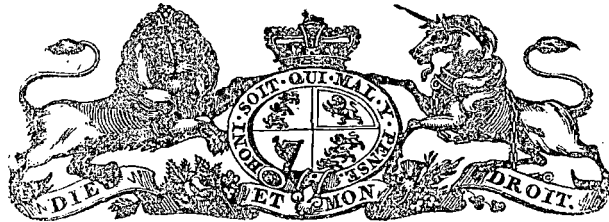


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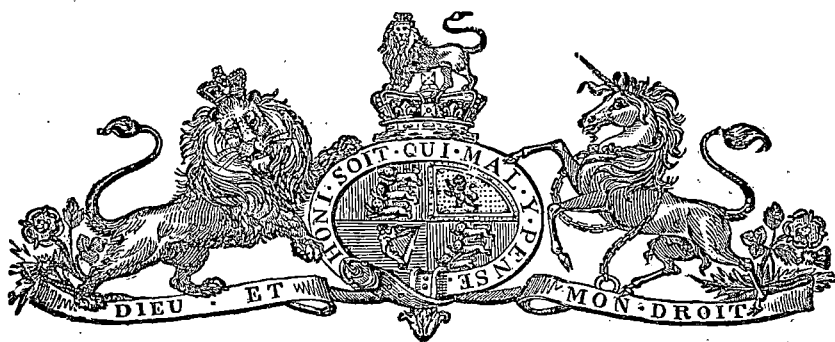
1861.

TASMANIA.

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION.

PETITION, No. 237.

Brought up by Mr. John Meredith, and ordered by the House to be printed,
30 January, 1862.



REPORT of SELECT COMMITTEE on EDUCATION upon the Petition which had been referred to it by the House of Assembly.

MEMBERS PRESENT.

MR. MEREDITH.
MR. BALFE.
MR. ALLISON.

MR. BUTLER.
MR. GREGSON.

WITNESSES EXAMINED.

J. J. STUTZER, Esq., *Inspector of Schools.*
M. BURGESS, Esq., *Secretary Board of Education.*

R E P O R T.

Your Committee have taken evidence as to the allegations contained in the Petition, and have unanimously arrived at the conclusion that the Board of Education have taken such steps as laid in their power to provide Education for the Children at the Spring Hill Bottom.

JOHN MEREDITH, *Chairman.*

Committee Room, 30th January, 1862.

E V I D E N C E.

MURRAY BURGESS, *Esquire, Secretary to Board of Education, states—*

Up to January, 1861, or thereabouts, the School at Spring Hill Bottom was under the charge of Mr. and Mrs. Horan, Teachers of the Roman Catholic persuasion.

In consequence of reductions which the Board of Education were called on to effect, in order to bring the general expenditure within the proportion of the Vote granted by Parliament, the Schools at Jerusalem and Spring Hill Bottom, being about 2 miles apart from each other, were amalgamated under Mr. Tutton and Miss Tolmey.

Previous to this arrangement, the entire expense of the Spring Hill Bottom School was borne by the Board; no resident within the District contributing one penny, either in the shape of subscriptions or school pence, towards its maintenance.

The average daily attendance at the Spring Hill Bottom School during 1860 did not exceed 22 children, and the cost of instruction to the Board averaged £5 12s. 6d. per head. Under these circumstances, the Board considered that some reduction was absolutely necessary.

The cost has been reduced (say) from £120 to about £40. The Board have not, however, altogether overlooked the fact that the attendance at this School during 1861 has increased; and it is under their consideration at this moment by what means they can meet the request of the Inhabitants.

The Letter to which the Petitioners refer as not having been acknowledged, I do not remember to have seen. I think it possible that it may have reached the office during my illness, when all papers were withheld from me. In consequence of a representation made by Mr. Marum to the Colonial Secretary a few days ago on this subject, I made enquiries respecting this Letter, but could learn nothing of it.

During the last few days I have been engaged in drafting an Estimate of the Board's probable expenditure for the current year, and in that Estimate, without any knowledge of this complaint at all, I had inserted £30 salary for a Schoolmistress (Assistant Teacher), and also some amounts for other Schools which are calling out for additional assistance. The result is that my Estimate is in excess of the Vote by very nearly £100.

This will show the difficulty the Board experience in entertaining claims for aid.

I should mention that, under the Regulations of the Board, it is expected that every School should have some local assistance. I have stated that Spring Hill Bottom School is without any.

By Mr. Meredith.—The Schoolmaster now itinerates from Jerusalem to this School. There are 38 children in average daily attendance at Jerusalem, and 33 at Spring Hill Bottom. This is the average for the last twelve months.

By Mr. Balse.—At Jerusalem the children get the full instruction. The average cost per head at Jerusalem was £4 17s. for 1860. The local contributions amounted to £16. I have estimated Spring Hill Bottom at £2 7s. 2d. per head for 1862. I was ill in November. Mr. Marum speaks of a Letter of 9th November. Apart from Mr. Marum's Letter, there have been personal statements made to the Board. Spring Hill Bottom is the only case where there are no local contributions. The Board have never received any formal Memorial from the residents there with regard to this complaint.

JOHN J. STUTZER, Esquire, Inspector of Schools, states—

There are two neighbourhoods; one comparatively wealthy, the other poor, within three miles of each other. The money which the Board could have afforded for the support of the two Schools, independent of fees, would not have sufficed to keep up either of the two efficiently. The people at Jerusalem agreed to contribute a considerable annual allowance in fees and subscriptions. The amount at present, to the best of my knowledge, is between £70 and £80; and if this were withdrawn, the Master, who is one of the very best under the Board, would immediately retire.

It was, consequently, perfectly fair and natural that those who really contributed to the support of one School directly, and the other indirectly, should have the greatest benefit from his services.

A number of the children at Spring Hill Bottom, at least 30 per cent., could attend at Jerusalem. Children walk a greater distance at Mona Vale and Swansea. At Jerusalem there are regular School Buildings.

By this arrangement of paying Tutton (a good Master) well, we secure a good man for both Schools; and the attendance at both Schools is now 80, compared with 30, which was the attendance before this arrangement took effect.

The secular instruction at the Orphan Schools is limited to 8 hours a week to children over 12; and I find this quite enough to enable them to keep up their knowledge.

By Mr. Meredith.—I have received no Letter addressed to the Board of Education by the Reverend Mr. Marum. I have not seen it.

To the Honourable the House of Assembly of Tasmania, in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the People of Spring Hill Bottom, Jerusalem.

SHOWETH :

THAT Petitioners are deeply interested in the Education of about Sixty Children ; that, according to the Inspector of Schools late Report, the names of forty-nine of these Children are on the Books of the Public School at Spring Hill Bottom, and thirty-eight of them are in attendance at the School.

That, up to April 1861, a Schoolmaster and Mistress appointed by the Board of Education resided at Spring Hill Bottom, and daily conducted the School.

That, at that period, the Resident Master and Mistress were abruptly transferred to another School District, and the School, in the midst of nearly sixty educable Children, has been since then shut up, save for seven hours weekly.

That the conductor of a neighbouring School gives two hours on Monday, and two hours on Wednesday afternoons, and three hours on Saturday forenoons—collectively seven hours per week—to the Spring Hill Bottom School.

That, whilst Petitioners are satisfied with the mode in which this gentleman discharges his duties, they are not satisfied, and never have been, with the arrangement of the Board which gives to so many Children but seven hours desultory weekly Education, in lieu of six days consecutive daily Education.

That, early in November last, Petitioners, finding this most objectionable arrangement still continued, caused a communication to be made to the Board respectfully remonstrating against the arrangement, and suggesting a remedy ; but regret having to inform your Honorable House that the remonstrance has been contemptuously disregarded, not having been treated with even the ordinary courtesy of an acknowledgment.

That the confidence of Petitioners in the Board of Education is grievously shaken, both by the despotic manner of depriving so many Children of a poor community of six days consecutive daily Education imparted by a Master and Mistress, substituting for it seven hours desultory weekly Education imparted by a Master only, and by the offensive mode of denying redress.

That, in the unchecked exercise of such power, Petitioners see with concern the arbitrary will of the Board must become the measure of a free people's educational rights, and accordingly pray your Honorable House to institute such inquiry into this matter as shall procure for Petitioners their equitable share in the Educational Grant, and secure them against the indignity of offensive treatment.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[Here follow 41 Signatures.]