

(No. 69.)



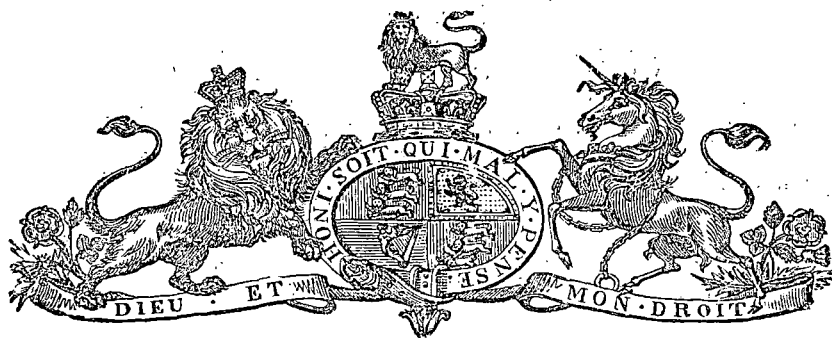
1866.

T A S M A N I A.

INCOME AND PROPERTY TAX BILL.

PETITION FROM EVANDALE AGAINST.

Presented by Mr. Rose, and ordered by the House to be printed, 29 August,
1866.



To the Honorable the House of Assembly, in Parliament assembled.

The Memorial of the undersigned Land and Householders and other Inhabitants of the District of Evandale.

RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

THAT "The Public Loans Security Bill," of which a Draft has been laid before the Honorable the House of Assembly by the Ministry, and also the intended introduction of Bills to abolish Customs Duties to the extent of £61,000, and to impose in lieu thereof a Property and Income Tax of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.—estimated to amount to £109,000 per annum,—are viewed by your Petitioners with the strongest feelings of disapprobation, anxiety, and alarm, for the following reasons :—

1. That the said Bill distinctly assumes that the public lands of the Colony are an insufficient security for the Debentures issued, or to be issued, and for the payment of the interest accruing thereon,—such assumption tending greatly to lessen the value of the public lands, and to injure the financial credit of the Colony, and seriously to depreciate the marketable value of its Debentures.

2. That the 5th Section of the said Bill provides, that "if in any year the Land Fund is insufficient to pay either the interest due on the sums raised by the issue and sale of Debentures, or is unable to furnish the proportion by the said Act charged thereon for the purpose of forming a sinking fund,"—that in such cases, instead of the Representatives of the people in Parliament then assembled providing for such deficiency from time to time as the same might arise, by such financial measure as might then appear most expedient and equitable, the power to provide for any and every such deficiency, of whatever amount the same may be, is delegated by the said Act to the Governor in Council, who is authorised to make and levy any such rate upon the annual value of property throughout the Colony as may be necessary to cover any such deficiency ; such delegation of power by the Parliament to the Executive involving a gross invasion of the constitutional rights of the community ; and the provision to cover any and every such deficiency by a tax upon property alone being not only opposed to every principle of equity, and most arbitrary and oppressive in its operation, but tending greatly to increase the very serious depreciation which has latterly taken place in the value of landed and other real property throughout the Colony.

3. That the proposal to abolish Customs Duties to the extent of £61,000, and in lieu thereof to impose a Tax of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum on property and incomes of £80 per annum and upwards, is also manifestly unjust and injurious,—a very large portion of the public expenditure for Charitable Institutions, Education, Convict and Gaol establishments, &c., amounting to some £100,000 per annum, being in no measure attributable to the owners of real property, or to those who possess incomes of £80 per annum and upwards ; whilst that portion of the community to whom such expenditure is without any question attributable, and who, and who only, are directly benefited by it, can only be effectually called upon to contribute in some due measure to the same through the medium of the Customs Duties, which the said measure purposes to abolish.

4. That such measure is the more unjust and oppressive to the owners of real properties, because such properties are already rated from 5 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for Police and Road Rates to the extent of at least £35,000 per annum ; whilst, in conjunction with those who possess incomes of £80 per annum and upwards, they may be fairly said to pay on Succession Duties £3000, for Stamps £3000 for Carriage Duties £1500, together £7500, making a total of £42,000 per annum paid by those whom it is now proposed to oppress by a Property and Income Tax ; such amount of £42,000 being, moreover, in addition to their rateable contribution with the other portion of the community to the General Revenue.

5. That an Income Tax of any amount would be most inquisitorial and obnoxious in its character, and would assuredly induce the withdrawal both of persons and capital from the Colony, the only one of the Australian Group where such a grievous infliction has hitherto been suggested by any Government.

6. That your Petitioners are fully convinced that an adequate revenue to cover all necessary expenditure can be readily derived from fixed Customs Duties upon a limited number of articles of import which enter most largely into general consumption; and hereby record their deliberate conviction, that the financial policy which the Ministry are now attempting to force upon an unwilling community, without even hinting at that Retrenchment which is so imperatively demanded, in direct opposition to the distinct pledges they made to the Parliament and to the public upon their assumption of office,—that they would derive the Revenue from “fixed Customs Duties only,”—is most unjust in principle and injurious in operation, and clearly demonstrates that they are not entitled to the confidence of the community.

Your Petitioners therefore pray that your Honorable House will withhold your assent to the said “Public Loans Security Bill,” and the Bills to abolish Customs Duties and to impose in lieu thereof a Property and Income Tax.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

[Here follow 231 Signatures.]