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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

V A C C I N A T I O N :

REPORT FOR 1887.

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



REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF VACCINATIONS FOR THE YEAR 1887.

Hobart, 31st March, 1888.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit my Annual Report on Vaccination for the year 1887.

This year was rendered memorable by the outbreak of smallpox at Launceston, and the consequent large increase of vaccinations through the temporary panic caused by the presence of this dreadful scourge.

This increase of vaccinations is well shown in the Report on the Smallpox Epidemic by Mr. Mault, Engineering Inspector under the Public Health Act, who, having carefully gathered together the returns of vaccinations by all the Medical Practitioners of the Colony, found that, during the six weeks immediately preceding the outbreak on 19th September, the total number of vaccinations performed in Tasmania amounted to only 179; whereas during the six weeks immediately succeeding, the number of vaccinations rose from that number to 6513,—including, of course, re-vaccinations.

The returns of vaccinations should, then, for the sake of contrast, be divided into those before and those subsequent to the appearance of smallpox, as the latter show such an unwonted increase upon the former, and which can hardly be maintained for any length of time.

And then, again, the appointment by the Government of all Medical Practitioners who were willing to be Public Vaccinators greatly altered the previous arrangement for gratuitous vaccination, which had been almost solely carried on by two salaried Public Vaccinators, one for the north and the other for the south of the Colony.

The number of vaccinations, by this new arrangement, has been vastly increased, at a very moderate outlay to the Government. As vaccination is thus brought within easy reach of everyone, there are great hopes of the population of the Colony, in the near future, becoming thoroughly protected against the incursion of smallpox, by reason of the more complete manner in which vaccination is now being carried out.

It is evident, by the returns, that the public have largely availed themselves of the opportunity of gratuitous vaccination by their own medical attendants, as the returns show that during the three months ending 31st December, 1887, the total number of successful vaccinations by Medical Practitioners who had consented to vaccinate gratuitously, at a cost to the Government of 2s. 6d. for each successful case, amounted to 2698; while the additional number of 774 were vaccinated by the two Public Vaccinators, north and south, during the same quarter,—their total for the year being 1478.

The following tabulated statement will make this clearer :—

Vaccinations before the outbreak of smallpox—	
By Public Vaccinators, for 9 months of 1887	704
Vaccinations after the outbreak—	
By Public Vaccinators, for 3 months ending 31st December, 1887...	774
By Private Medical Practitioners, ditto	2698
	— 3472
Total number of vaccinations for 1887 performed by Vaccinators ...	4176

It will be thus seen that during the last three months of the year more than double the total number of vaccinations for the whole year by the Public Vaccinators were performed in the Colony, showing a remarkably increased activity in vaccination amongst the masses, who in the time of danger from smallpox so gladly availed themselves of the increased facilities for vaccination afforded them by the Government.

It is to be hoped that this gratifying attention to the benefits to be derived from the operation will not be allowed to die out, but that the main clauses of the Vaccination Act will be more strictly enforced, as I have so urgently advocated in my previous Annual Reports.

To show the distribution of the vaccinations by Medical Practitioners acting as Public Vaccinators throughout the Colony, I have prepared a table showing the towns, and number of vaccinations performed in each, under the new Regulations, from commencement of October to 31st December, 1888 :—

<i>Town.</i>	<i>Number of Vaccinations.</i>	<i>Town.</i>	<i>Number of Vaccinations.</i>
Hobart	382	George Town	117
Launceston	279	Ross	55
Evandale	339	Fingal	99
Wynyard	282	Campbell Town	226
Ulverstone	202	Hamilton	94
Longford	123	St. Helen's	69
Deloraine	63	Green Ponds	18
Emu Bay	69	St. Mary's	49
Waratah	118	Richmond.....	37
Stanley	23	Moorina	43
Sheffield	14		

It must be remembered that this table only refers to the vaccinations performed gratuitously to the public, by Medical Practitioners who had consented to act as Public Vaccinators, and to none other.

I may mention here, as a cause of satisfaction, that with this large number of vaccinations not one bad result has been reported as being due to the operation itself,—showing that care had been exercised in the selection of the lymph used, as well as in the manner of performing the operation.

The supply of lymph at the time of the outbreak of smallpox was insufficient to meet the increased demand, as the Public Vaccinators, finding that if lymph is kept beyond a certain length of time it became unreliable, merely collected sufficient for their usual weekly vaccinations; and, besides, the public were so regardless of their duty as regards vaccination, that but few children were being brought to the Public Vaccinators for this purpose.

The unprecedented demand, too, for bovine or calf lymph created further delay, as it was difficult to obtain reliable lymph of this kind in sufficient quantity. Previous to the smallpox appearing, the demand for this special lymph was very limited,—so much so that many points of this lymph which had been obtained had not been required, and so it had become unreliable from being kept so long.

Afterwards fresh calf lymph was obtained from several sources: some from Victoria, which was not at all reliable; and some from Dr. Benjafield, who supplied upwards of five hundred tubes, which were found to be in great measure satisfactory; and, latterly, a small supply was obtained from calves at the New Town Farm which had been innoculated with calf lymph obtained from Dr. Faulkner, of New Zealand.

All this lymph was distributed to the several Medical Practitioners of the Colony who had consented to act as Public Vaccinators.

As a supply of good lymph is of the utmost importance in time of danger from smallpox, the question naturally arises, how in the future to ensure abundance of lymph, both calf and humanised?

In the first place, vaccination from arm to arm should go on continuously throughout the year. By this means fresh humanised lymph would be always available. Our main reliance must be placed upon this kind of lymph; and, if carefully selected, no fear need arise as to its action or results. The provisions of the Vaccination Act must be more stringently enforced in the future than in the past. Every child born in the Colony should be brought for vaccination as soon as it is strong enough to bear the operation, and certainly not later than six months after birth. The vaccination of every child should be immediately registered; and a list of the unvaccinated children should be supplied to the Public Vaccinator for the district in which they were born, with

a view to their being seen to. Should the parents of these children persistently neglect to have them vaccinated, the law should be enforced, as it is only by a complete system of vaccination that full protection from smallpox is possible.

It is to be hoped that recourse to prosecution will be but rarely required in Tasmania, but that every parent will be induced, by a better knowledge of vaccination, its advantages and practical importance, to help the Authorities rather than thwart them in carrying out the law.

In addition to humanised lymph, the cultivation of bovine or calf lymph should be systematically carried on at the New Town Farm, so as to be always obtainable; as a full supply of good reliable calf lymph, carefully taken and stored, would be one means of helping to remove some of the objections to vaccination which have been occasionally promulgated.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

C. E. BARNARD, *M.D.*,

Government Medical Officer.

The Honorable the Chief Secretary.