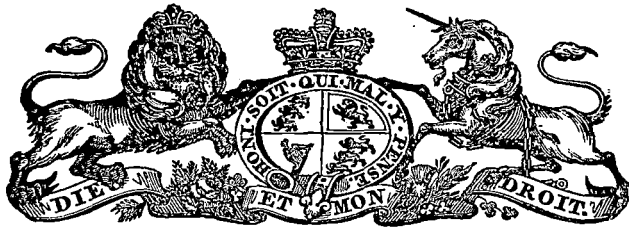


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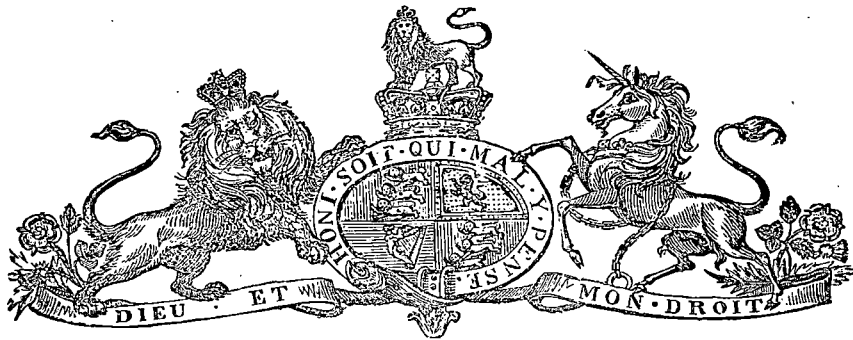
T A S M A N I A.

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y.

RAGGED SCHOOLS, HOBART TOWN.

REPORT FOR 1870.

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, November 8, 1871.



FOURTEENTH REPORT of the Hobart Town RAGGED SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

THE Schools in connection with this Association are now three in number. One in Lower Collins-street: a second in Watchorn-street: the third in Upper Macquarie-street, near the Cascades. Your Committee believe that these Schools have never been more needed; never better taught; never more fully attended; and never in better working condition, than during the period which has elapsed since their last Report. Three male teachers are employed in them; three female teachers; and from four to six monitors.

Since the month of January last the average numbers have been as follows; viz.—In Watchorn-street, average names on the roll, 171, average attendance, 114; in Collins-street, average names on the roll, 168, average attendance, 135; in Macquarie-street, average names on the roll, 159; average attendance, 126; showing a total of children connected with the schools of 498, and a total attendance of 375; that is, an attendance of nearly four out of five of those on the books. This also shows, as compared with the last Report, an increased attendance at Watchorn-street of 39: at Collins-street of 55: at the Cascades of 37. The increase in attendance is in all 131; while the increase on the books is only 81.

Before the last midsummer break up there was a large distribution of clothing in all the Schools, subscriptions having been received for that purpose to the amount of £15. There was also at Watchorn and Collins-streets a public examination, which was felt to be on the whole so satisfactory and beneficial that your Committee recommend such an examination as an annual observance in each of your Schools.

The children's treat took place in the Domain in March last; 363 children present. They were visited by His Excellency and Mrs. Du Cane.

The Lady Superintendents report:

In Watchorn-street.—"The children have improved very much in one important feature—cleanliness. The girls have done a great quantity of plain needlework—frocks, under clothing, and shirts for the boys, materials being given by a few friends and the Lady Superintendent: about 125 garments were made by the children during the last twelve months. At the last winter distribution 63 articles were given by the Lady Superintendent. Mrs. Du Cane has visited the School during the year; 120 other visits have been paid."

In Collins-street.—"Teachers competent in teaching and management; distribution of clothing in September last; about 90 articles divided, the greater part of them made in the School. The Hon. Mrs. Du Cane kindly presided at the distribution."

In the Cascades.—"The School has been conducted in a satisfactory manner; on July 10th, at the distribution of winter clothing, 68 articles were given out, all made by the children. Thanks are due to Messrs. Salier, Mathers, and Brownell, for contributions of working materials, to the Honorable Mrs. Du Cane for supply of print, and to Mesdames Calvert, Crosby, and Allport, and to the Misses Kirby, Elliott, and Edwards for their kind assistance with the children's work."

Your Committee receive an annual grant of public money to the extent of £300. For that sum—about 13s. 4d. a head—they are affording a fair education to about 450 of the poorest children in the City, and by the assistance of Local Boards, the steady visitation and assistance of Ladies' Committees, the manufacture and the regular distribution of clothing both to boys and girls, they are exerting a great amount of salutary influence—social, moral, and religious—not only over the children in attendance, but also in the districts where the Schools are located.

In addition to these three Schools your Committee endeavoured to initiate a fourth in Upper Murray-street, a portion of the Town in which they consider such an Institution to be urgently required. But here they were met and mastered by two difficulties—the raising of the requisite funds, and the securing of adequate teachers and superintendence. They have, however, the less reluctantly given up the attempt, as they have been led to understand that the Board of Education are likely to establish a Free School in the centre of the very district they consider so urgently necessitous.

Your Committee have three subjects of very anxious consideration which they would respectfully press on the friends of this Association.

1st. They feel the urgent need of more funds. They have had difficulties in canvassing the Town for subscribers and subscriptions; and so getting the amount of pecuniary support which they conceive this important public charity deserves. Of the original subscribers some have lessened their donations, some have left the Colony, some have died. Among those whose loss they have reason to regret is the late Mr. Hopkins. But, in leaving the world, he did not leave this Association forgotten; and to his legacy of £100 your Committee have been indebted for carrying on the Schools during the last fifteen months without debt. From old subscribers and new friends they ask at least Fifty Pounds more of subscriptions to carry them through the ensuing year.

2nd. This impecuniosity is felt to be the more inconvenient and distressing that the salaries of all the teachers are confessedly too low. During the last year your Committee have very reluctantly been obliged to reduce those of the female teachers. This was the more painful and inopportune, as two of these teachers had been so long and so highly valued in the Schools. The salaries of the masters are 30s. a week, or £78 a year; the salaries of the female teachers only 15s. a week, or £39 a year. In the judgment of your Committee these salaries are quite inadequate; and it is their desire, if the subscribers will enable them, to raise them all by some decided increase.

3rd. Your Committee have done their best with these Schools, but they are not satisfied. So far as they may have assisted in collecting a mass of children of both sexes from the bad education of the streets; in furnishing that mass of children with a certain amount of schooling, and in bringing them under a certain amount of restraint and discipline—they have had some success. But much more than this they have not done, and without farther means they scarcely can. They cannot introduce with any good effect any kind of industrial training, such as shoemaking or tailoring; for the expense is too great, and the children too young. They cannot usually retain the children beyond the age of 12 or 13; nor is it on the whole desirable that they should in these Schools; and they intensely feel that your Association loses the fruits it might gather by losing hold of these children at the very time when their future career is to be made or marred. When they leave us, what is to become of them? What can most of them find to do? In Collins-street the master has succeeded in getting situations within the last few months for two girls and one boy. But this is difficult to do in any number of cases with children so young. We let go from 20 to 30 boys every year from these Schools and as many girls; and who is to support or take them up when they leave us? And for what occupation are they fitted? If not absorbed in some industrial occupations, of course many of them must go to the bad. Your Committee would earnestly invoke the ladies, with whom the Schools are associated, to a practical dealing with this matter, so far as it bears on the future training and lives of the girls; and as for the boys, they are of opinion that some practical scheme may, and ought to, be devised for their future training in habits of industry and morality, and for helping them on to honest independence, as useful workmen, or settlers on the lands of the Colony.

In conclusion, your Committee have, with deep regret, to record the removal of their late venerable President, Mr. Henry Hopkins. They have recorded in their minutes their own testimony to the obligations which these Schools have owed, from their foundation, to his unflinching interest, his counsels, and his liberality. It will now devolve on you to elect his successor in office.
