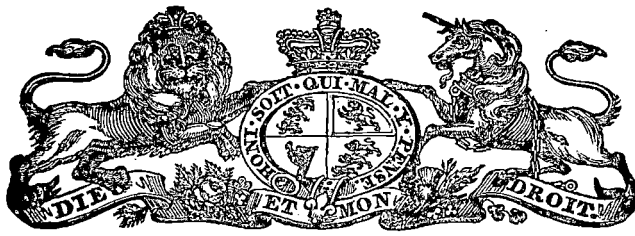


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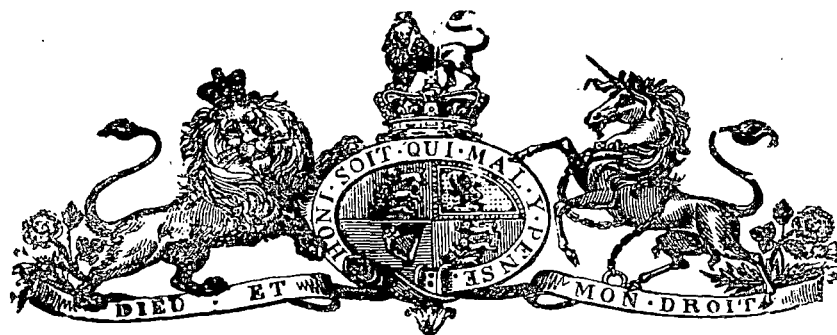
1887.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

SANITARY CONDITION OF PART OF
GLEBE TOWN :

INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

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



Hobart, 12th March, 1887.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour, by direction of the President of the Central Board of Health, to forward herewith, for your information, a copy of Report made, under your authority,* by Mr. Mault, upon the sanitary condition of part of Glebe Town, and to inform you that a copy of the same has also been forwarded to the Glebe Town Local Board, with the recommendation that the suggestions contained in paragraph 10 of the said Report for the effectual remedying of the unsatisfactory condition of the district be immediately adopted and carried out at as early a date as possible.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. H. GRAHAM, *Secretary.*

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

* Date of authority, 8th instant.

REPORT on the Sanitary Condition of part of GLEBE TOWN.

To the President and Members of the Central Board of Health.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN,

1. IN accordance with your instructions, I have made an inspection of the locality in Glebe Town in which cases of typhoid fever have occurred, and have the honor to report to you the result.

2. Two cases occurred in a house in Davenport-street, situated opposite the end of Shoobridge-street. This house is a four-roomed cottage, and is inhabited by eight persons, of whom four are adults. The back yard is unpaved, and the ashes with which it was once covered seem now to be so completely incorporated with the earth and soil of the natural surface that it is impossible to keep it satisfactorily clean. There is a grated gully under the water-tap, and a covered drain thence to the gutter in the street. Poultry are kept in this back yard. In an outhouse there is a privy with a movable pail, that is now emptied once a fortnight by the persons who have contracted for the service under the Local Board of Health.

3. The position of the house, half way up the hillside, and the character of the natural undulations of the surface, made it liable to receive all the drainage of the houses at the top of the street and from those that front the Queen's Domain. The consequence was that the hillside above the house was to a great extent saturated with sewage. When the streets of Glebe Town were made, about five months ago, provision was made for carrying off this sewage by the street gutter running

just in front of the house. To get to this gutter part of the sewage, including that from a stable manure heap, had to run along a little open unpaved channel dug in the earth, which delivered it upon the footpath, over some length of which it spread itself before it fell into the paved gutter. On the last Sunday in January the rain fell in such quantities that the water overflowed the little channel above mentioned, and, resuming its old course, ran down the hillside and inundated the basement of the house in question; and shortly thereafter the fever broke out therein.

4. The other case of typhoid fever occurred in a house at the other end of Shoobridge-street, where the only insalubrious conditions to be noted are the open gutter-drain in front, and the want of proper paving in the back yard. The only access to the house is by Davenport-street, with its open drains.

5. None of the cases of fever were fatal, and the patients are now all convalescent.

6. There is a dairyman's establishment in Lillie-street, lower down the hillside, but within a few yards of the rear of the premises in Davenport-street in which the two cases of typhoid fever occurred. Nine cows and a horse are kept. The byre in which seven of the kine are kept was clean, as it has a wooden floor. The shed in which the other two are kept, and the stable and stable-yard, are so ill paved that it is impossible to keep them clean. The milk-room is unfortunately placed on the sunny side of the house, and, when visited on the 9th instant, wanted white-washing and cleaning. The drains from the house, stable, and byres are open unpaved ditches, running the whole length of the yard, and across it, to a little pipe-drain laid under the footpath into the gutter of Lillie-street. There was no flow through the pipe, as the sewage stagnates in many parts of the ditches that are lower than their outfalls. The whole yard is unpaved, and its rough surface of trodden dung and dirt cannot be properly swept. By the side of the house there is a small garden, in which the contents of the closet-pail have been buried, with a little lime from time to time.

7. The water supply of Glebe Town is obtained from the Hobart waterworks, but it is delivered in very insufficient quantities to Davenport and Shoobridge-streets. A single $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch service pipe, about 200 yards long, originally intended to supply two houses, is made to do duty as a street main, and supply all the houses (nine) in lower Davenport and Shoobridge-streets; consequently, the upper houses have usually only a dribble, and often no water at all. A cast-iron main was laid some time since, but no connexions have been made with it. In the meanwhile the $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pipe is left lying loose in the gutter down which the sewage flows. If the pipe leak,—and it certainly does in other places—and if the water mains in the neighbourhood be emptied, sewage might be drawn by the consequent suction into the pipe, and the water poisoned. Even if this do not happen, it is not an agreeable sight to see a thin water-pipe lying in a trough of sewage.

8. The streets, as before mentioned, were partly made about five months ago. The work, probably with the idea of saving money, was very imperfectly and inefficiently done. Footpaths were made, and gutters were paved (with random rubble stone) only on one side of each street; and where the streets were metalled it was only on the side adjoining the paved gutter. On the other side, the surface—often of soft earth moved to form the embankment—is left uncovered, and a gutter for sewage is made by the earthen bank of the footpath—that is, without either curb or pavement. Where this occurs the streets are up steep hillsides, and carters, naturally choosing to avoid the loose metalling, drive over the earthen surface; their wheels sink in, especially in the gutters, and the sewage is taken by the ruts all over the unmetalled portion of the roads, and the nuisance is thus greatly aggravated.

9. There is no scavenging service in the district; and, until recently, the sewage from the streets was delivered upon the surface of Park-street, where it formed a nuisance so intolerable that the Park-street sewer was prolonged to the end of Davenport-street, where a trapped gully with a grating was built. But still the only existing means of getting rid of the sewage from the houses in which the fever occurred, as from all the other houses, is to let it run down the open gutters, paved or unpaved, for the whole length of the streets to the newly-built gully. The streets seem to be still under the control of the contractor. The gutters have not been cleansed since the first outbreak of fever five weeks ago, and the paved one in Shoobridge-street is especially offensive, and the unpaved one in Davenport-street still worse. It is one of the many great drawbacks to the use of street gutters for sewage that they make it doubly dangerous and offensive by repetition. The smells are bad enough and noxious enough that are exhaled as it flows along the side of the footpath depositing its slime, but they have to be endured again with aggravation when the putrid slime has to be stirred up for removal.

10. The only effectual remedy for the unsatisfactory condition of the district is to keep all sewage off the streets by constructing underground drains. These might have been more cheaply laid while the streets were being made. They will not be costly now. Nearly every house has drains laid into the gutters, so that in most cases all that will be necessary is to make a sewer to that already constructed in Park-street. In cases where the premises are not properly drained, or the yards not

properly paved, notices should be given to the owners to do the necessary work. The attention of the Waterworks authorities should also be called to the condition of things described in paragraph 7.

I have the honour to remain,
Mr. President and Gentlemen,
Your faithful Servant,

A. MAULT.

Central Board of Health, Hobart,
10th March, 1887.

P.S.—Since writing the above, one of the contractor's men has been round to "clean" the gutters. He has shovelled the mud out of the paved gutters, and a small part of that out of the unpaved ones, and spread it upon the surface of the streets for the sun and air to dry. The smell is most offensive. And when it is remembered that this mud is, in part, the deposit of sewage from houses in which there have been cases of typhoid fever, the dangerous character of the whole proceeding must be superadded to its nastiness.