

(No. 18.)



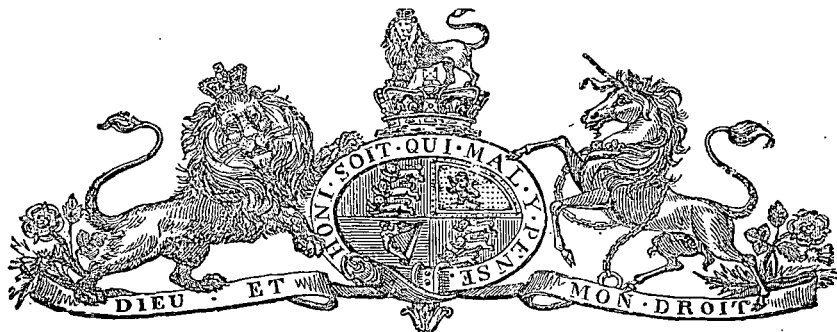
1861.

T A S M A N I A .

P E T I T I O N .

FROM ROMAN CATHOLICS FOR RE-DISTRIBUTION OF
STATE AID.

Presented by Mr. Wedge, and ordered by the Council to be printed, August 28, 1861.



To the Honourable the Legislative Council, in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned Roman Catholics of Tasmania.

SHOWETH :

1. THAT, by an Act passed by the Legislature of this Colony in the Year 1837, commonly known as "The Church Act," the Churches of England, Scotland, and Rome were affirmed to be on equality, and provision made for the support of Clergymen of the three Denominations on equal terms.

2. That the operation of this Act was suspended in 1843, at a time when the Ministers of the Church of England were liberally provided for, and more than a liberal provision made for those of the Church of Scotland; but the spiritual wants of the Roman Catholics were left entirely unprovided for throughout the greater part of the Colony.

3. That only three Clergymen of the Church of Rome,—the Vicar-General at Hobart Town, and the Clergymen of Launceston and Richmond,—were provided for by the Government in 1843; and up to the present time these three only receive full salaries.

4. That in consequence of the suspension of the Church Act under these circumstances, the Members of the Roman Catholic Communion have been excluded in a great part from its benefits, and subjected to what they consider unjust taxation, receiving in proportion to their number a much smaller share of the sum granted in aid of Religion than that received by the Members of the other Churches.

5. That according to the last Census, the number of each Denomination is as follows:—

Church of England.....	49,233
Church of Rome.....	19,454
Church of Scotland.....	6,618

6. That the sums paid to Clergymen of each Communion as Salaries and Allowances are, respectively, as follows:—

Church of England	£9,420
Church of Rome	£1,810
Church of Scotland	£3,070

7. That dwelling-houses have been provided from Colonial funds, and are now occupied by Clergymen thus; viz:—

By Clergymen of the Church of England, 11 houses, rent equivalent to £60 per annum each,—equal to £660.

By Clergymen of the Church of Scotland, 2 houses, rent equivalent to £60 per annum each,—equal to £120.

By Clergymen of the Church of Rome, 1 house, rent equivalent to £60 per annum,—£60.

8. That, including the estimated rental of these houses as above, the sum received by each Church is as follows:—

By Church of England.....	£10,080, or 4s. 1d. per head.
By Church of Rome.....	£1,870, or 1s. 11½d. per head.
By Church of Scotland.....	£3,190, or 9s. 7½d. per head.

9. That Petitioners consider this distribution to be contrary to the spirit and provisions of the Church Act,—contrary to the principles of equity and common justice,—and to form a painful contrast with the just and impartial manner in which the sums granted in aid of Religion are distributed in Victoria and New South Wales.

10. That the injustice now complained of was clearly admitted by the last Parliament, in taking the numbers of each Denomination as the basis of its legislation, in the Act passed in 1859, “To abolish State Aid to Religion on certain Terms.”

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray your Honourable Council to take into consideration the facts herein stated, and cause the Grant for Public Worship to be re-distributed, or apportioned in such other manner to the Churches named as may seem to you wise, equitable, and just; and thus relieve the Roman Catholics of Tasmania from that sense of injustice under which they have so long laboured.

And Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

[Here follow 1220 Signatures.]