

(No. 92.)



1863.

[SECOND SESSION.]

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T A S M A N I A.

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MR. CHAMBERS.

REPORT FROM THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

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Brought up by Mr. Balfe, and ordered by the House to be printed,  
4 September, 1863.



20TH AUGUST, 1863.

*Resolved*, That a Select Committee be appointed to enquire into the causes which have been alleged by the Board of Education as justifying the summary dismissal of Mr. Chambers from the situation of Schoolmaster at Franklin; such Committee to consist of the following Members:—

- Mr. Balfe.
- Mr. Allison.
- Mr. Hodgson.
- Mr. Murray.
- Mr. Perkins, (*Mover.*)

*WITNESSES examined.*

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Profession.</i>	<i>From whence summoned.</i>	<i>Expenses allowed.</i>
Thomas Stephens, Esq., B.A.....	Inspector of Schools.	Hobart Town.	None charged.
Mr. Chambers .....	Late Government Schoolmaster.	ditto.	ditto.

PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEE.

- Wednesday, 26th August, 1863. *Members present.*—Mr. Balfe, Mr. Murray, Mr. Perkins.
- Friday, 28th August, 1863. *Members present.*—Mr. Balfe, Mr. Hodgson, Mr. Allison, Mr. Perkins.
- Wednesday, 2nd September, 1863. *Members present.*—Mr. Balfe, Mr. Murray, Mr. Hodgson.
- Friday, 4th September, 1863. *Members present.*—Mr. Balfe, Mr. Murray, Mr. Hodgson.

*THE Committee appointed to enquire into the causes which have been alleged by the Board of Education as justifying the summary dismissal of Mr. Chambers from the situation of Schoolmaster at Franklin, have the honour to bring up the following*

R E P O R T.

YOUR Committee, in obedience to the instructions of your Honorable House, having made due enquiry as to the causes alleged by the Board of Education in justification of the summary dismissal of Mr. Chambers from the office of Schoolmaster at the Franklin, have unanimously agreed to report as follows:—

That, from a careful consideration of the voluminous correspondence and documents furnished to the House by the Board of Education, and of other authentic papers supplied by Mr. Chambers himself, it appears to your Committee that Mr. Chambers was abruptly dismissed from a situation he held for more than four years, receiving only sixteen days' notice,—although there is no reliable evidence to show that up to the period of his dismissal he had ever received a single official reprimand.

That, so far from an intimation being given to him of the existence of any feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the Board with the manner he discharged his duties as Schoolmaster, he received, upon two occasions, an increase of salary upon the special recommendation of Mr. Stutzer.

That it was not until after Mr. Chambers was virtually dismissed he was made acquainted with the fact, that the late Inspector of Southern Schools had left a record in the office of the Board of Education in which unfavourable notice was taken of Mr. Chambers' mode of conducting the School. It also appears from the evidence of the present Inspector, that a Memorandum appended to Mr. Stutzer's Report reflecting upon Mr. Chambers, and dated 9th October, 1862, was objected to by that gentleman, but was continued, notwithstanding, on the records of the Office.

That Mr. Stephens the present Inspector of Schools, and whose report to the Board of Education led to the dismissal of Mr. Chambers, has stated in his evidence before the Committee, that in his opinion Mr. Chambers is clearly entitled to compensation for loss of office, or to another trial as a Teacher, if he had not as asserted, and indeed as has been proved to the satisfaction of your Committee, received official warning from the late Inspector, or the Board of Education, as to the unsatisfactory state of the School. Mr. Stephens has also expressed his opinion that he considered Mr. Chambers to have been hardly treated.

That your Committee are of opinion that Mr. Chambers never received such warning either from the Board of Education or its late representative Mr. Stutzer; and they therefore consider that he should be either employed again as a Teacher, or else receive the usual compensation for loss of office.

In conclusion your Committee have to add, that from all quarters Mr. Chambers has received the most satisfactory testimonials as to his high moral qualifications; the Clergymen of all religious persuasions, as well as the Police Magistrate of the District, uniting in the record of their opinions as to his excellent character and worth as an elementary Teacher.

J. D. BALFE, *Chairman.*

*Committee Room, 4th September, 1863.*

## MINUTES OF COMMITTEE. No. 1.

WEDNESDAY, 26 AUGUST, 1863.

PRESENT.

Mr. Balfe, Mr. Murray, Mr. Perkins.

The Committee met at 12.25 o'clock.

*Moved*, That Mr. Balfe do take the Chair. Carried.

Part of the Papers read by the Clerk.

*Moved*, That a *precis* be made by the Clerk for the use of Committee at its next meeting. Carried.

*Moved*, That the Committee adjourn to Thursday at 11. Carried.

To meet on Friday, at 11 o'clock. The Inspector of Schools to be summoned for that hour; also Mr. Murray Burgess. Carried.

No. 2.

FRIDAY, 28 AUGUST, 1863.

PRESENT.

Mr. Balfe, Mr. Hodgson, Mr. Allison, Mr. Perkins.

*Precis* of Papers read to the Committee.

The Committee adjourned to Wednesday, September 2nd.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1863.

PRESENT.

Mr. Balfe, Mr. Murray, Mr. Hodgson,

The Committee met at 11:50 o'clock.

MR. STEPHENS *called in and examined.*

*Mr. Balfe.*—I visited the Franklin School in March. At that time I had no information about the School whatever. I had not seen Mr. Stutzer's Report. I was not aware of the opinion of the Board as to Mr. Chambers' management of the School. My Report shows the state in which I found the School. After the examination of the School I was waited on by one of the inhabitants, who told me that he and others had complained of the unsatisfactory state of the School to my predecessor, but had obtained no redress. He made several complaints as to the state of the Children. I told him that if he would put his complaints on paper attention should be paid to them. Until I heard these complaints I had not intended to do more than caution Mr. Chambers; but as Mr. Lloyd complained that he had complained without receiving any redress previously, and as his complaint was borne out by what I found to be the state of the School, I found it necessary to bring the matter before the Board. At my second visit to the School, two days afterwards, my first impression was fully confirmed. On returning to town I called a Special Meeting of the Board, and laid the Report before them. Some of the members mentioned that complaints had been made before on the unsatisfactory state of the School, and documents bearing on the subject were turned up. A Minute of the Board and a Report of Mr. Stutzer's, both in the previous October, were found in the records of the office. (Board Minute, 9 October, 1863.) This Minute was found in the records of the Board. I understand that Mr. Stutzer objected to that Minute after it was recorded. The next was at the same time Mr. Stutzer's Report, dated 16 October, was read. The Board were of opinion, after hearing that Report read, that Mr. Chambers had had five months' warning; and as no improvement had taken place in that time, they thought they would dispense with his services.

I do not think that he was dismissed for anything else but incompetency.

There is no School there now; because when a School has been going on for some time unsatisfactorily we do not open it again until we can find a competent Master. As this is a very difficult matter to obtain, the School has not been opened.

I consider Mr. Chambers competent to conduct a School as far as his own education was concerned; but utterly unsuitable for the office of Teacher. I do not ask for any high qualifications in a Teacher. I am quite content if the Master can teach them to read fluently, write fairly, and a little arithmetic.

The School is now closed, because we have not yet been able to get a Master. There is an application of Mr. Lloyd's brother for the appointment of Schoolmaster now before the Board.

The action of the Board was taken upon my report, and upon evidence taken before them.

I have seen a memorial, the nature of which I cannot remember, which contained testimonials in Mr. Chambers' favour. It states that the chief inhabitants have every confidence in the abilities of Mr. Chambers.

As Inspector of Schools, I could not recommend Mr. Chambers as a fit and proper person to conduct a Country School.

Mr. Lloyd's letter has only the effect of confirming my own idea, which I formed on my first examination of the School.

I could not take any person's evidence whom I did not know as being competent to give a testimonial to a man's ability to act as Schoolmaster.

I could recommend giving Mr. Chambers another trial. I would not object to any one else appointing him, so long as I was not considered responsible.

Mr. Lloyd's application is in the Office,—we have not as yet entertained it.

It was simply because the Board felt that Mr. Chambers had had warning enough that he was dismissed as he was.

I think that if Mr. Chambers could prove that he never had any warning he is clearly entitled to compensation.

The School has been closed since the end of April. I was only there two days. I examined every child in the School twice over. I do not pretend to give an opinion upon a School without having done so.

It is not my act Mr. Chambers' dismissal. The Board simply acted on my report. I did not offer an opinion further than that contained in my report.

I think that from his own statement this gentleman was hardly treated.

Mr. Stephens withdrew.

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MR. CHAMBERS *called in and examined.*

Mr. Stutzer never gave me any warning.

I never saw Mr. Stutzer's report complaining of me, or got a hint of it, before I was dismissed; and had no reason to think that Mr. Stutzer was dissatisfied.

Mr. Stutzer told me, when he last visited me, that he thought I was in a fair way of going on.

The Witness withdrew.

*Resolved*, That Mr. Balfe be asked to draw up a Report.

The Committee adjourned till Thursday, 3rd September, at 11.

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THURSDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER, 1863.

No Quorum.

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No. 4.

FRIDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER, 1863.

*Present*—Mr. Balfe, Mr. Murray, Mr. Hodgson.

The Committee met at 11·30 o'clock.

The Chairman brought up a Report, which was unanimously adopted.

The Committee adjourned at 11·4 o'clock.