

(No. 9.)



1857.

T A S M A N I A.

P E T I T I O N

FROM SHIPOWNERS, &c. FOR ALTERATION OF A CLAUSE IN
THE MARINE BOARDS BILL.

Presented by Dr. Butler, and ordered by the House to be printed, 27 October, 1857



*To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly,
in Parliament assembled.*

The humble Petition of the undersigned Ship-owners of Tasmania and others interested in the inter-Colonial Trade carried on between Tasmania and the neighbouring Colonies.

SHOWETH :

THAT a Bill has lately been brought into your Honourable House, entitled " A Bill to establish Marine Boards, and to vest in such Boards the general control and management of Ports, Pilots, Light-houses, and other matters relating to Navigation."

That the said Bill purports to fix and regulate the rates to be paid by the Masters of Vessels arriving in any Port in Tasmania for the maintenance of Light-houses, according to a Schedule to the said Bill.

That the said Schedule, in reference to the subject of such rates, after specifying the rate of Four-pence per ton for Coasting Vessels, and Nine-pence per ton for other Vessels, contains the following provision by way of exception ; namely, " Payment by the Owner or Master of any Vessel of the sum of One hundred Pounds shall exempt such Vessel from further Light-house rates for the period of one year from the date of such payment."

That your Petitioners respectfully submit to your Honourable House, that the only just and equitable principle that can be applied in the regulation of rates of this description, is, that the Owners of Vessels should contribute to the maintenance of Light-houses in proportion to the value of the property which is protected from accident by them, as ascertained by the tonnage of the Vessels, and to the frequency of the voyages or trips in which they experience that protection.

That this principle has hitherto been recognised, and acted on, in the regulation of the Light-house Dues in this Colony ; and if in any respect it has been relaxed, it has been so in favour only of small Coasting Vessels : and the same principle is also adopted in the neighbouring Colonies where any such Dues are payable ; the Light-house Rates in Victoria being for all Vessels One Shilling per ton for six months ; and those in South Australia being Five-pence per ton per trip ; there being no such Dues payable in New South Wales.

That your Petitioners respectfully submit, that the provision which they have above extracted is at variance with this principle, and is calculated unduly to favour the Owners of Steam Vessels, more especially if they are of considerable burthen.

That Sailing Vessels of the burthen of about Two hundred Tons, being of the value of about Two thousand Pounds, and making about ten or twelve trips in a year, would, under the existing regulations, contribute from Eighty Pounds to One hundred Pounds per annum each towards the maintenance of Light-houses ; and a Steam Vessel of about Three hundred and sixty tons burthen, of the value of from Fifteen thousand Pounds to Twenty thousand Pounds, and making twenty-four or twenty-five trips in a year, and earning freight to the amount of about Twenty-eight thousand Pounds or Thirty thousand Pounds per annum, would contribute about Three hundred and thirty Pounds per annum for the same purpose ; so that if the exceptive provision referred to should be retained in the Bill unaltered, the Owners of such a Steam Vessel will be relieved of upwards of two-thirds of the Light-house Dues to which it would now be subject, but no relief whatever would be extended to the Owners of Sailing Vessels.

That the Light-house Dues in this Colony (as has been already shown) are higher than those in the neighbouring Colonies, and they are felt to be a heavy burthen ; and if they should be levied unequally, and made to press more severely upon any class of Traders than upon others, it would operate as a great discouragement to the inter-Colonial trade of this Colony.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray, that the clause to which they have referred, exempting Vessels from further Light-house Rates for a year on payment of One hundred Pounds, may

be rejected from the Bill; or that it may be so modified that the reduction of Light-house Dues, which in its present form would be affected by it in favour of Steam Vessels only, may be extended to all Vessels engaged in the same trade.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

Thomas Brown.
Crawford M. Maxwell.
Tondeur & Lempriere.
Gilles Brothers.
Phillis Seal.

William Knight.
A. & H. Maning.
William Paterson.
Louis Phillips.
Chapman & Thomas.

Frederick A. Downing.
Edward Lucas.
Thomas Paterson.
James F. Lloyd.