

To the Honourable the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF VAN
DIEMEN'S LAND.

The Petition of the undersigned Inhabitants of Hobart Town and
its Vicinity

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH—

THAT in the last Session of your Honourable House, an Act was passed entitled
“An Act to regulate the Sale of Liquors,” by the 38th Section of which it was
provided, that all Houses Licensed for the Sale of Liquor should be closed, except
to travellers, throughout the whole of Sunday.

That your Petitioners are informed, that some persons, directly or indirectly
interested in the Liquor trade, are preparing to move your Honourable House
for a repeal of the above-named Section of the said Act.

That your Petitioners, firmly believing that a Law to prohibit the trade in
liquors on the Sunday is a great public benefit, cannot regard with indifference
any agitation for its repeal, and therefore desire most respectfully and earnestly to
pray your Honourable House to abide by its recent Legislation in this matter.
They would ground their appeal upon the following facts and reasons:—

It is an undoubted fact, that before the passing of the new Licensing Act
drunkenness, accompanied more or less by other offences against social order and
good morals prevailed to an alarming extent upon the Sabbath Day.

It may be as confidently affirmed, that since the new Law came into operation,
Sunday drunkenness has comparatively disappeared, and order and quietness have
prevailed in our towns and rural districts, where before scenes of riot were of con-
stant occurrence.

It would be highly satisfactory to be able to establish the truth of these asser-
tions by reference to the Police-records of the Colony. Such Returns your
Petitioners are unable to procure, but they trust that your Honourable House will
order their production, and thus test the accuracy of your Petitioners' statements.

In the mean time, since the experience of different countries, placed under
similar circumstances, must be more or less parallel, your Petitioners may be per-
mitted to refer to the case of Scotland, as remarkably illustrating their position.

It is well known, that in that part of the United Kingdom, a Law that should
prohibit the sale of Liquors on the Sabbath Day had been extensively demanded,
and that such a Law, having received the sanction of the Imperial Parliament,
came into operation in the month of May, 1854. The results of its working have
been published upon most unquestionable authority.

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh shews, from returns prepared by the Superin-
tendent of Police of that city, that during the operation of the new Act for the first
three months from its becoming law, viz., from the 15th May to the 16th August
1854, the number of persons taken to the Police-office charged with drunkenness,
from 8 o'clock on Sunday morning to 8 o'clock on Monday morning was only 27,
whereas during the corresponding quarter of 1853 the number had been 153.

Again, to shew that the diminution of drunkenness on Sunday had not been
balanced by an increase on Saturday or Monday, but had extended to the whole
week, the same high Functionary states, that in the above-named quarter of 1854,
“the *total number* of cases of drunkenness was 2029, whereas in 1853 it had been
2716; and, what is of immense importance in the present enquiry, whilst the
number of these persons charged with other crimes was 911 in 1854, the number
in 1853 was 1199. Thus the decrease of crime was much greater during this
quarter than could by any calculation have been ascribed *directly* to the decrease
on Sundays.”

And again, his Lordship mentions the striking fact, that, whilst the number of
prisoners in the County Prison had been for several years past steadily *increasing*
—so much so that the Edinburgh Prison Board had recently voted £12,500 for an
enlargement of the prison,—during the quarter above-named the number of per-
sons had *decreased* from 503 to 408, and the contemplated enlargement of the
prison had been in consequence for the present *abandoned*.

Similar testimony is given by the Lord Provost of Glasgow in regard to the
operation of the Law in that city.

Your Petitioners confidently anticipate that an enquiry into the working of the "Sunday clause" in this island will bring similar facts to light, and afford incontestible proof that legislation in this matter has been the means of removing from our social system a large amount of evil.

But the prevention of drunkenness and the consequent repression of crime and disorder are by no means the only benefits resulting from such legislation. It directly tends to promote another great moral good, the value of which cannot be estimated by the statistics of Police. Your Petitioners refer to the withdrawal of temptation from the path of the young and unwary, to whom, as well as to servants and others during their day of leisure, the open public-house has too frequently proved the gate of ruin.

Believing, then, that it is essential to the well-being of the people that the law should have power to correct vice, and at the same time exercise its noblest function by giving protection to the weak,—your Petitioners earnestly implore your Honourable House to abide by your recent legislation in regard to the Sunday trade in liquors. They are far from wishing to abridge, and would by all lawful means promote, the comfort and recreation of the working classes; but they believe that these ends would not be promoted by re-opening the Public-houses on the Sabbath Day. They would desire to see due regard given to the rightful claims of all private interests; but they submit that it would be a great public wrong to consult the interests of any particular class at the expense of the health, morals, and happiness of the community at large.

Your Petitioners therefore pray that the 38th Section of the Licensing Act,—commonly known as the "Sunday Clause"—may not be repealed.

And your Petitioners will ever pray,
&c. &c.

21
Hobart Town 2/6 Mo. 1855.

Respected friend
Wm. Barnett.

The Licensed Victuallers and others interested in the sale of Intoxicating Drinks, are using very strenuous efforts, preparatory to the assembling of the Legislative Council, in order to get up a petition numerously signed, praying that the clause in the new Licensing Act prohibiting "the Sunday traffic" in Intoxicating Liquors, should be rescinded.

Hence it becomes highly necessary that the friends of Sobriety, and all who value the orderly and quiet observance of "the Sabbath day" should bestir themselves, lest, through their own supineness and indifference, an enactment which has already been productive of the happiest results, should, through the clamours of the interested, be abrogated.

Under this conviction, the
Committee of the Tasmanian Temperance

Association

rance and Total Abstinence Association" has prepared the Petition of which I enclose a copy, and which now lies for signature at various places in Hobart Town.

But it is obvious that to give effect to the appeal thus made to the Legislature, the voice of the people in the Country Districts must also be lifted up. And it is under this persuasion that by direction of the Committee, I have earnestly to request the favour of thy influence and co-operation in promotion of the object we have in view.

This may be done effectually and perhaps with the least trouble, by adopting the Petition referred to verbatim, or, if not, one of similar import, on behalf of the District in which thou art resident, and by taking subsequent measures in order to obtain the greatest possible number of signatures.

The subject is one of such paramount importance, and so intimately concerns all who have the moral and religious interests of their

fellow-creatures at heart, that I trust arguments are unnecessary to prevail upon thee to accede to our request.

I will only further remark, that the Petition itself should be engrossed on stout paper, or parchment; and a few signatures should be included on the same sheet after which sheet after sheet of names can be appended to the original, as may be necessary.

Care should, however, be exercised, that the Petition itself be always submitted, and its purport made clearly intelligible, to the persons who sign, at the time of signing. Nor should it receive any other names than those of adults, or of persons of sufficiently mature age to apprehend its meaning, and only of the male sex.

It is also desirable to append the occupation and residence of the parties signing, in distinct, ruled columns.

With these observations, and

explanations, offered with a view to ensure the getting up of the Petition in due form, I recommend the subject to thy careful attention and most active zeal; and trusting to receive from thee, a line in acknowledgment of my communication having been received,

I remain,

Thy friend & resp^y,

Geo. W. Walker

written to again 12/7/55

- ✓ N. B. Giles Cambridge
 - ✓ Wm Barnett Flouon
 - ✓ Wm Barnett Junr New Norfolk
 - ✓ Greenponds W Waterful'd
 - ✓ ~~Catlands~~
 - ✓ Richmond H. B. Giles
 - ✓ O'Brien's Bridge W. H. Boroden
 - ✓ Newtown Wm Cato
 - ✓ Campbell Town Dr. Turnbull
 - ✓ Oaklands S. Campbell Minister
 - ✓ Ross Capt. Horton
- Proun's River, I Forth received

Kerry Lodge Aug: 20^d. 1846

My dear friend

I forward to your care a petition to the
Lieut Governor against the increase of Public Houses, & which
with the accompanying letter to him, I am desirous should
be placed in the hands of Mr. R O Connor M.L.C. if now
at Hobart Town — should he have left for this side of the
Island. please return the letter to me and forward the
Petition with as little delay as possible through the presented
channel to the Lieut Governor.

We unite in kind remembrances
to yourself and family.

Yours very sincerely

Theodore Bartley

W. G. W. Walker
Hobart Town