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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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NATIONAL PHYSICAL CULTURE:

SCHEME OF C. BJELKE PETERSEN.

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## NATIONAL PHYSICAL CULTURE SCHEME FOR TASMANIA.

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### PROPOSALS SUBMITTED BY MR. PETERSEN.

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I. Financial reasons make it necessary that the bulk of the work should be done by the teachers of the department. It is, therefore, proposed that teachers be encouraged to attend Physical Culture classes, held for the purpose of giving them the necessary training.

II. The aim of such instruction would be :—

- (1.) To teach the fundamental laws governing the growth of children, and their physical development; to put such information before teachers as would interest them in the physiques of their pupils, and prove to them that Physical Culture is a great aid to the mental and moral education of the child.
- (2.) To instruct the teachers in classified groups of exercises to be used in their schools. This course would consist of :—

- (a.) *Health Drills.*—Work for building up and strengthening the vital organs should be given. Many children are predisposed to consumption, and others are rickety, scrofulous and anæmic; others again, are subject to various disorders of the nervous system. A course founded upon modern knowledge of the physiology of bodily exercise would be the best preventative. Special attention should be given to develop the lungs. No system is effective unless the breathing exercises are made an essential part.
- (b.) *Department Drills.*—Work should be given to correct the usual irregularities of child-growth, such as round shoulders, round back, knock-knee, flat feet, head poking forward, &c. Such work would, in course of time, do much to improve the race.
- (c.) *Miscellaneous Drills.*—Under this heading would be arranged groups of exercises which aim more specially at (1.) Strength; (2.) Flexibility; (3.) Agility; and (4.) Endurance.
- (d.) *Walking and Running Drills.*—Exercises would be given to bring about correct and easy walking. Running drills can be made very useful in developing the muscles of the lower limbs, and in increasing the lung capacity.
- (e.) *Military Drill.*—In the Senior boys' classes some military drill might be taught with advantage. Suitable movements from the "Army Drill Book" should be selected.
- (f.) *Physical Culture Games.*—It has been demonstrated by modern science what a very great importance the attitude of the will plays in all such educational work. The will must be directed to the part to be developed, and the exercises never done in an automatic way. An ideal lesson should therefore end with recreational work in order that the strain may be taken off the will. A variety of good Physical Culture Games have been devised for this purpose, and might be used for the last few minutes of a lesson.

The experience of other countries has been that the utmost care is necessary in selecting exercises and directing the work, when Physical Culture is made compulsory. You cannot insist

upon all the children taking part unless the work is based upon up-to-date physiological and anatomical knowledge with regard to child-growth. Much gymnasium work that looks well is injurious to the delicate frame of a growing child. Physical Culture will therefore not be a success unless the Government has the work directed in such a way that it can guarantee parents that only the right kind of exercises are done.

III. *Apparatus required.*—Classified groups of exercises as above described can be done :—

1. Without any apparatus.
2. With light apparatus, such as dumb-bells, clubs, wands, blocks, rings, skipping-ropes, bells, &c.
3. With aid of fixed apparatus, such as ladders, trapeze, Roman rings, bars, horse, &c.

Work on fixed apparatus can be done under two conditions :—

- (a.) With a cheap selection of 6-8 apparatus fixed on play ground.
- (b.) In a special room, furnished for the purpose (proper gymnasium.)

IV. A very good beginning could be made without apparatus ; in fact, real satisfactory results can be obtained under such conditions, if the teacher has a thorough knowledge of the variety of work that can be given without appliances. The question of apparatus is of secondary importance to that of teachers. A good teacher will obtain result without apparatus ; an indifferent teacher will obtain none, even with apparatus.

V. After having had the system indicated in the previous clause introduced, steps might be taken to secure light apparatus (especially dumb-bells), particularly for the larger schools, where a small expenditure would profit a larger number of scholars. Later on, a "Pan-Gymnasium," or a selection of cheap apparatus for the playground, might be secured.

VI. The enthusiastic teacher would, in many cases, be able to raise funds for apparatus, as parents would often be willing to subscribe towards such if they knew the teacher would make good use of them.

VII. How to get teachers instructed —

- (1.) Two holiday courses might be held annually—a summer course in Hobart, and a winter or Easter course in Launceston, each course to last about a fortnight or 3 weeks.

If found desirable, such classes might also be arranged in other districts ; for example, Devonport.

- (2.) In connection with the Model Schools' training classes for teachers, instruction in this work might be given on Saturday mornings. (At present about 30 teachers attend classes for Singing and Drawing on Saturday mornings.) Course to consist of from 15-20 lessons.
- (3.) A similar work might be done in Launceston. Teachers from the city and vicinity might attend a course of instruction given on alternate Saturdays (15-20 days annually.)

As the majority of pupil teachers in Hobart and Launceston have to go to the outlying districts, the small schools far away from the larger centres will soon benefit by the Scheme.

VIII. Literature and diagrams to be sent to those teachers who are unable to attend instruction classes.

IX. As the Gymnasium in Hobart is centrally situated with regard to State Schools, the senior classes (5th and 6th) could be put through their physical culture there. They might have one lesson weekly, and the boys and girls would be taught separately. The head teachers of the different schools would very much appreciate it, and have expressed themselves to the fact that it could easily be worked into the school curriculum. About 400 children would be instructed under this scheme.

X. Can we afford it? Good work can be done with an expenditure of from £300 to £500, at first, annually. The country can afford to spend money on improving its live-stock. Can it not afford to spend such a small sum on improving its thousands of children physically?

Modern education should include the whole man, and not only the moral and intellectual part of his nature. Our present system largely ignores his physical aspects. Our great men all emphasise this part of the education. Gladstone said, "Money spent on developing the body pays a larger interest than any other investment."

The countries which are constantly mentioned as leading in educational matters introduced Physical Culture into their national schools half a century ago. National Physical Culture would give to the coming generation increased ability to do work with body and brain, and therefore greater prosperity, better health, and therefore greater happiness. Can we afford not to have it?

DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF PHYSICAL CULTURE IN THE STATE  
SCHOOLS OF TASMANIA, UNDER PROPOSED SCHEME.

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*In Hobart.*—In connection with the Model School's training classes for Teachers, instruction should be given in Physical Culture, lectures and lessons to be given on alternate Saturdays. The course would consist of 18 lessons annually; lessons would include both theoretical and practical instruction; each lesson to occupy about two hours.

*Holiday Courses.*—During January, an Instruction Class should be held. The Director of Physical Culture should take charge of the Class, and give such instruction to Teachers as is indicated in the Scheme. The course should last two or three weeks, and lectures, instruction, &c., occupy from three to five hours daily.

*State Schools.*—Instruction should be given to the 5th and 6th classes of the Hobart State Schools at the Gymnasium in the Barracks. Boys and girls to be taught separately. Each pupil should get one lesson weekly during three quarters, the first quarter being omitted; a quarter to last for 10 weeks; a lesson to last from three-quarters to one hour. Eight lessons weekly would be the maximum number needed at present.

*In Launceston.*—A course of instruction should be held on alternate Saturdays, similar to that held in Hobart. Two or three hours should be given to the work each morning; the annual course to consist of 18 such visits to Launceston.

*Holiday Course.*—Between the dates of June 10th and July 20th, a course of two or three weeks duration should be held. It would be conducted on the same lines as the Hobart course. The daily work should be 3 to 5 hours of lectures, instruction, &c.

*Sundry Duties.*—Literature—The Director of Physical Culture should prepare such drills and diagrams as the Hon. the Minister of Education may wish printed—to be forwarded to Teachers who are unable to attend instruction classes.

*Apparatus.*—To prepare and supply detailed information about calisthenic and fixed apparatus suitable for the work in the Department.

To give advice to teachers in matters relating to the question of fixing play-ground apparatus, and fitting up gymnasias, &c.

ROUGH ESTIMATES OF PROBABLE COST.

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Salary of Director of Physical Culture .....	£	250
Travelling allowances to same :—		
Launceston holiday course .....	£10	}
“ Saturday visit .....	£10	
		23 maximum
If any inspection has to be done, another three pounds may have to be added.		
Purchase of the apparatus required for the work in Launceston...		10
Allowance for additional apparatus required at Hobart Gymnasium, £7 to £10.....		7
Printing drills, plans of apparatus, circulars, and contingencies, £20 to £50.....		20
		£310
Supplying 50 Schools with Clubs, Dumb-bells, and Wands; each School getting a 20 to 24 set; that is sufficient for that number of Children to drill at once.....		100
		£410