

(No. 20.)



1886.

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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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**HOBART BENEVOLENT SOCIETY :**

**REPORT FOR 1885.**

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



*TWENTY-SIXTH Annual Report of the HOBART BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.*

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THE tabular statement and balance-sheet prepared by the Registrar give, so far as figures can give, an insight into the actual work done, and the financial position of the Society.

Compared with the Report for the year 1884, there is an increase in the number of cases and in the expenditure. It does not follow, however, that poverty is on the increase. For some weeks the Invalid Depôt at New Town was so full that females could not be admitted. Instead of troubling the Government, these cases were accepted by the Committee and dealt with as casual cases. This simple circumstance would nearly account for the increase.

The value of the emergency fund, designed to meet cases occasioned by flood and fire, has been amply tested. After the recent flood many applications for aid were received. The assistance of the Superintendent of Police was most valuable. The Registrar and Mr. Kemp presented to the Committee an estimate of actual damage, and the sum of £53 3s. was paid away, as compared with £150 on the previous occasion of flood relief. In several instances remonstrances, on the ground of loss of self-respect, led to their immediate withdrawal. Although poverty is not a crime, it is certainly not a virtue to be cultivated.

It may interest subscribers to learn that almost from the commencement of the Society it has been customary to give rations for work done. It was found, however, that in some cases the rations were sold, much to the annoyance of small shopkeepers. The Committee consequently resolved on cash payment, and so far the change has worked admirably.

The financial position, eminently satisfactory from one point of view, is equally unsatisfactory from another. The interest on bequests is really the amount available for actual charity. Annual subscriptions, with the Government subsidy of £1 for £1, do not cover the working expenses of the office. Much as the Committee would desire to enlarge and to vary their sphere of labour, particularly in the way of a night refuge, and in better dwellings for the poor, the immediate outlook compels caution and judgment.

During the year the Select Committee on Charitable Grants, appointed by the House of Assembly, reported most favourably on the work of the Society, recommending that the Committee should be left as free as possible from official restraint.

The Benevolent Society exists not only to render aid to the deserving, but also to discourage pauperism and prevent imposition. To quote the words of Mr. Smiles, in his work on "Thrift":—"True benevolence does not consist in giving money, nor can charitable donations, given indiscriminately to the poor, have any other effect than to sap the foundation of self-respect, and break down the very outworks of virtue itself." To avoid this censure has been the object of the Executive of this Institution.

The full return furnished by the Registrar is as follows:—

Cases for 1885.—Number, 147; illness, 64; husbands away, 12; husbands in prison, 4; accidents, 6; widows, 20; destitute, 34; aged and infirm, 7. Adults.—Males, 60; females, 111. Children.—Males, 97; females, 106. Total, 368 individuals, and 5 cases refused. On the books for last year—25 cases, 137 individuals.

Casual relief given to 28 individuals going up the country to seek employment, or into the Depôt, New Town. Work given to 42 men in the wood-yard until they could get employment.



*CAPITAL Account of the HOBART BENEVOLENT SOCIETY, arising from Legacies and Donations, 1885.*

	£	s.	d.
Debentures—T. Y. Lowes.....	2000	0	0
Ditto from sundry other persons.....	2000	0	0
Deposit—M.P. Building Society.....	684	6	6
	<u>£4684</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>

## EMERGENCY.

On the 22nd December, 1881, the Mayor of Hobart (Jas. Harcourt, Esq.) and the Hon. W. H. Burgess waited upon and asked the Executive Committee to take charge of a special fund particularly designed to meet cases by flood and fire, to be called the "Emergency Fund." The sum of £150 was placed at interest. In December, 1885, the sum of £53 was paid to sufferers by flood and fire, which must be deducted from this amount.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTS.

*Charitable Aid, Hobart and Suburbs.*

In addition to the direct work of the Society the Executive Committee undertakes, on behalf of the Government, the outdoor relief of Hobart and suburbs. During 1885 there were 146 cases on the books, including 22 married couples, 57 single women, 25 single men, 42 families, and 130 children. There were 6 cases of desertion by husbands; 1 husband in gaol, unable to find sureties; 1 husband, invalid; 2 orphans; and 35 widows. The sum of £760 17s. was expended in cash, being an increase of £10 17s. over 1884. On the Ration Account there was a decrease of 525 issues, equal to a reduction of £70 16s. cash.