

1883.

VICTORIA.

AGAINST OPENING THE PUBLIC LIBRARY, MUSEUMS, AND
NATIONAL GALLERY ON SUNDAYS.

P E T I T I O N .

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 31st July 1883.

TO THE HONORABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA IN
PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The humble Petition of the several persons whose signatures are here affixed :

SH EWETH—

1. That your Petitioners respectfully submit that the Public Library, Museum, and National Gallery of Victoria, being national institutions, supported by annual votes of public money, are under the supreme control of Parliament.

2. That by emphatic and repeated votes Parliament has refused to sanction the opening of these institutions on Sundays.

3. That, in opposition to the declared will of Parliament, the Trustees of the Art Gallery and Museum, by a small majority, resolved to open these institutions on Sundays; and although the Premier of the colony, acting as the guardian of the privileges of Parliament, and at the request of a very large and influential deputation, intimated to the Trustees that, in the opinion of the Executive, no such action should be taken until Parliament had an opportunity of discussing the subject, yet the trustees have actually opened the institutions in question and employed their attendants on Sunday, and are still doing so.

4. Your Petitioners submit that, by the time and manner of this act, the Trustees have seriously infringed upon the constitutional rights and privileges of Parliament, and have affronted the Executive as the guardians of those rights, and, by the act itself, they have outraged the consciences of thousands of citizens.

5. Your Petitioners respectfully urge that Parliament shall, in such way as may seem to it most expedient, vindicate its authority thus assailed. They also petition that the resolution of Parliament closing these institutions on Sunday may be re-affirmed and enforced, for the following among other reasons :—

- (a) Because in this colony, as in every other civilized and Christian State, Sunday is a national institution, a day on which no labour should be required or performed save such as is justified by considerations of necessity or mercy.
- (b) Because by opening such institutions a serious wrong will be inflicted upon many servants of the State, who will be necessarily deprived of Sunday as a day of rest and worship, and, in addition, Sunday traffic and labour will be largely and generally increased.
- (c) Because such a violation both of Divine law and human rights is needless, as, owing to the limited hours of labour happily prevailing in this colony and the frequent recurrence of holidays, ample opportunities of visiting these institutions are already enjoyed by all classes, and no desire has yet been expressed by the working classes in particular for the step now taken.
- (d) Because the example of the State employing Sunday labour for purposes of recreation merely must exercise a pernicious influence on the community at large.
- (e) Because the closing of these institutions on Sundays is, at most, but an inconvenience to a small number of persons, while their opening on Sunday, with all the consequences which must attend such a proceeding, is an offence to the religious feelings of the great majority of the people of this colony.

For these and other reasons your Petitioners, whose signatures are hereto affixed, humbly pray your Honorable House to direct that, as heretofore, the Public Library, Museum, and National Gallery of Victoria be closed on Sundays, and the employés of the State be not required to labour on that day.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

[Here follow 11,008 signatures.]

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