

(No. 47.)



1861.

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T A S M A N I A.

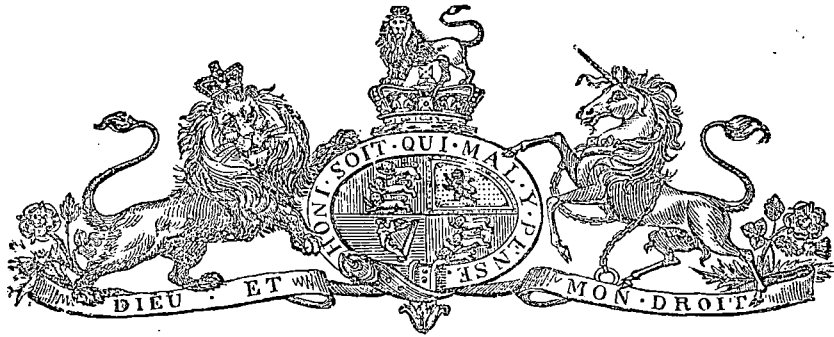
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NORTHERN BOARD OF EDUCATION.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1860.

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Laid upon the Table by Mr. Innes, and ordered by the House to be printed,  
10 September, 1861.



*THIRD REPORT* of the NORTHERN BOARD OF EDUCATION, *Tasmania*, for the Year 1860.

To His Excellency SIR HENRY E. F. YOUNG, *K.C.B.*, *Captain-General* and *Governor-in-Chief* of the Colony of *Tasmania* and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

WE, the Members of the Northern Board of Education, have the honor to submit to Your Excellency this our Third Report, comprising a Statement of our proceedings during the year 1860.

SCHOOLS.

1. Between the 1st January and the 31st December, 1860, there were 35 Schools in operation. Two of these, at Avoca and Quamby Bend, were opened during the year as new Schools: three, at Bishopsbourne, Fingal, and the Forest, Circular Head, were reopened: four, at Northam, Breadalbane, Windermere, and West Tamar, were temporarily discontinued: the two former from the impossibility of replacing Teachers who had been removed: the latter, Schools combined under one Teacher, from the insufficiency of the attendance and the difficulty of maintaining regular communication between the two sides of the River Tamar.

2. We have long desired to establish Schools in the under-mentioned places, but have only succeeded in doing so (the want of funds being the chief impediment) at Northdown, and Table Cape, where Schools are now (1861) in operation:—

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Chudleigh.              | 6. New Ground, Port Sorell. |
| 2. Cleveland.              | 7. Torquay.                 |
| 3. River Forth.            | 8. Table Cape.              |
| 4. River Supply.           | 9. White Hills.             |
| 5. Northdown, Port Sorell. |                             |

3. The number of children returned as having received instruction between the 1st January and 31st December was 2470, showing an increase of 253 on the number for 1859. The average number on the books for the year was 1681, showing an increase of 104; and the average daily attendance 1222, being less by 34 than the average for 1859. This decrease is attributable to the extraordinary prevalence of epidemics during the early part of the year, when many of the Schools had to be entirely closed. The following Table exhibits the progress which has been made since the establishment of the Northern Board in 1857:—

Year.	Number of Schools.	Average Number on Rolls.	Average Daily Attendance.	Number of Teachers.	
				Male.	Female.
1857.....	26	1130	849	25	15
1858.....	28	1408	1043	27	18
1859.....	34	1577	1256	28	29
1860.....	35	1681	1222	31	30

## TEACHERS.

4. There were employed during the year, in the service of the Board, 31 Male and 30 Female Teachers, together with 4 Pupil Teachers, at the following rates of remuneration :—

*Male Teachers.*

5 at £150 per annum.	2 at £70 per annum.
5 at £120        "	1 at £60        "
4 at £100       "	5 at £50        "
9 at £80         "	

*Female Teachers and Workmistresses.*

1 at £80 per annum.	9 at £40 per annum.
1 at £60        "	14 at £20       "
5 at £50        "	

*Pupil Teachers, Male.*

3 at £27 10s. per annum.	1 at £20 per annum.
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5. The incomes, from all sources, of the 34 Head Teachers, inclusive of the salaries of wives or relatives where employed in the Schools, were as follows :—

- One was in the receipt of £300 per annum.
- Two were in the receipt of from £250 to £300 ditto.
- Three ditto from £200 to £250 ditto.
- Five ditto from £150 to £200 ditto.
- Eight ditto from £100 to £150 ditto.
- Fifteen ditto from £50 to £100 ditto.

## FINANCE.

6. The amount paid in salaries and allowances to Teachers of all classes was £4252 6s. 3d., and in School fees by parents of children, £1271 11s. 11d. In 1859 the amounts under these heads were, respectively, £3778 12s. 10d. and £1173 19s. 6d. The increase in the item of salaries is chiefly owing to the fact that, during the past year, nearly all the Schools were in full operation from January to December; while in 1859, more than a third of the whole number consisted of new Schools opened late in the year, and others whose operation was temporarily suspended.

7. The amount expended in renting School-houses was £345. The cost of repairs and improvements of School-houses not the property of the Board was £28 14s. 0d.

8. School furniture was supplied to a number of Schools in which it was much needed, at an expense of £84 7s. 3d. The amount of £71 8s. 2d. was expended in supplying school books, maps, and other requisites.

9. The whole of the disbursements during the year under the annual grant for Education amounted to £4991 4s. 11d., being £627 12s. 2d. in excess of the proportion which was originally allotted to the Northern Division at the end of the year 1856.

10. The average cost of the education of each scholar in ordinary attendance was £3 14s. 6d., of which the Board paid £2 19s. 4½d. and the parents, in School fees, 15s. 1½d.

11. The details of the general expenditure under the Annual Grant, with statements of the amount expended on each School and in each Electoral District, will be found in the Appendices attached to this Report.

## ERECTION OF SCHOOL-HOUSES.

12. Under the Grant specially appropriated by Parliament to the erection of School-houses the expenditure during the year was £796 11s. 6d. We have endeavoured to

induce the people of various Districts to take advantage of the liberal terms on which Building Grants are now made, with a view to the erection of suitable and permanent School-houses, and the reduction thereby of the amount annually expended under the item of rent. But up to the end of 1860 only five Districts had provided the requisite subscription from local sources; viz.,—Westbury, Queenstown, Cressy, Perth, and Northdown.

#### CENTRAL SCHOOL.

13. Finding that a sufficient sum remained unexpended out of the several Building Grants, and encouraged by the general sanction given by the Government to the undertaking, we determined to proceed at once with the erection of the long projected Central School in Launceston. Of the object and intended scope of this Institution mention has already been made in previous Reports. Viewed as an ordinary primary School it is intended to provide means of education for from 300 to 400 children. But it will be more especially required as a Training School, in which Candidates for employment may acquire some knowledge of their profession, and experience in the management of children, before being intrusted with the sole charge of a School. It was mainly upon this ground that the whole cost of the erection of the Central School was provided for by the Board out of the funds placed at its disposal by Parliament. But, if precedent or additional argument in support of our view of the case had been required, we need only have appealed to the fact, that no grant has ever been made towards the erection of a Public School in Launceston since the foundation of the Colony; while, on the other hand, a sum of, we understand, not less than £4000 has been expended in Hobart Town upon two School-houses, which have nevertheless failed to effect the centralization and consequent reduction of the annual expenditure aimed at in Launceston by the projected Central School.

Having invited proposals from Architects, we finally, with the express sanction of the Government, instructed Mr. Henry Hunter of Hobart Town to prepare the requisite plans and specifications from a ground plan and details furnished by the Inspector of Schools, and we have every reason to be satisfied with the result. Tenders for the erection of the building were next called for. Out of six which were sent in, we selected the one which appeared to give the best guarantee for due execution of the works at the lowest cost, and it was immediately forwarded, in conformity with the usual routine, for the formal approval of the Government. After being kept in suspense for upwards of two months, we were at last informed that the tender would be submitted for the consideration of Parliament. We have already explained that no new Grant was required, the amount of the selected tender being provided for out of the funds previously appropriated by Parliament; we consider that, as every step which we have taken has been sanctioned by the proper authority, the faith of the Government was pledged to enable us to carry out the work without interruption; and we have only now to record our protest against the policy which has thus obstructed our endeavours, and which, by destroying the confidence hitherto placed in the Board by Contractors and the public generally, must inevitably tend to embarrass with increased expense and difficulties all our future undertakings.

#### VISITS AND INSPECTION.

14. We find from the Teachers' Returns that 568 visits were paid to the Schools under the Board by Ministers of Religion, and 261 by other persons, making in all 829. The majority of these visits are, however, to be allotted to one-third of the whole number of Schools. In several, during the greater part of the year, the Teacher sees no Visitor but the Inspector. The almost entire dependence of the Schools on the public funds tends, no doubt, to diminish the local interest in their welfare.

The Total number of visits paid by the Inspector of Schools during the year was 128, independently of those paid to localities in which efforts are being made to establish new Schools.

#### REDUCTION OF SALARIES.

15. The reductions which we were compelled to make in the Salaries of Teachers at the end of the year in consequence of an unforeseen alteration in the financial position

of the Board, call for especial notice at our hands. We will preface this by a brief history of the distribution of the Educational Grant, and a statement of the policy which has regulated our proceedings since the establishment of the Board.

Prior to the year 1857 the expenses of Public Education in Tasmania were borne by one general fund; but on the establishment of the Northern and Southern Boards it became necessary to allot a specific sum to the purposes of each. It is not quite clear upon what principle the distribution was made, but it resulted in the appropriation of £7636 7s. 3d., or seven elevenths of the Annual Grant of £12,000, to the Southern Division; and £4363 12s 9d., or four elevenths, to the Northern Division, although the small number of Schools in the latter, as compared with the population, might have proved its claim for extra assistance. A similar rule was followed in the distribution of the four Grants of £5000 specially appropriated by Parliament since 1856 to the erection of new School-houses, and the repairs of those which had previously been built at the public cost. Of this class of School-houses there was not even one in the whole of the Northern Division at the time of the establishment of the Board. Two old Buildings there were, which had been handed over by the Government, but they were ill adapted for School purposes, and required extensive and costly repairs. The rest were either the property of religious bodies or of private individuals. And yet, notwithstanding this deficiency in the Northern Division, the proportion allotted to it out of the four Grants mentioned above only amounts to £7272 14s. 6d. against £12,727 5s. 6d., allotted to the Southern Division.

During the first two years of our tenure of office, not having any precise information respecting the current income and expenditure of the Department, and desiring to economise the public funds as far as possible, we endeavoured carefully to avoid incurring fresh liabilities. It was, however, perceived after a time that the existing Schools were by no means distributed according to the population of the several Districts, or the deficiency in the means of Education.

It was also seen that, while the Grant to the Northern Division of the Island had been administered with a too rigid regard for economy, that which was appropriated to the Southern Division had been considerably exceeded.

Acting upon this precedent, we determined to enlarge our sphere of operations by establishing new Schools in those places where they appeared to be most urgently required. In the Regulations laid down for the guidance of the Board, provision is made for the establishment of Schools wherever an attendance of 20 Children can be counted on. Had this provision been carried into effect, the number of the Schools and the expenditure of the Board would by this time be nearly twice its present amount. With scarcely an exception, the applications which were entertained gave reason to anticipate an attendance exceeding 40. In thus endeavouring to carry out the object for which we conceived the Board to have been established, we were unavoidably compelled to exceed the amount of the Grant, such excess being provided for in the Estimate of Expenditure annually submitted to Parliament. Still there were many legitimate claims which remained unsatisfied. Several competent Teachers had accepted situations at low Salaries in the hope of their being raised after a time, and others had qualified themselves for promotion. An increase would have been desirable in the number of Pupil-Teachers, who might advantageously be employed to a much greater extent than they now are. Grants for the purpose of effecting necessary repairs and alterations in School Rooms, which have been occupied free from the payment of rent, were applied for from various quarters. But though objects such as these are fairly entitled to consideration under ordinary circumstances, we did not feel that we were justified in incurring any fresh expenses beyond those which were absolutely required to keep the Schools in operation.

Such was the state of affairs when we received, on the 28th July, 1860, an official communication from the Colonial Treasurer in which it was proposed on the part of the Government, that a Local Treasurer should be appointed to receive and disburse the proportion allotted out of the Annual Parliamentary Grant to the purposes of the Northern Board; it being understood that the liability of the Government would be confined, in

respect of all expenditure for the maintenance of Schools, to the amount thus transferred. In the course of the correspondence which ensued between the Inspector of Schools and the Government, it was objected, on the part of the Board, that a greater responsibility than any Member of the Board could undertake would attach to the office of Local Treasurer as defined in the proposal of the Government. It was also urged, among other objections, that the proposed limitation of the expenditure would render nugatory all that had been done by the Board in extending the means of Education throughout the District; that the original Grant was totally insufficient to meet existing requirements, which had increased with the population; and that if retrenchment was to be insisted on, ample time should be given for making the necessary arrangements without injustice to the individuals employed in the service of the Board.

Notwithstanding these remonstrances we received, on the 13th December, a final intimation from the Government to the effect that an immediate reduction was required. A statement of the proceedings of the Southern Board in reference to a similar object was at the same time enclosed for our information. An examination of the current expenditure convinced us that the item of Teachers Salaries was the only one in which it would be possible to effect a reduction to the amount required, viz., £600. We were therefore reluctantly compelled to notify by Circular that all Salaries above £50 per annum would be reduced from the 1st January, 1861, in accordance with the following scale, which was decided on after long and careful consideration:—

Salaries of £150	reduced	33 $\frac{1}{3}$	per cent.,	or to	£100.
120	..	25	..	90.	
100	..	20	..	80.	
80	..	15	..	68.	
70	}	..	10	..	63.
60					

A comparison of the Incomes of Teachers for 1860 with those for 1861, which are calculated from their receipts for the quarter ending 31st March, will show the general effect of the reduction.

*RECEIPTS of Teachers from all sources for 1860 and 1861 respectively.*

		£ 300	£ 250 to 300	£ 200 to 250	£ 180 to 200	£ 160 to 180	£ 140 to	£ 120 to 140	£ 100 to 120	£ 80 to 100	£ 60 to 80	£ under 60	TOTAL.
No. of Teachers.	1860.....	1	2	3	1	3	3	7	3	6	4	1	34
	1861.....	—	1	3	—	—	—	5	7	8	4	5	33

In four instances compensation appears to have been made from local sources in the shape of increased school fees or special subscriptions. In the rest the whole loss caused by the withdrawal of a considerable portion of his salary has been allowed to fall on the Teacher. Compensation from the Board's funds will be out of the question, for the current expenditure, even at the reduced rates, will absorb the whole of the Grant, leaving no margin for contingencies or for new Schools.

RE-DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT.

We have now given a brief outline of the circumstances which taken in connection with the results of the late Census make it imperative on us to demand a re-distribution of the Parliamentary Grant.

The distribution of the grant at the end of 1856 was determined, it is presumed, by the Educational Statistics of the two divisions. But it might fairly be argued that the great deficiency in the North, in respect of Schools, School-houses, and trained Teachers, a necessary consequence of remoteness from Hobart Town under the old centralised system, should have been considered a sufficient ground for establishing its claim to extra assistance, by way of compensation.

The true basis for defining the appropriation of the Grant is, of course, the population of the respective districts, the two chief towns and the two country districts being compared separately.

Subjoined is a Summary of the Results of the late Census.

Population of 13 Electoral Districts forming the Southern Division .....	49,870	} Difference
Population of 11 Electoral Districts forming the Northern Division.....	40,107	
Population of the Southern Division, exclusive of Hobart Town.....	30,421	} Difference
Population of the Northern Division, exclusive of Launceston.....	29,748	
Number of Children under 15 years in the Southern Division, exclusive of Hobart Town .....	6,048	} Difference
Number of Children under 15 years in the Northern Division, exclusive of Launceston .....	5,692	

The sum which is now allotted to the Northern Division amounts to little more than one-third of the whole Annual Grant, while the above figures clearly establish its claim to a sum nearly approaching one-half.

We have only, in conclusion, to express our hope that the circumstances which have thus been detailed will be submitted by Your Excellency to the consideration of Parliament at the earliest possible opportunity.

SECRETARY.

16. Since the end of 1858 the duties of Secretary to the Board have been discharged by the Inspector of Schools, with the valuable assistance of Mr. Burgess, the Secretary to the Southern Board. At the beginning of the present year Mr. Burgess was relieved from all the business of this Department, except that which is connected with the half-yearly issue of Free Stock, and the sale of School-books to Teachers.

17. The General Report of the Inspector of Schools is annexed.

JOHN WARD GLEADOW, *Chairman.*  
 CHARLES A. W. ROCHER.  
 JAMES AIKENHEAD.  
 WILLIAM K. O'KEEFFE.  
 WILLIAM CLEVELAND.  
 JOHN WHITEFOORD.  
 WILLIAM JOHNSTONE.  
 ARTHUR J. MARRIOTT.

T. STEPHENS, *Secretary.*

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## APPENDIX A.

ABSTRACT of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE between the 1st January and 31st December, 1860.

Dr.			Cr.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Proportion of Parliamentary Grant.....	4963	12 9	Salaries to Teachers....	3970	14 4
Balance of Expenditure in excess of Grant	627	12 2	Ditto to Pupil Teachers....	88	15 0
			Gratuities to Masters for instruction of Pupil Teachers	33	0 0
			Fuel allowance .....	159	16 11
					4252 6 3
			Rent of School-houses .....	—	345 0 0
			Repairs and Improvements of School-houses .....	—	28 14 0
			School Furniture and Fittings .....	—	135 6 9
			School Books, Maps, and Requisites .....	—	71 8 2
			<i>Miscellaneous.</i>		
			Mr. Drysdale, for inspecting Furniture .....	3	4 5
			Steel punch, Office .....	1	10 0
			Prizes, Stationery, &c. ....	10	15 9
			Office Books, Books, Samples, &c., from Education Office, Hobart Town .....	44	12 4
			Printing and Advertising ....	11	5 9
			Teachers' Travelling Expenses and Miscellaneous Charges .	9	16 0
			Messenger, Office Keeper, Stores .....	27	5 6
					108 9 9
			Aid to Infant School, Launceston .....	—	50 0 0
					£4991 4 11
					£4991 4 11

G. STEPHENS, *Secretary.*





## APPENDIX C.

*DETAILED STATEMENT of Grants in Aid of Erection, Alteration, or Improvement of School Buildings made during the Year ending 31st December, 1860.*

Number.	Electoral District.	School.	Object of Grant.	Cost of Works.	Locally subscribed.	Amount granted by Board.	Remarks.
				£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
1	Norfolk Plains	Perth.....	Erection of School-house and Teacher's Residence	1013 9 6	337 16 6	675 13 0	Buildings the property of the Government.
2	Ditto.....	Ditto....	Architect's Commission and Cost of Plans	37 8 6	—	37 8 6	
3	Fingal.....	Fingal....	Repairs and Alterations in Public School-house	73 10 0	—	73 10 0	
4	Ringwood....	Cressy....	Purchase-money of School Site	10 0 0	—	10 0 0	

## BALANCE SHEET.

Dr.	£ s. d.	Cr.	£ s. d.
To proportion of vote of £5000 to be raised under the Loans Bill .....	1818 3 6	By amount paid or contracted on account of the erection or improvement of School-houses .....	796 11 6
		Balance .....	1021 12 0
	<u>£1818 3 6</u>		<u>£1818 3 6</u>

T. STEPHENS, *Secretary.*

## APPENDIX D.

*RETURN showing the AGE of Children who have received Instruction during the Year ending 31st December, 1860.*

ELECTORAL DISTRICT.	Under 4 Years.	4 Years.	5 Years.	6 Years.	7 Years.	8 Years.	9 Years.	10 Years.	11 Years.	12 Years.	13 Years.	14 Years.	15 Years.	16 Years.	17 Years.	TOTAL.
	Campbell Town .....	11	25	36	22	27	24	20	15	11	8	11	3	2	—	—
Devon .....	3	31	47	42	38	41	27	34	27	16	17	7	5	2	—	337
Fingal .....	7	6	20	9	17	15	11	8	9	5	5	6	2	1	—	121
George Town.....	2	2	7	3	6	8	4	6	5	5	4	2	1	—	—	55
Launceston .....	4	24	66	69	59	60	78	60	62	42	22	14	3	1	1	565
Morven.....	3	12	14	14	24	19	13	16	13	11	20	9	2	1	—	171
Norfolk Plains.....	2	41	39	36	29	18	20	14	9	7	1	2	1	1	—	240
Ringwood.....	5	6	23	12	17	13	16	15	6	9	4	3	3	1	—	133
Selby.....	7	22	10	16	12	14	20	11	16	12	4	4	2	1	1	152
Westbury .....	7	23	57	57	59	49	39	66	44	35	23	9	10	1	2	481
TOTAL .....	51	192	319	280	288	261	248	251	207	152	117	58	32	9	5	2470

T. STEPHENS, *Secretary.*

## GENERAL REPORT

*On the state of Public Education in Northern Tasmania for the Year 1860, by T. STEPHENS, Esq., B.A. Oxon., Inspector of Schools and Secretary to the Northern Board of Education.*

Launceston, 16th March, 1861.

GENTLEMEN,

FOUR years having now elapsed since the establishment of the Northern Board of Education, it appears desirable that, in presenting my Annual Report, I should briefly notice what has been done towards the extension of Elementary Education in Northern Tasmania since the year 1856.

1. I entered upon my duties as Inspector of Schools in May, 1857. There were then 23 Schools in operation, attended by 986 children of both sexes. From visits paid and examinations held during the remainder of the year I was enabled to classify them as follows:—

Class.	No. of Schools.	Character of Schools.
A.	3	Schools with an attendance exceeding 60, and with a highly satisfactory standard of instruction.
B.	10	Schools with an attendance of from 30 to 80, and conducted with fair efficiency.
C.	6	Schools with an attendance of from 20 to 40, under inexperienced Teachers, and with a low standard of instruction.
D.	4	Schools with an attendance of from 15 to 25, in the lowest possible state as to discipline, instruction, and general management.

In little more than three years the number of Schools has increased to 35, with an attendance of 1681, and they may be classified in accordance with the above scale as follows:—

Class A.	6
B.	22
C.	7
D.	None.
TOTAL.	35

2. At my first visit in 1857 it was seldom that I found, even in the higher classes, children able to write ordinary sentences correctly from dictation. Now a School in which such an exercise does not come within the range of a majority of the scholars would rank as decidedly below the average. Then the black-board—that most necessary of all apparatus—was rarely to be met with: now there is scarcely a School in which it does not bear a prominent part as a medium of instruction. A considerably advanced standard in the ordinary elementary subjects has been attained in some Schools, and a certain amount of improvement is evident in all. Much has been done towards supplying the want of School furniture, books, and necessary apparatus, though the funds of the Board have not sufficed to meet all demands.

That the results for 1860 would contrast so favourably, in spite of financial and other difficulties, with the unsatisfactory state of things in 1857 was more than I had anticipated. The shortcomings of the time present are wont to obtrude themselves most forcibly upon our notice, and it is only by minute enquiry into the history of the past that a fair estimate of actual progress can be arrived at.

3. In a District like this, with a widely scattered population, and where the Schools are for the most part far distant from each other, it is impossible to adhere to any perfectly methodical system of inspection, or to pay equal attention to all. I may instance the Schools and the populous but school-less Districts on the North Coast, west of the Tamar, where tours of inspection are attended with much inconvenience and unavoidable waste of time: the communication between closely adjoining settlements being not unfrequently interrupted for several days together. Again, a single visit to the School at George Town occupies three days, and entails a ride of nearly 80 miles; while, if the ordinary means of conveyance are availed of, there is a still greater waste of time. I have endeavoured, as a rule, to pay most attention to those localities in which my visits appear to be attended by the best results and the time may least unprofitably be spent. The number of visits of inspection paid during the year, not including those to Schools in Launceston, was 108. Four Schools, three of which are small and unimportant, were visited twice; four, three times; and the rest, four

times and upwards. The correspondence and much of the routine business connected with the Department had to be attended to at the same time; but I have not hitherto allowed them to interfere with the work of inspection.

4. The entire absence of any system of local superintendence in connection with the Public Schools renders it necessary for the Inspector to spend almost his entire time in hurrying from place to place; though I believe that less frequent and, at the same time, less hurried visits would be attended with more beneficial results. It is often urged that local committees will not take an interest in the School unless they are invested with supreme authority in all matters relating to its conduct and control. I still believe in the possibility of forming organizations, by means of which the general welfare and efficiency of the Public Schools may be greatly promoted, while the Teacher may yet be protected, as he now is, from unprofessional interference. It is the complete exemption from this annoyance, too common in other countries, which, more than any other cause, enables us to secure and retain the services of our best Teachers. Some modification of the existing system is, no doubt, not only possible but desirable; but it is to be hoped that, as far at least as regards the internal management of their Schools, they may never be placed under the absolute control of any one who has not had practical experience in the work of education.

5. Having in previous Reports entered at some length into a consideration of the ordinary subjects of instruction in the Public Schools, both as to the present standard and the means which may be best employed to raise it, I need not dwell upon the subject now. The opinion which I expressed last year respecting the necessity of having closer attention paid to the *essentials* of an English education I find to be fully borne out by the Reports of Inspectors in other countries. Even in England it was found necessary to check, in some degree, the growing disposition to neglect the unattractive realities of Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, for other subjects which, though useful enough in themselves, ought not to be considered of primary importance. "The improvement in respect of instruction," writes the Rev. J. P. Norris, one of H. M. Inspectors, "has been in the *elementary* subjects. I wish to call especial attention to this fact, because there is a misapprehension abroad that the effect of your Lordships Minutes has been to depreciate the elementary subjects, and concentrate too much attention on Grammar, Geography, and the like. During the last two years we have agreed to examine very mainly in the elementary subjects, bestowing less attention than heretofore on the higher subjects. The unconscious bent of the Teachers will, perhaps, always be in the other direction; for the task of teaching Geography and History is far easier than that of teaching to read and write thoroughly well. It seems desirable, therefore, that Inspectors, School Managers, and Officers, in training Schools, should throw their weight into the other scale; for of the comparative importance of the two sorts of lessons to school children there can be no doubt. That Teachers should give their principal attention to these essential subjects of instruction is rendered still more desirable by the fact of the very early removal of children from our Schools."\*

6. Many of the common defects of Schools arise from the want of a properly arranged course of study. A good Teacher will always endeavour to lay out this for the whole year at its commencement, and, by periodical revision of the work of each class, will ascertain from time to time how far apparent progress may be depended on. I have latterly made a point of requiring annually from every School a detailed account of the work of the past year, and have already begun to see indications of improvement where it was most needed, in the shape of a more methodical arrangement of the routine of instruction. It is impossible for an Examiner to estimate rightly the labours of a Teacher unless put in possession of tolerably precise information respecting their scope and direction. In future examinations it is my intention to introduce, wherever time and circumstances will allow, more paper-work than has hitherto been usual, and I am in hopes that the results thus obtainable will compensate for the additional time and labour that will be required. Only the higher classes can be expected to express intelligibly on paper their ideas or the stock of information which they may have acquired, but it is desirable to encourage them to do so at as early an age as possible. Exclusively oral examinations, whether conducted by Inspector or Teacher, are very insufficient tests of the actual efficiency of a School.

7. The averages of attendance for 1860 have been much reduced, through the great and unusual prevalence of influenza and other epidemics in the early part of the year. But averages, at the best of times, give but an imperfect notion of the surface over which the Teacher's influence has extended. During the past year, while 2470 children received instruction between the 1st January and 31st December, the average attendance for the whole year was only 1222. The attendance of those who were present at all during the year was as follows:—

<i>Attendance.</i>	<i>Over 200 Days.</i>	<i>Over 150 Days.</i>	<i>Over 100 Days.</i>	<i>Over 50 Days.</i>	<i>Under 50 Days.</i>	TOTAL
Number of Children.....	329	431	457	554	699	2470

\* Report of Committee of Council on Education, 1858-9, p. 102.

The irregularity of attendance is one of the chief difficulties with which the Teacher has to contend. I find that generally, not invariably, the average attendance approaches most nearly to the number on the books in those Schools in which the character of the instruction is most satisfactory. I do not believe that parents are so indifferent to the true interests of their children as is generally supposed; but while the labour of even young children is of so much value as it is here, we must expect that, when the advantages resulting from regular attendance at School are not self-evident, such labour will be availed of to the utmost by the parents. Ignorant as many of them are, they can full well discriminate between bad Schools and good ones. In proportion to the increase in the number of the latter will be the regularity of attendance.

8. Of the present staff of Teachers only 9 have been in the Board's employment since 1856. Of the rest of the 23 whom I found in charge of Schools in 1857, 9 were dismissed for absolute incompetency or dereliction of duty, and 5 have died or have left the Colony. As some of my remarks on the qualifications of the Northern Teachers appear to have been misinterpreted in various quarters, I may here repeat that it has, from the first, been my study to avoid singling out any individual Teacher or School either for censure or commendation, from a conviction that such distinctions cannot be made in a Report of this nature without great injustice to many. My remarks, when not intended exclusively for the perusal of the Board, have always been couched in general terms. If they have appeared to be somewhat the reverse of eulogistic, it has been because I have sometimes ventured to look forward to the time when natural aptitude and special training for his office shall be considered indispensable qualifications in every Teacher: a time which has not yet fully arrived to any country under the sun. The difficulty which I have experienced in getting together the present staff has been considerable. Only one of the trained Teachers who have been introduced from the mother-country at the public cost is now in the employment of the Northern Board, and many of the most useful have acquired their experience in the Schools which they now occupy. Taken as a class, with qualifications ranging from mediocrity to high excellence, the country has reason to be proud of them. Some few may receive as much as their services are worth, but the majority are decidedly underpaid.

9. The above remarks apply also to what I have said in reference to the character of the instruction. The general standard is certainly higher than in the ordinary private Schools, but still has not yet reached the point which I know to be attainable. There can be no doubt that the general standard is very considerably higher in Hobart Town than in Launceston. But the former has enjoyed a constant succession of the best Teachers who could be procured from England; and their efforts have been judiciously and systematically encouraged during a long series of years. With Launceston it has been quite the reverse; and, even now, though there is visible a movement of progress, it is being made under circumstances of the greatest discouragement. I have no reason to suppose that any difference would be perceptible were the comparison made on a more extended scale,—indeed I am assured by persons whose acquaintance with both Districts enables them to speak authoritatively on the subject, that the Schools and Teachers of the North are certainly not inferior to those of the South.

10. I have only, in conclusion, to call attention to the present position and prospects of these men to whom the work of Education—one confessedly of the very highest importance—is entrusted. Even prior to the restriction of the Board's expenditure to the very insufficient amount of the original Grant, the average incomes of Teachers were such as to offer no attractions to really competent members of the profession. The effect of the reductions, amounting in some cases to one-third of the salary, could not, under such circumstances, be other than deplorable. The incomes of many (who, it is to be remembered, have to maintain themselves and their families in a respectable position in society) are no better than those of ordinary unskilled farm labourers, and in very few cases are they equal to those of working carpenters and masons. Even prior to the reductions they were, as I have frequently pointed out, considerably inferior to those of Teachers in the neighbouring Colonies, where the expense of living is little, if at all, greater than in Tasmania. It is notorious that the salaries of higher Government Officers here are less by from 25 to 50 per cent. than in Victoria and New South Wales. Most of them have had opportunities of obtaining lucrative appointments in one or the other of those Colonies, but they have preferred a moderate income coupled with the enjoyment of an almost perfect climate in Tasmania. The climate, however, is not a marketable commodity; and if it be desired to secure for Tasmania a regular supply of competent Teachers, and educational advantages even proximately corresponding to those which are afforded in other parts of the Australian Colonies, it is clear that some more substantial inducement must be held out. Had the recent Order of the Government been accompanied by a measure empowering the Board or the Districts to levy local subscriptions in aid of the maintenance of Schools, I should have gladly welcomed it; but neither has such a measure been introduced, nor has the pressure been applied in such a way as to stimulate voluntary action.

There can be little doubt that the proportion of the cost of public instruction now paid by Government is greater than is either necessary or expedient. I believe that in no other part of the British possessions are the local contributions so insignificant as in Tasmania, and that to this cause the absence of local interest may chiefly be attributed. The principle of proportioning the grants to

the sums locally subscribed, though evidently contemplated by the original promoters of the present system, has never been properly asserted or recognised ; indeed the prevailing impression is, that the Board has no right to expect any pecuniary aid from a District beyond the payments made by parents in the shape of School fees. But something more than this must be done if the grant from the General Revenue is to be permanently reduced. Whether the contribution shall be enforced or left dependent on spontaneous liberality is a question which must be left for the consideration of the Legislature.

As regards the interests of the Teachers themselves, my demands cannot be considered unreasonable. I do not ask that lucrative appointments shall be created to attract distinguished scholars, but simply that a decent maintenance shall be guaranteed to persons who have proved themselves competent to undertake the charge of a Public School.

As in most of the Schools the instruction must be for many years to come of a purely elementary character, it would be absurd to require a high standard of qualifications in all Teachers. What I do look for is, that they shall have some natural taste or aptitude for the profession : that they shall thoroughly understand what they profess to teach : and, above all, that they shall be persons with whom the inculcation of sound, moral, and religious principles in the training of the characters of those who are committed to their charge at the most critical period of life, will ever be an object of paramount importance. Such are the Teachers whom we require ; but such as these, if the present state of things be allowed to continue, must soon become almost unknown in Tasmania.

I have, &c.,

T. STEPHENS, *Inspector of Schools.*

*To the CHAIRMAN and MEMBERS of the  
Northern Board of Education.*