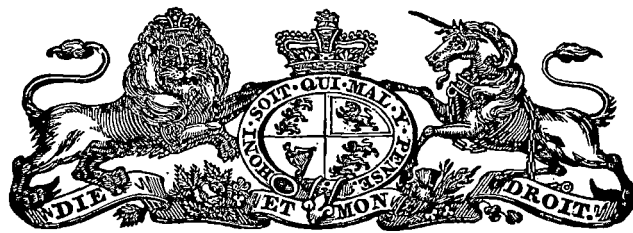


(No. 20.)



1887.

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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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LAUNCESTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY :

REPORT FOR 1886.

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



## LAUNCESTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

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### *REPORT for 1886.*

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EACH season brings its duties, and the Committee of the Benevolent Society are reminded that at this season of the year they must meet the friends and patrons of the Society, in order to lay before them the details of their administration during the year that is past, and to ask for continued benefactions and support in the time to come. This Report, from the very nature of its subject, cannot aim at being entertaining, for it treats of the infirmities of the aged, and the sufferings of the poor. The duty of the Committee lies in showing in what manner, and to what extent, and by what means the funds generously placed at their disposal have been dispensed.

Your Committee have relieved during the past year 75 men, 102 women, and 135 children, showing, in comparison with the year 1885, an increase of 8 men and 18 women, and a decrease of 4 children. The applications for relief have been 157, of which number 148 received relief, and 9 only were refused.

The winter of last year set in early, and proved a severe season. Kind friends were mindful of the sufferings of the poor in the piercing cold, and gifts of blankets were sent in for their use; by means whereof, and those purchased by the Committee, they were able to distribute 64 pairs; and firewood was supplied in half loads to the amount of £30 9s. Your Committee thankfully acknowledge the receipt of clothing from various donors, and from the Hospital, all of which were judiciously dispensed amongst the numerous and scantily-clad applicants; and your Committee earnestly ask, and confidently hope for a repetition of such thoughtful beneficence in the approaching winter. The Christmas season was not passed over without the customary issue of an extra ration: New Year's Day was observed in like manner, and the Committee are grateful for the special donations sent for the purpose of giving enjoyment to the poor at the season when the rich are rejoicing.

There have been 47 meetings of the Committee, which, as you are aware, consists of 11 members, several of whom are actively engaged in business; yet there has been an average weekly attendance of 9 members.

The ordinary duties of the Committee demand vigilance, but there is a class of deplorable cases to which their attention is drawn from time to time, with which they find great difficulty in dealing,—viz., the confinement of unmarried females. The voice of humanity calls on the Committee to give help wherever suffering and distress are to be found. During the past year there were, fortunately, fewer of these unhappy cases. Your Committee are sensible that the subject is involved in difficulty: let it however be clearly understood, and they avail themselves of this opportunity to make it publicly known, that in the cases of these unfortunate young women, relief from the Benevolent Society does not follow as an easy matter of course. With these cases your Committee have the kind assistance of Mrs. Baker, whose experience and knowledge are so valuable in dealing with young women under such delicate and painful circumstances.

Your Committee are obliged to tread over old and well beaten ground in warning the public against indulgence in promiscuous charity. Let every applicant for out-door relief be referred to the Secretary, that enquiries may be made, and thus the impostor will be rejected, and relief be given to real want.

The public are little aware of the time it frequently takes to obtain all the necessary particulars of a family seeking to be placed on the relief roll. In some cases it may require reference to the

Police Office to ascertain their antecedents ; a visit to the Surgeon-Superintendent at the Hospital ; and another to the applicant's landlord, or last place of abode ; and then follow enquiries of neighbours, which must be conducted with caution and delicacy. A report is then made to the Chairman, or Vice-Chairman, who, according to his judgment, after visiting the case if he deems it necessary, orders temporary relief, prior to the case being submitted to the Committee at the next weekly meeting ; or he disapproves, the enquiries not justifying relief : but even in such cases the circumstances are laid before the Committee.

The thanks of the Committee are due to the Surgeon-Superintendent of the Hospital and other professional gentlemen for their ready assistance whenever sought. They are also indebted to the Press for the publicity given to their proceedings : it keeps the operations of the Society under the observant eye of the public, and they feel assured that the more extensively their measures are made known, the more highly they will be favoured and rewarded with the support of the benevolent inhabitants of Launceston, proverbial for their charity.

The Committee most earnestly solicit subscriptions, donations, clothing, &c., and, with such substantial aid, they cannot fail of success in so useful an undertaking.

E. L. DITCHAM, *Chairman.*

February, 1887.

LAUNCESTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY *in account with Treasurer*, 1886.

Dr.	£	s.	d.	Cr.	£	s.	d.
To Meat .....	306	12	9	Balance in Bank .....	57	11	2
Groceries .....	160	3	11	Government Grant .....	500	0	0
Bread .....	264	5	5	Bequest (Mrs. Delany) .....	50	0	0
Secretary's Salary .....	75	0	0	Subscriptions and Donations .....	368	18	5
Midwifery .....	8	5	0	Interest .....	13	10	0
Firewood .....	30	9	0	Balance due V.D.L. Bank .....	19	4	4
Blankets .....	18	16	5				
Printing, &c. ....	16	15	6				
Lodgings .....	13	5	6				
Milk .....	1	0	0				
Car hire .....	0	17	6				
Commission .....	13	12	11				
Equitable Building Society .....	100	0	0				
	£1009	3	11		£1009	3	11

Audited and found correct,  
G. BAKER.  
29th January, 1887.

G. BABINGTON, *Hon. Treasurer.*