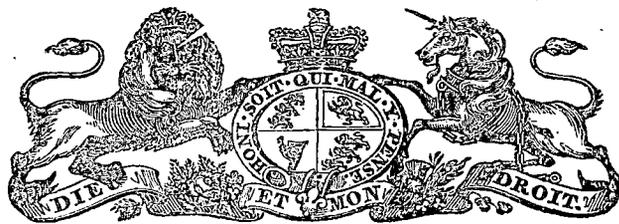


(No. 19.)



1867.

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TASMANIA.

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CHAPLAINCIES.

CORRESPONDENCE.

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Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, 31 January, 1867.



Hobart Town, 5th September, 1866.

To His Excellency the Governor in Council.

SIR,

1. I HAVE the honor, most respectfully, to bring under the kind consideration of Your Excellency certain proceedings which have taken place within the last few days in the House of Assembly, and which deeply affect the spiritual interests of the most helpless, destitute, and afflicted of the flock entrusted to my spiritual care: I refer to the abolition of the Chaplaincies of the Queen's Asylum, the Gaols, the Hospitals, and the Houses of Correction.

2. By these proceedings it would appear to be the desire of the House of Assembly, so far at least as that House is concerned, to exclude religious instruction and religious ministrations from these Institutions altogether, or to reduce them to so unsettled and unsatisfactory a state as to render them unproductive of any solid or permanent advantage. Nor is it now for the first time, I regret to observe, this desire has been made manifest, for I find the House of Assembly passed last year the following Resolution:—"That, inasmuch as the acceptance of the burden of the maintenance of the Queen's Asylum out of the public revenue can only be justified as being the recognition of the duty of the State to feed and clothe the destitute, it is the opinion of this House that the admission of denominational teaching as an element in the management of the Institution not only forms no part of such obligation, but, as experience has shown, lessens the value of the Asylum as a practical training school for labour."

3. The interpretation which this Resolution naturally bears is to the effect that, whilst it is the duty of the State to feed and clothe the destitute, it is no part of its duty to provide them with religious instruction; nay, that religious instruction would prove rather injurious than beneficial, as interfering with the training for labour which those children require.

4. Now it is devoutly to be hoped that the principle propounded in the foregoing Resolution will never find favour or acceptance in Tasmania, and that its Legislature will recognise its obligation to a higher duty than that of treating its Orphans as merely irrational creatures without immortal souls, viz., the duty of providing that their young minds shall be imbued with the principles of the Christian religion, and that they shall thus be disposed to discharge honestly, truthfully, and virtuously the various duties which in after life they shall be called upon to perform.

5. This doctrine of merely clothing and feeding the destitute has been truly described by an honorable Member of the House of Assembly in the following terms:—"It was monstrous to think of bringing up so many children without giving them religious instruction. Honorable Members could not go to sleep with their consciences alive if they advocated such a course. They should be taught the principles of their religion by clergymen. It was absurd to think of leaving it to the schoolmasters. The mere act of their going to church was nothing. They must put religion into the Children by teaching them. They did not want to bring the Children up as heathens, and in total ignorance of their religion, and the religion of their parents." Another honorable Member declared "it was impossible for any Ministry to allow 550 Children to be taught by charity."

6. And, surely, when the circumstances under which those Children are placed in the Asylum, and the dangers with which they will be surrounded after leaving it, are taken into consideration, it will be at once acknowledged that such Children above all others require a watchful and early training in the principles of religion and morality. The following statement on this point is made by Dr. Coverdale, the Principal of the Asylum, in his last Report, bearing date 22nd July, 1866:—"Considering the idiosyncracies of the Children, the surrounding circumstances of their early life, and the character of their parents, it would be too great a stretch of charity to believe that the unfortunate Inmates of the Asylum, as a body, could be otherwise than defective in mental capacity and physical vigour."

7. To educate such Children without the aid and direction of religion would be attended with the most baneful consequences, not only to the Children themselves, but to the community at large. They would become worse than the ill-fated Aborigines of this Island, the prints of whose footsteps would have scarcely disappeared when succeeded by a race more immoral, more dishonest, and more dangerous to society. It would, I am confident, occasion the deepest sorrow to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, whose honored name the Asylum bears, to learn that its Inmates were doomed to so deplorable a condition.

8. It has been suggested by some Honorable Members that charity would move many individuals to discharge gratuitously the duties of religious teachers; but it must be borne in mind that the services of volunteers are always uncertain and irresponsible, and that charity grows cold. Hence duties which are most important in themselves, and which require regularity in their performance, ought not to be left to such precarious ministrations. In reference to this matter, an Honorable Member of the House of Assembly thus appropriately expressed himself:—"The Government was Father and Mother of these Children, and religious teaching was the first duty and desideratum, and to do away with the Chaplains was to do away with all religious education; for any such education as could be supplied without them would be desultory and altogether unsatisfactory. The labours of these gentlemen were not confined to a Sunday service, but were daily."

9. It has been asserted by an Honorable Member that the Children could be sufficiently instructed by their Secular Masters and Mistresses in all that has been taught them by their Chaplains, inasmuch as they were incapable, before the age of 12 years, of understanding dogmatic Theology. It is quite true that Children of such tender age are incompetent to comprehend abstruse questions of Theology. Such questions, which form part of the education of clergymen, have never been taught them. Still they are capable of comprehending, and, by a precept of their religion, Catholic Children are under an obligation of knowing the principal mysteries of religion,—the Unity and Trinity of God, the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of our Saviour, the Atonement made for Sin, what is commanded and forbidden by the Decalogue, and the precepts of their Church, the efficacy of prayer, the Sacraments, and the dispositions necessary for receiving them worthily. That the Catholic Children now in the Asylum have been instructed and grounded in those requirements I am prepared, from my own knowledge, to state, as well as from the Report of the Examination conducted at the Asylum on 19th December, 1865. The late Very Rev. Dr. Hall, who examined the Children on the occasion, says in his Report:—"Some of the Children, both Girls and Boys, especially in the upper classes, answered remarkably well, showing that much attention had been given to the instruction imparted to them." Now, it is manifest that Secular Teachers are not competent to discharge the duty of imbuing the Children's minds with this knowledge of religion. It is the clergyman alone, who teaches with Divine authority, that can communicate religious knowledge with effect, and plant in the hearts of children those seeds of piety which in future will be productive of abundant fruit. Moreover, it is the rule of the Asylum that the Inmates be apprenticed, and sent upon the world at the age of 12 years. Should they then leave the Asylum without any knowledge of religion, it is morally certain they will never acquire it. For it is during the period that elapses before 12 years of age that the strongest and most lasting impressions are made, and when the child becomes "father to the man."

10. Other Honorable Members have asserted that it is the duty of the Bishops to appoint Chaplains to the public Institutions, and to have them salaried out of the State Aid Funds. Now it must be taken into consideration that these Chaplaincies have always formed a separate department, having special and distinct duties attached to them, and requiring the distinct services of clergymen to perform these duties. Were the Inmates of these Institutions dispersed throughout the different Districts of the Island, they would have the advantage of the pastoral care of the several clergymen who reside in those Districts. But having been brought together into one place, they require the constant attention and care of their own special Chaplains. Again, these Chaplaincies existed during the time the Imperial Government had charge of these Institutions, and have been continued since the State Aid Distribution Bill passed into law, up to the present time. Whence it follows that it was never contemplated that the Chaplains should be paid out of the State Aid Funds, which were solely intended for the general purposes of religion in the Colony. Permit me to add that the portion of the State Aid Funds which is allotted to the Catholics has been long since apportioned and distributed among the several clergy throughout the Diocese, as is shown by the Annual Report, the Chaplains of the Public Institutions receiving only a trifling share of it. To withdraw, therefore, from those Clergymen now the amounts which they receive from the public funds, and upon which they mainly depend for their support, would be tantamount to depriving some of them of the means of residing in their Districts, and the inhabitants of the advantages which are derived from their presence among them.

11. The above observations, which refer particularly to the Queen's Asylum, can be applied with slight modification to the other Public Institutions affected by the vote of the House of Assembly. I believe it to be true that in every Christian Country where the State takes the sick, the prisoner, and the destitute under its own management and control, responsible Chaplains are appointed to regularly provide for their spiritual wants, and to afford them the consolations of religion.

12. I need hardly say that religious instruction is an important element in the reformation of prisoners; but it may not be out of place to produce the testimony given by the Inspectors of Prisons in England, in reference to the wise provisions made by the British Legislature for the spiritual guidance and instruction of Roman Catholic Prisoners by members of their own flock. These gentlemen are well skilled in watching and deciding upon the conduct of convicts, and they write thus after three years' experience of the new system:—"It is with much pleasure that we record the benefits which have arisen from the appointment, by the Secretary of State, of visiting Roman Catholic Priests at Millbank, Parkhurst, Portsmouth, Dartmoor, and Fulham. The effect on the convicts has been marked, and the recognition by the State of their claim to the ministration of a clergyman of their own persuasion has been the source of a great improvement in their outward conduct. The visiting Priests who have been nominated by Bishops of their Church to the Secretary of State have fulfilled their duties with zeal and an anxious solicitude for the good of those in their care; and all those now holding the office of visiting Priests have been careful to conform to the prison regulations, and to avoid all grounds of differences. We believe the measure to have been attended with unmixed good results."—"Tablet," 2nd June, 1866.

13. The same may be said in respect to the benefit of religion in effecting the cure of the Insane, who also are threatened with the abolition of their Chaplaincy.

14. Attention to the sick and the dying is a most important and arduous duty, occupying a great portion of the clergyman's time and labour, and frequently requiring his presence by night as well as by day. To the sick and dying there is no greater consolation than that afforded by religion, and no obligation more binding than that of affording it to them. To deprive them of this consolation would be not only an injustice, but a cruelty.

15. I believe it will not be denied that the Chaplains attending these Public Institutions have been zealous in the discharge of their respective duties, and have strictly conformed to the rules of the several Establishments visited by them.

16. I, therefore, most respectfully beg leave to request that Your Excellency will be pleased to cause such measures to be adopted as will provide regular religious instruction by responsible Clergymen to the Orphan, the Insane, the Sick, and the Prisoner of this Colony, and to prevent the evils which must necessarily result from their being deprived of it.

I have the honor to be,

Your Excellency's humble and obedient Servant,

† DANIEL MURPHY, *Bishop of Hobart Town.*

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*Colonial Secretary's Office, 22nd November, 1866.*

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th of September, addressed to His Excellency the Governor in Council, on the subject of the Chaplaincies to the Gaols, Hospitals, &c., and in reply to inform you that the salaries for those appointments have been inserted in the Estimates which have been prepared to lay before Parliament.

I have the honor to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's very obedient Servant,

(Signed) JAMES WHYTE.

*The Right Reverend Bishop Murphy.*

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*Hobart Town, 21st January, 1867.*

*To His Excellency the Governor in Council.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to address Your Excellency with reference to my office of Roman Catholic Chaplain at the Queen's Orphan Asylum, which, I have been informed, it is proposed to abolish.

On the transfer of the Orphan Schools to the Colonial Government, in December, 1859, I was appointed Chaplain to that Institution, at a salary of £150 per annum; and in consideration of my being obliged to reside in Hobart Town, an allowance of £50 per annum was granted in lieu of forage. From that time, therefore, and for some years previously under the Imperial Government, I have performed the duties of the above office, as well as those of Guardian to the Asylum.

These duties are, chiefly, Divine Service every Sunday morning and afternoon, and also on the other Festivals of our Church, during the year; and on every Wednesday the whole day is given to religious instruction of the Children in classes. I have also to visit the Infant School and Hospitals frequently, and to perform funeral service in cases of death.

In addition to these clerical duties, much of my time is occupied as one of the Guardians appointed by Government under the Queen's Asylum Act. I have to attend the regular meeting of Guardians at the Asylum once a week. I have frequently to write letters, and ascertain information most necessary to be known, regarding the fitness of persons applying for apprentices. When Catholic Children are apprenticed, I communicate with the clergyman of the district they are sent to, and secure his care and attention towards them. Many Children are apprenticed in and around Hobart Town. I am frequently called upon to visit these Children, to advise and restrain them, as also to protect them from improper treatment.

These duties, connected with the office of Guardian, it may be easily seen, occupy a great portion of my time and attention.

This appointment, as Chaplain, having been always regarded as a permanent one, the only provision made from the State Aid Grant for the Clergyman filling it is a sum of £50 per annum to supplement his salary from the Asylum.

I may also remark that the Catholic Chaplain has none of the advantages possessed by the Protestant Chaplain to the Institution, who resides on the spot, and has a house, garden, and land provided for him by the Government, besides a well-endowed Church and Parish.

Thus has the spiritual as well as the temporal welfare of the immense number of Children who have passed through this Asylum been hitherto most charitably provided for by the Government. But if these arduous and important duties are to be henceforth left to chance,—to mere volunteers, who cannot be held responsible,—or to masters and mistresses who may be quite unfit to impart religious instruction, the consequences must be most lamentable. For it should be remembered that these poor Children have had little or no teaching or care at home, and consequently enter the Asylum in a woeful state of ignorance; many are dull of intellect, and being now apprenticed at the tender age of twelve years, if the ground-work of religion is not laid before leaving the Asylum, and they be not afterwards diligently watched when thrown on the world, they will never obtain it, and the greater part of these Children will become a pest to society.

May I, therefore, respectfully request that Your Excellency will be pleased to reconsider this important subject, and make such provision as will ensure the moral and religious instruction and spiritual welfare of the Children of this Institution?

I have the honor to be,

Your Excellency's most humble and obedient Servant,

GEO. HUNTER, *Chaplain.*