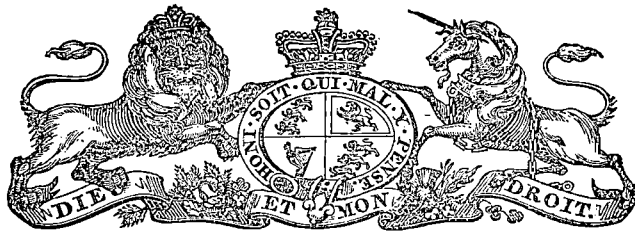


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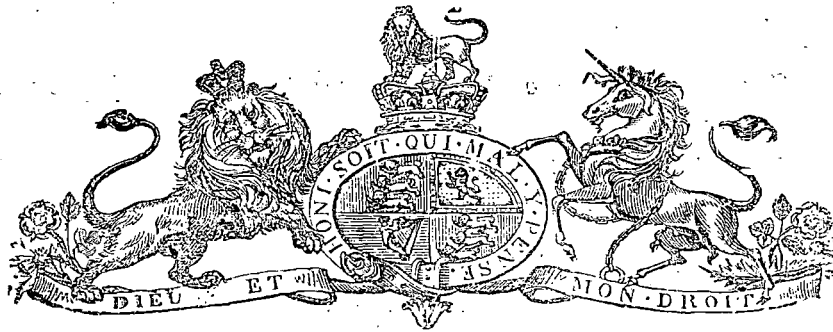
T A S M A N I A .

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HOBART TOWN BENEVOLENT SOCIETY :

REPORT FOR 1879.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Moore, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
August 10, 1880.



TWENTIETH Annual Report of the Hobart Town BENEVOLENT SOCIETY, for the Year ending 31st December, 1879.

THE Society this year enters upon its Twentieth Anniversary ; and we may fairly congratulate ourselves upon its present position, that the work in which we have been engaged has been of great service to the State, has commended itself to the sympathy of the public, and to the different Administrations throughout this period.

During the years the Society has been in operation there have been 12,929 individuals relieved, consisting of 1973 adult males, 3387 adult females, 3880 male children, and 3689 female children.

Two hundred and eighty thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine lbs. of meat have been issued in rations and used in soup ; 933,619 lbs. of bread have been issued ; as also 56,260 lbs. of oatmeal ; 53,943 lbs. of rice ; 4706 lbs. of barley ; 4995 lbs. of peas ; 840 lbs. sago ; 82,787 lbs. sugar ; 11,389 lbs. of tea ; together with 160,644 pints of good soup. Aid has been also rendered with firewood and coals, blankets and rugs to the necessitous poor ; and Mr. Witt has encouraged year by year poor persons to lay by from week to week their pence towards procuring blankets, which are supplied at the wholesale cost price.

In the third year of the Society's operations, 1862, the soup kitchen was established, affording a ready meal at all hours between 9 A.M. and 1 P.M. to persons sent with soup tickets or recommended by note to Mr. Witt, who also exercises his own judgment concerning applicants.

During the first ten years of the Society's operations meat was issued with the rations by orders upon the butchers who contracted with the Society ; but it was found that in the majority of cases there was so much scheming and dissatisfaction, parties selling their orders for prime cuts and paying the difference, that the Committee determined to discontinue the issue, and to give an increased ration of bread and other necessaries.

From the general public (considering that the poor flock to the cities, North and South), more especially those outside the city, the Society deserves better support than it has received. Of late years very little help has been received beyond the city. Our means have been received from a few tried friends who do not fail us, and the kind remembrances of those who were friends while living and did not forget the Society in their last moments, but who have, by their bequests, placed the Society on a permanent basis.

The different Administrations have cordially helped the Society on account of the aid we were rendering to check pauperism and imposture ; and during the first ten years of the Society's operations the Committee had but to make its need known when the Government of the day at once afforded relief.

Up to the year 1869 the cases of distress and destitution in the city, as well as those coming in from the country, were all met by the Society's agency, when the ill-advised step of opening a Government relieving office was started, which gave a stimulus to the system of charitable grants, which was then growing larger and larger, and which has made such rapid strides year by year until self-respect, self-reliance, and shame are obliterated ; and the claimants for relief now base their demands on a right to receive aid as well as their neighbours, and are oft-times supported in their demands by respectable recommendations.

During the two Reibey Administrations the Government took counsel with the Committee of this Society as to the best mode of meeting these demands for relief. It was pointed out to the Government that all the cases coming under our notice in Hobart Town had been met when this Society was the only channel for dispensing charitable aid, except by private benevolence. That the number of the inhabitants of the city and colony had not materially altered, and that the Committee was quite sure that if the Government committed the cases to the consideration of the Benevolent Societies of Hobart Town and Launceston very soon a different state of things would be brought about, and a check be put upon the demands for relief.

The present Government have also taken the matter up, and the Society is now ready, by its Executive, to do its duty.

Every case should be dealt with upon its own merits, and full and substantial aid afforded: impostors would soon be detected, pauperism will be checked, and the public purse be relieved. In a great many cases the distress in families is occasioned by the drunkenness of parents, either father or mother, or both; and in many cases any other course than feeding the children at the depôt only encourages the parents in their cruelly destructive habits, allowing them more means to gratify their depraved appetite. Out of the number of cases that have been relieved by the Society during the past year fifty-four are traced, either directly or indirectly, to intemperance, viz., 32 men and 22 women, in most cases involving the helpless children in much misery.

His Excellency Mr. F. A. Weld and family have, during the past year, been frequently visited with begging petitions, which have invariably been sent to the Registrar, Mr. Witt, when, if the case is one needing relief, he administers the aid necessary. One woman named Owen, in the month of September last, took such a petition to present to His Excellency, who directed his Private Secretary to send the case on to Mr. Witt: the petition was enclosed with a request from His Excellency to deal with the case as was needful. On the way the woman opened the letter, abstracting the begging petition, bringing only the Private Secretary's note, stating that she had lost the other papers. She is addicted to drink, a most importunate beggar, and a great impostor.

The public generally have been frequently, in the Reports of this Society, requested to give their aid through the Society instead of relieving persons with pence who beg from door to door; and ministers of religion, who are more generally than others made the victims of unscrupulous beggars, have been urged to adopt the method of sending all their cases to Mr. Witt of persons who come soliciting charity at their doors. Every individual in the city adopting this plan would be greatly the gainer, and the city be relieved of persons who are continually in and out of the depôt deceiving the public. A donation to the Society would relieve subscribers from the possibility of being imposed upon, or parties could purchase soup tickets, which would check the importunity.

The Committee would bring under notice again that soup tickets can be obtained from the Registrar, Mr. Witt, so that persons begging can be supplied with a good meal; whereas assistance in money, which is what is desired, is generally carried as far as the first public-house and there deposited to satisfy the insatiable craving for alcoholic drinks.

In the beginning of the year a man in the receipt of 30s. per week came home drunk and turned his wife, a very decent steady woman, with their three children into the street: the case was placed in the hands of the police, and the wife and children were provided with necessaries, which is only one of many similar cases.

The business of the year was commenced with 40 cases, comprising 131 individuals. During the past year 188 cases have received attention, comprising 67 cases of illness; 17 widows, 24 husbands away; 8 husbands imprisoned; 46 destitute; 5 for the children alone; 2 aged and infirm; 7 cases were refused. In these cases there are 480 individuals,—93 males and 148 female adults, 119 male children and 120 female children.

Wife desertion is very common: many men desert their wives and families, not caring what becomes of them or who shall bear their burden. One case of a bricklayer, in constant work, without any justifiable cause, has deserted his wife and family several times, and will not support them until compelled by the Police Court.

Kind friends have supplied the Society with 98 tons of wood and two tons of coal. The labour required to cut up and split the wood has been very valuable, as a test of industry, and also gives employment to men for relief granted. Work has been given to 85 men in the wood yard, mostly with families, until they could obtain better employment. They are permitted to work for an hour or more, according to number of family, and then they can go forth and search for work elsewhere. Twenty-two tons of wood have been bought for extra cases and sickness, &c. Casual relief has been given to 48 individuals going up the country to seek employment, or persons waiting to be invalided.

The wood brigade was commenced to give occupation to poor boys; but for two or three years the demand for boys' labour has entirely altered the character of this work, which is now performed

by infirm men and women for their food, as they can perform their work whilst sitting. Two hundred and ninety-three dozen and seven bundles have been sold during the year, including large orders from Government House.

Blankets have been sold to persons who are encouraged to pay into a fund for the purchase for winter supply. The amount received was £14 13s. 11d. The blankets are supplied to the people at the wholesale cost price. Lodging tickets and rent have been paid to the amount of £24 10s. 6d., and cab hire for the removal of sick persons to the General Hospital has been paid, amounting to £2 8s. 6d.

The usual visitation of cases of persons applying for relief, in addition to occasional ones from members of the Committee, is performed by Mr. Witt, the Registrar, who also now does the collecting of subscriptions without any extra remuneration. The Committee meet every week, and the depôt is visited almost daily by the Chairman and Secretary, to supervise the operations for relief, &c., and advise with the Registrar. Old clothing from kind contributors and the Cascade Invalid Depôt, and other institutions, have been received and acknowledged, and have been thankfully received by many poor persons.

The Committee tender their thanks to the kind friends who year by year give them aid to the work, and ask them kindly to continue the same, which is as much needed as ever. The Committee assure the public that if the Government require the assistance of the Society to aid in investigating all the cases of charitable relief that the work will be entered upon with the due consideration of the interests involved.

Stores that have been issued during the year are—bread, 31,225 lbs. ; oatmeal, 707 lbs. ; rice, 931 lbs. ; sugar, 4731 lbs. ; tea, 468 lbs. ; 4572 pints of soup have been supplied, and soup sold has amounted to £3 15s. 11d.

For making soup, 3658 lbs. of meat, 482 lbs. of rice, 488 lbs. of barley, and 503 lbs. of peas have been used.

E. SWARBRECK HALL, *Chairman.*

THE Treasurer in Account with the Hobart Town BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

Dr.		Cr.
1879.		1879.
Dec. 31. To Balance in Bank, January..	£ s. d. 56 14 5	Dec. 31. By Bread
Government Grant for 1878.	200 0 0	Groceries.....
Ditto for 1879	200 0 0	Printing and Advertising ..
Ditto, Repayments	117 9 6	Insurance
Subscriptions and Donations.	184 0 6	Cab Hire to Hospital, for
Interest on Debentures, &c.	205 10 0	the Poor
Deposit in Bank, June 28...	300 0 0	Lodging Tickets and Rent..
		Salary—Registrar
		Salary—Cook for Soup
		Kitchen
		Meat for Soup
		Lying-in Cases, Government
		Debentures
		Extra Cases, Payments paid
		for
		Milk for Child—Mother in
		Hospital.....
		Repairs.....
		Wood for Wood Yard
		Balance
	<u>£1263 14 5</u>	<u>£1263 14 5</u>

R. ANDREW MATHER.

WM. WITT, *Registrar.*

THE Treasurer in Account with the Hobart Town BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

Dr.		Cr.	
1879.	£ s. d.	1879.	£ s. d.
Jan. 1. To Balance.....	56 14 5	Jan. 1. By Expenditure per Pass Book..	813 16 4
Government Grant, 1878	200 0 0	Debentures, &c.	338 3 9
Ditto, 1879	200 0 0	Balance	111 14 4
Repayments	117 9 6		
Subscriptions and Donations ..	184 0 6		
Interest on Debentures	205 10 0		
Deposit in Bank to June 23 ..	300 0 0		
	<u>£1263 14 5</u>		<u>£1263 14 5</u>
1880.	£ s. d.		
Jan. 1. To Balance.....	<u>111 14 4</u>		

R. T. WESTBROOK, *Treasurer.*

Audited with the several Accounts and Bank Book, and found to be correct,

JAS. E. SALIER, } *Auditors.*
HUGH M. HULL, }

26th January, 1880.