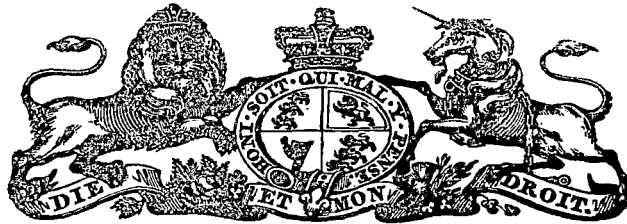


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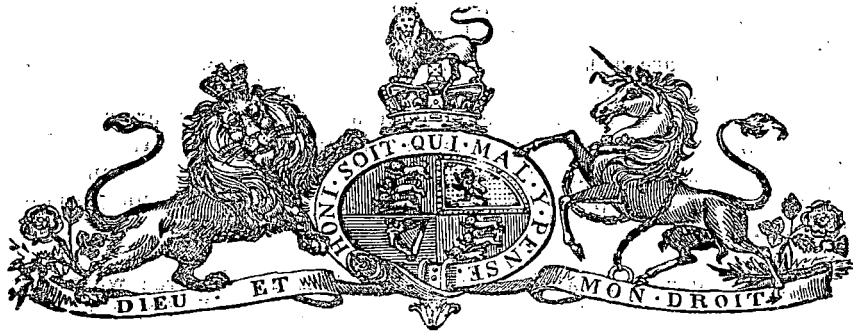
T A S M A N I A.

H O U S E O F A S S E M B L Y.

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA :

MEMORANDUM FROM THE COUNCIL OF EDUCATION.

Laid upon the Table by the Attorney-General, and ordered by the House to be printed, August 3, 1882.



TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF EDUCATION.

MEMORANDUM.

REPORT of Council of Education as to the expediency of applying to Parliament to make Amendments in "The Tasmanian Council of Education and Scholarship Act."

1. THE Council of Education is of opinion that the time has come to bring again under the consideration of Parliament the expediency of founding a University of Tasmania.

2. As far back as in the year 1875 the Council affirmed that such a change in our educational scheme was desirable, and two of its Members, Mr. Justice Dobson and Dr. Butler, prepared a draft Bill to give it effect. The Bill passed the House of Assembly, but reached the Upper House too late in the session for consideration, and since that time it has not been revived.

3. The Council desires to restate and, on further experience, confirm the reasons, given in an Appendix to this Memorandum, which, in 1875, moved the Council to propose the establishment of a University. As a provisional arrangement to foster learning in the youth of the Colony, the scheme of the Council has been admirably suited to our past conditions, and has achieved most gratifying results in the high standard of its examinations, in the benefits which it has thrown open to every class in the community; and in the number of students it has incited to compete for its honours. But the operation of the scheme for twenty-two years has disclosed some defects which it is desirable to remedy.

4. The most admirable part of our present arrangement is the "ladder" of Exhibitions and Scholarships which the wisdom of Parliament has set up. At comparatively small cost it has proved very effective to stimulate learning. It enables the poorest boy, who has diligence and ability, to rise from the common school to the Tasmanian Scholarship. But considered as a system of education there is room in our plan for improvement. Our radical failing seems to be that we are not moving on the lines of a University course, or, at least, that we do not sufficiently regard the regular stages of its ascent. We cannot grade our scheme with the ordinary curriculum. Our Degree of Associate of Arts is, in our circumstances, somewhat anomalous. We have no Faculty of Arts to be "associated" with. The term is borrowed from the Oxford Local Examinations, and denotes an adjunct rather than a constituent part of University training; but it pre-supposes a University. It has no determinate value, and may mean anything from a point below matriculation to the equivalent of a second year in a curriculum. Outside the Colony the worth of our A.A. as a test of proficiency is hardly known. Every one understands in a broad way the measure of attainment that is indicated by matriculation or by the Degree of B.A.; yet we have nothing in our scheme that answers to either. And though our A.A. is really equivalent to the first year of a University, it fails to secure the recognition it deserves. The Committee think that no time should be lost in adjusting our system to the recognised grades of University training.

5. The Council sees no reason to disturb the provisions of the Act in respect to the Tasmanian Scholarships. If we had a University, the subjects of examination required by law might all be embraced in the pass for the Degree of B.A. The other conditions, in regard to age, residence, and admission to a British University, may also remain as they are.

6. The benefits to accrue from the Examination for the Tasmanian Scholarships may be extended with advantage to the interests of higher education. Unlike the A.A., the Scholarship holds out no inducement to go up to its examination for the sake of obtaining a mark of proficiency. Hence many promising boys decline it if they know that two cleverer boys mean to contend for the prize. The examination is not valued for its own sake, and as a test of education. It is reduced to a mere struggle among a few for a grand monetary boon; and as even with them the alternative is to get the coveted

prize or nothing, the unsuccessful competitor loses heart, and does not care to prosecute his studies any further. It may also happen that the boy who gains the Scholarship in one year does so though he may possibly be of inferior merit to the lowest of his unlucky predecessors of the year before. The accidents of the year are a large factor in the issue. The Council is of opinion that some means should be provided for duly honouring those who have failed only relatively and by accident; and that the examination should be such as will allure boys who are ambitious of the honour of passing it but who may not care to compete for the material prize. It would, perhaps, be better to merge the particular examination for the Scholarship into the general examination for the Degree of B.A., and then the Scholarship could be awarded to the two highest who pass under the conditions which the law prescribes.

7. The difficulty, however, has been suggested that any Degree which, as an unchartered University, we could confer, would carry no weight beyond the limits of the Colony (though we might hope soon to gain at least the partial recognition of our Australian neighbours); and that it would do us no good, and certainly would not help our scholars, if on their entrance at Oxford or Cambridge they were to represent themselves as having already passed the Tasmanian B.A. Perhaps the difficulty could be met by making it the condition of the Scholarship that the winner must take it without the Degree that we should otherwise confer; or some other way might be devised to avoid exposing ourselves to premature and unnecessary disparagement. All this could, however, be made matter of arrangement by the Council without accentuating it by Act of Parliament.

8. To sum up the disadvantages of continuing our present system which, in the judgment of the Council, call for amendment,—though our Tasmanian scheme has rendered admirable service in the past conditions of the Colony, and though its gradation of Exhibitions and Scholarships is all that could be desired, it is in other respects becoming less suitable to our growing wants. It so far fails that it is not adjusted to the ordinary curriculum of academic training. We have no matriculation. Our A.A. Degree cannot be graded with any recognised stage of a University career. Beyond Tasmania the A.A. is not understood, and, therefore, it is undervalued. In regard to our highest Scholarships, they require a competitive examination for a valuable prize, which is awarded to relative excellence, but takes no account of positive attainments in those who fall short of the highest number of marks. Thus, against the intention of Parliament and the interests of higher education, it discourages those who fail only by comparison; and, apart from the prize, the examination offers no inducement to our youth to study beyond the A.A.

9. The Council sees no other course in the way of substantial improvement than to constitute for ourselves a Tasmanian University, with power to confer Degrees and to adjust the stages of learning to the ordinary curriculum. If care be taken to maintain a high standard of examination, and to secure the services of well-known and highly qualified examiners, we may gain a repute for efficiency which will soon command the respect of our Australian neighbours, and which may prepare the way in a few years for a reasonable application to the Crown for a charter.

HENRY BUTLER, *President.*

Hobart, June, 1882.

APPENDIX.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT of the Tasmanian Council of Education, 1875.

To His Excellency FREDERICK ALOYSIUS WELD, *Esquire, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Island of Tasmania and its Dependencies.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

THE Council of Education is of opinion that the benefits to be derived from the examinations held under its direction could, without extra expenditure, be advantageously extended; and that to attain that end it is desirable that alterations should be made in its constitution and functions. Amongst the defects in the present system the following may be specially mentioned:—

1. In the examination of boys under fourteen years of age for the Council's Exhibitions many boys attain the required standard, but the first two only secure Exhibitions, and the others receive no recognition of their proficiency.

2. In the examination for the Scholarships, Candidates are required to attain a higher standard than would entitle them to a Pass Degree of B.A. at the University of Oxford, Cambridge, or Melbourne; and although the Colony is at the expense of holding yearly an examination of so high a standard, yet it does not take advantage of it for any other purpose than to decide whether the two annual Scholarships shall or shall not be conferred. Two boys alone can receive any mark of recognition of their having

passed these examinations. Candidates have attained a standard which would have entitled them to a Degree of B.A. at any University, but failing to attain a Scholarship some first class boys have gone unrewarded, and their proficiency has passed unrecognised by the Council. Thus no inducement is held out to boys to continue their studies; for although they might be able to attain a standard which would entitle them to a Degree of B.A., they may know that there are at least two cleverer boys of the year who must beat them in the personal competition for the Scholarships. Moreover, those who have passed the age within which they may compete for a Scholarship have now no inducement held out to them to pursue their studies.

The Council of Education holds three examinations in every year:—

1. For boys under fourteen years of age who are candidates for the Council's Exhibitions.
2. For candidates for the Degree of A.A.
3. For candidates for the Scholarships.

The examination for Exhibitions embraces subjects similar to those prescribed for matriculation by the University of Melbourne.

The examination for the Degree of A.A. is at least equal to the first year's examination in a University curriculum.

For the second year's examination in such a curriculum the Council has no equivalent.

Corresponding to the third year's, or Degree examination, the Council holds its Scholarships examination. So that except as the second year's examination the Council is already holding examinations which are very closely analogous in value and character to the known course of examinations held in British Universities.

It is desirable that the Exhibition examination should, in addition to its present objects, hereafter become a recognised step, and be the matriculation examination in a regular curriculum, instead of having no coherence with or relation to the A.A. and Scholarship examinations. This being so, the present preliminary examination for the A.A. Degree would not be required.

It is also desirable that advantage should be taken of the Scholarship examination, not only to examine all who are desirous of presenting themselves as candidates for a Scholarship, but also all who desire to be examined as to whether they have attained a standard equal to an ordinary Pass Degree of B.A. (say) in the University of Melbourne. Power to confer the Degree of B.A. on all who attain such standard should be created.

In order to render that Degree one of practical value, and one which will be recognised out of Tasmania, it must be conferred by a *University*. A University need not be a building for teaching, nor a body of teachers and scholars, but a body of persons empowered to examine candidates and confer Degrees. Such is the University of London, which carries on its work in rooms in Burlington House. For some years that University was not recognised by the Crown, and not until after it had been in existence for about 10 years a Royal Charter was granted to it. Such also is the University of France; while the University of Dublin admits non-resident students to its Examinations and Degrees.

The University of Melbourne was constituted by Act of the Parliament of Victoria, but no Royal Charter declaring that its Degrees should be recognised throughout the British Dominions was granted for some years afterwards; up to which time the Degrees conferred were of validity in Victoria only.

It is improbable that Degrees conferred by any Board or Corporate Body other than a *University* will be recognised in any of the sister Colonies; and no Royal Charter could be hoped for until there has been a University in existence for some years, and until its standard of merit has become established.

The necessary expenses of a University are not great. The whole income of the University of Cambridge is less than £2000 a year. That of Oxford is not much more. Several of the Colleges in both Universities are very wealthy, but the Universities have no control over the funds or internal discipline of the Colleges. The establishment of a Tasmanian University would involve no necessary expense beyond that of paying examiners, printing examination papers, and other small incidental charges.

It has been shown that the requisite examinations are already held by the Council, except that of the second year. If this is deemed indispensable, it could be held contemporaneously with the examination for the Degree of Associate in Arts, and by the same Examiners. The preliminary examination would be dispensed with, and so far the examination work for the A.A. Degree would be reduced; and but little extra remuneration would be required to secure the services of the Examiners to conduct both examinations together. This remuneration might be easily provided by charging a small fee to candidates,—a course which is adopted in almost all Universities.

To provide then for the necessary expenses of the University, and to afford the character of stability to the institution, the same provision only which the Legislature has during the last 14 years annually made for the expenses of the Council of Education should be permanently secured to the University,—the Council ceasing to exist as such, and the University undertaking its functions.

An institution so founded, and maintaining for a few years a reasonably high standard of scholarship for its Degrees, would probably have little difficulty in obtaining a Royal Charter declaring that its Degrees shall be recognised as academic distinctions throughout Her Majesty's Dominions, and thereupon the youth graduating at the University would become entitled to the benefits which accrue to the graduate of a British University.

In the constitution of the University it is desirable that the Governor for the time being should be the Visitor, and that in the election of Members to the Council of the University every Tasmanian Scholar and all graduates above A.A. should be entitled to vote.

The suggested alterations would at once create a University in the germ, the growth and development of which would depend upon the future requirements of the Colony. It is not improbable that in course of time endowments to aid in teaching up to the required standard would be made, and that institutions for that purpose would become affiliated to it, as we find in the case of the London University, with which there are now collected more than 40 Colleges and Schools, including amongst their number King's College, London, Stonyhurst College, and Bishop Stortford Collegiate School.

If the University once became favourably known, there can be little doubt that the advantage of the climate of this Colony would induce our neighbours who live in the warmer parts of Australia to send their sons to reap the benefits to be derived from making Tasmania their place of study.

The outline of the present scheme having been submitted to Professor Irving, who has always taken a deep interest in the cause of higher education in Tasmania, he writes as follows:—"In its conception I consider it excellent; in fact I am lost in wonder why it never occurred to me that you might thus take up the examining apart from the teaching function. * * * Your scheme will give unity and coherence to the whole thing—will encourage the second-raters, who now drop all study, to persevere, and will, I should say, probably eventuate in a good College for training lads beyond the Grammar School work."

It should not be forgotten that the benefits derived under our system of higher education are open to all classes. The boys primarily trained in our Public Schools under the Board of Education have already largely participated in the honors and rewards conferred by the Council. Out of thirty Exhibitions granted twelve have been gained by boys originally trained at these schools. Six of such boys have attained a first class degree of A.A., one of a second class Degree, one matriculated at Melbourne, and the other four are studying for the A.A. Degree. Three have attained the standard fixed for the Scholarship Examination.

The present system has gradually raised the standard of higher education in Tasmania to a degree but little anticipated when the Council of Education commenced its duties, and a foundation has been laid for the progress now indicated.

ARTHUR DAVENPORT, *B.A., President.*

Hobart Town, 10th June, 1875.