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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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**RAGGED SCHOOLS, HOBART:**

REPORT BY CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS.

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Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



*REPORT on the Hobart Ragged Schools, by T. STEPHENS, Esq., M.A., Chief Inspector of Schools.*

Hobart, 10th February, 1885.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to furnish a Report on the Ragged Schools at Cascades Road, Watchorn-street, and Lower Collins-street, and St. Luke's Free School, for the year ended 31st December 1884.

All these Schools were visited as frequently as possible during the year, and were examined between the 16th September and the 12th December.

CASCADES ROAD.

The premises are convenient, and in a good state of repair. The ventilation might be improved with advantage, and blinds should be provided for some of the windows which would exclude the heat of the sun without darkening the room. The out-offices are not well-planned, but appear to be properly looked after.

|                              | <i>Boys.</i> | <i>Girls.</i> | <i>TOTAL.</i> |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| No. on Rolls .....           | 101          | 101           | 202           |
| Average Attendance .....     | 84           | 73            | 157           |
| Present at Examination ..... | 90           | 82            | 172           |

The school is worked in three sections. In the highest, under the charge of Miss E. Mitchell, were a Fourth Class with 5 boys and 8 girls, and a Third Class, in two divisions, with 14 boys and 17 girls. The work in both classes, so far as tested, was well up to the prescribed standard, the writing spelling and arithmetic being generally satisfactory, and in some instances very good. The order and attention in the desks also deserve favourable mention.

In the next section, under Miss Mitchell, were the two chief divisions of the Second Class with their subdivisions, containing in all 31 boys and 30 girls. The reading showed evidence of careful teaching, the writing was for the most part clear and well formed, and the arithmetic fairly accurate, except in the lowest draft, which was hardly advanced beyond the standard of the First Class. In all other branches within their range the children answered on the whole with readiness and intelligence, and the general order is good.

In the lowest section, under Miss Corbet, who is assisted by a paid monitor, there were 40 boys and 27 girls, constituting the Infant School. In the highest division 11 were able to read the Primer very fairly, to write words on slates from dictation, and to work easy sums in simple addition. The rest of the children in this section were in various rudimentary stages of proficiency, the instruction being well graduated, and suitable intervals being provided for recreation, singing, and the customary exercises.

The tone of the whole School is good, and the interest displayed by the children in their work, and their prompt obedience to instructions, are highly creditable to the staff of teachers.

## LOWER COLLINS-STREET.

The premises appear to be in pretty good order, necessary repairs being executed as they are required. In the Infant School and the room over it the whole of the light comes from windows with a northern aspect, and on hot sunny days there is only a choice between darkening the rooms, and submitting to a temperature which is far too high either for health or comfort. Outside blinds might be planned without much difficulty to remedy this defect, and the ventilation could be improved at the same time. The out-offices are not very satisfactory, but it is not easy to suggest measures for their improvement.

|                                | <i>Boys.</i> | <i>Girls.</i> | <i>TOTAL.</i> |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| No. on Rolls.....              | 82           | 75            | 157           |
| Average daily Attendance ..... | 61           | 63            | 124           |
| Present at Examination .....   | 55           | 68            | 123           |

The School is worked in three sections, each with a separate teacher. In the highest, under Mr. Pierce, are the Fourth and Third Classes. The object of the Examination being mainly to test the working of the official "Standard," stress was chiefly laid upon the subjects in which a weakness had been previously noted. Of 8 present in the Fourth Class nearly all showed tolerable proficiency in writing, their spelling being scarcely up to the proper standard for this class. In arithmetic one showed moderate proficiency; the rest had not fully mastered the work prescribed for the grade immediately below them, and the class would be more correctly described as an upper division of the Third. In the Third Class there were 21 present, in two divisions, who appeared to be properly classified, though one-fourth failed in spelling. The work in arithmetic had covered the prescribed range, but not more than five could be described as passing satisfactorily. While it is evident that much good work is being done here outside the limits touched by an Examination, there is still plenty of room for improvement in discipline, and until this deficiency is made good the results of instruction will not show an adequate return for the time and labour expended upon the work. The continuance of the present arrangement under which one class sits in front of another, the children face in different directions, and the teacher is placed at the extreme end of the School, cannot be recommended.

In the next section were the Upper and Lower Second Class, under Miss Proctor, with 16 present in the former and 17 in the latter. The work is well graduated, the regulations of the Standard are closely followed, and the details of instruction well mastered as far as it has extended in each class. The general tone and discipline are good, and the children appear to take a lively interest in their work.

In the Infants' Room there were 61 present, under the charge of Miss Ryan, of whom 13 were nearly up to the standard necessary for promotion. In the next division were 7 reading easy monosyllabic lessons from sheets, and learning to write easy words on slates, the rest being in various rudimentary stages. The routine of instruction is varied by singing and the usual exercises. The general management is moderately satisfactory.

## WATCHHORN-STREET.

The premises are generally in good repair, and a great improvement has been effected in the School-room by lining the roof. The space outside is so small that there is no room for a play-ground, nor for the proper separation of the out-offices.

|                                | <i>Boys.</i> | <i>Girls.</i> | <i>TOTAL.</i> |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| No. on Rolls.....              | 68           | 74            | 142           |
| Average daily Attendance ..... | 49           | 52            | 101           |
| Present at Examination .....   | 56           | 49            | 105           |

Of the two sections into which the School is divided, the highest, comprising the two divisions of the Third Class, with 19 children present in each, is under the charge of Miss Proctor. The reading was fairly fluent, the writing on the whole well up to Standard, but the spelling rather weak. Fair progress had been made in arithmetic, and much of the work in the highest division was very neat and accurate. The rest of the work mostly ranged from fair to moderate, but some of the answering from the upper division in Sacred History was pretty good. A want of self reliance was noticed showing itself in a tendency to adopt the first answer hazarded by a neighbour, which establishes a habit of random guessing, and requires to be sedulously checked. The general tone is good, and the discipline satisfactory.

In the lower section, under the charge of Miss Williamson, I usually find quite two-thirds of the whole school. At the time of the examination there were 67 present, of whom 9 represented the Second Class, and had made some progress in the mechanical work of that grade. The First Class contained 58 children, of whom 11 in the highest division were reading short easy sentences with difficulty, and in other respects were somewhat below standard. In the next division were 9 beginning to read from books and copying easy words from the black board; in the next were 9 reading very easy monosyllables from sheet lessons; while the rest were in various stages of what

is usually termed the Alphabet class. Every endeavour appears to be made by the teacher to keep all the classes profitably employed, and to secure continuous attention ; but the range over which the instruction professes to extend is far too wide for one teacher to undertake. In schools of this description the Second Class represents the most important stage of a child's school life. If they are properly organised, from 25 to 35 per cent. of the children will usually be found passing through the various grades of proficiency comprised within the limits of this class, and an average child will take at least one year to thoroughly master the instruction prescribed by the standard. It is necessary to again call attention to the fact that this important grade is represented in name alone at the Watchorn-street School : the few children constituting the Second Class would be more correctly classed in a lower grade. The present organisation of the Ragged Schools requires a staff of three adult teachers for each, and, without an entire change of system, a less number will not suffice, whether the school be large or small.

#### *General.*

From their very nature, and the purpose of their existence, the teaching and management of Ragged Schools are impeded by difficulties which are met with only in a minor degree in other schools, and I endeavour to avoid calling attention to any deficiencies which are not remediable. Taken as a whole the Institution is doing excellent work in training many poor and neglected children who would not be easily reached by any other agency.

#### ST. LUKE'S FREE SCHOOL.

The premises are convenient, and the buildings in a good state of repair. The internal arrangements have been altered during the year by removing the junior classes from the large school-room, and the change is a decided improvement ; but care must be taken not to over-crowd the class-room.

|                                | <i>Boys.</i> | <i>Girls.</i> | TOTAL. |
|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------|
| No. on Rolls .....             | 38           | 30            | 68     |
| Average daily Attendance ..... | 29           | 19            | 48     |
| Present at Examination .....   | 29           | 22            | 51     |

In the junior department were 26 children, of whom 8 were able to read easy sheet lessons and to write letters and figures on slates, the rest being in various lower stages. Some pieces of poetry were repeated fairly by all, but they require to be trained to modulate their voices.

In the principal Schoolroom the lowest grade was that which is usually known as the Upper First Class. Only 4 children were present ; their work as far as it went was very fairly done. In the Lower Second there were also 4 present, of whom 3 read their simple lessons very well, and did the rest of their work fairly. One boy was quite unfit for this grade. In the Upper Second 10 were present, all reading very fairly, and nearly up to a satisfactory standard in the greater part of their work. Most were trying to write small-hand in a style which is out of place in any elementary school, especially in a junior class. In the Third Class 7 were present, aged from 9 to 15 years. The reading here also was satisfactory, and the general answering very fair. The small-hand copies might be changed with advantage ; the slate-writing and spelling were fairly up to standard. In arithmetic only two were fit for a higher position than the Second Class, and one of these was very inaccurate in his work.

Four out of seven in this class appear to attend so irregularly that they cannot possibly make any satisfactory progress in the secular part of the instruction.

The employment of a monitor in charge of the little ones is an evident gain, and will leave the good ladies who conduct this school more time than they have hitherto had for the general work of instruction.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

T. STEPHENS, *Chief Inspector of Schools.*

*The Hon. the Chief Secretary.*