further detracting from any advantage supposed to result from the concentration of the men. There would besides be the expense of transporting subsequent paupers to New Town, which would amount to £150 to £200 per annum.

That many of the invalids have friends residing in Launceston and its vicinity, who frequently visit them, and send little comforts—attentions which afford the old people much pleasure and show that they are not forgotten, thus throwing a ray of sunlight across their otherwise cheerless pathway. That to remove them in the way proposed would be felt as an act of cruelty that would cause much sorrow, if it did not break many hearts. In some cases there can be no doubt it would be resisted, and thus many old and infirm men would in their last days be thrown upon the community to obtain a precarious living by mendicancy, and finally dying in prison.

That the maintenance of this Depôt involves an expenditure for provisions, &c. of about £2000 per annum, the withdrawal of which, without securing any corresponding advantage to the country, would be unfair to the tradesmen of Launceston and to the inhabitants of the northern side of the island, who contribute their full share to the general revenue.

Your Petitioners therefore pray that your Honorable House will take the foregoing into your favourable consideration, and adopt such means as in your wisdom may seem best to prevent the breaking up of the Launceston Invalid Depôt as aforesaid.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

[Here follow 641 Signatures.]