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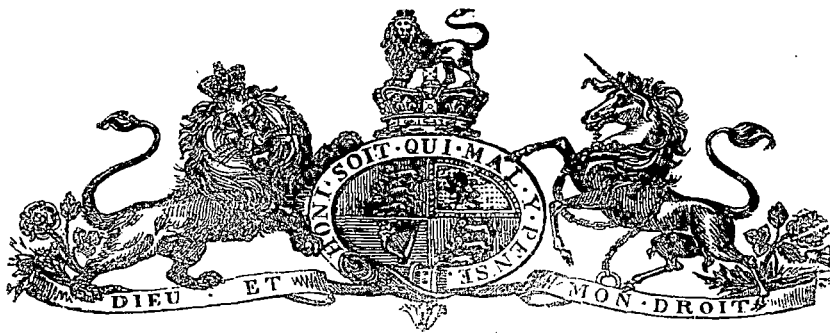
1885.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

**OFFICER OF HEALTH, NEW TOWN, SANDY
BAY, AND WELLINGTON HAMLETS :**

REPORT FOR 1884.

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



REPORT for 1884 of the Officer of Health for the Towns of New Town, Sandy Bay, and Wellington Hamlets.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit my Annual Statistical Report for the Hobart Registration District which includes the three suburban towns, it being inadvisable altogether to separate the statistical details of these towns from those of the city proper.

The population of Tasmania as ascertained by Census in April, 1881, was 115,705. This number, it is estimated by the Statistician, had increased in 1883 to 124,350, and he further estimates the mean population of 1884 to be 128,380, showing an increase in three years of 12,675, or a little over 4000 a year. The number of deaths registered in Tasmania in 1884 was 1990, which is 132 less than in 1883, and at the rate of 15.50 per 1000 of the population. The rate in 1883 was 17.06 per 1000, or 1.56 per 1000 more than in 1884. Passing now to the District of Hobart, including the city with its three suburban towns and the rural districts of Glenorchy and Queenborough, I learn that the mean population for 1884 was estimated at 29,324, or only 676 more than in 1883. The total number of deaths which occurred in this district was 702, giving a death-rate of 23.93 per 1000, or 3.27 per 1000 less than in the previous year. Considering the many circumstances which tend to swell this rate—such as the concentration of pauper invalids at New Town, the deaths of country patients in hospital, those occurring at sea and on ships of war and registered here,—this death-rate must be considered a favourable one, and this satisfactory aspect will be more realised when I come to consider the ages at which death has occurred.

TABLE I.

TABLE of Deaths in the Hobart Registration District for the 10 years 1875–84, inclusive.

<i>Year.</i>	<i>January.</i>	<i>February.</i>	<i>March.</i>	<i>April.</i>	<i>May.</i>	<i>June.</i>	<i>July.</i>	<i>August.</i>	<i>September.</i>	<i>October.</i>	<i>November.</i>	<i>December.</i>	<i>Total of each Year.</i>
1875	48	49	99	102	77	62	55	66	51	55	45	41	750
1876	53	48	48	32	63	47	61	44	44	63	58	52	613
1877	78	64	71	68	57	44	76	72	60	54	56	60	760
1878	61	62	72	51	55	61	51	45	40	46	44	42	630
1879	68	61	64	53	50	53	68	58	44	51	30	41	641
1880	58	62	81	51	36	56	68	47	44	49	48	47	647
1881	66	58	55	40	66	48	49	58	45	44	47	59	635
1882	61	66	53	63	50	47	67	55	46	44	47	68	667
1883	81	63	49	56	67	69	75	72	68	58	61	63	782
1884	63	51	52	43	70	57	72	72	51	55	49	67	702
10 years' average.....	63.7	58.4	64.4	55.9	59.1	54.4	64.2	58.9	49.3	51.9	48.5	54	682.7

Here are tabulated the number of deaths occurring each month during the last ten years, including 1884, while the ten years' average for each month is also given. In previous Reports this table gave monthly details for twenty years, and a twenty years' average; but with an increasing population this is not so useful for purposes of comparison as the shorter period. The 702 deaths which occurred in 1884 are 80 less than in 1883, and only 19.3 more than the mean for the ten years 1875-84. No month had an excessive number of deaths, July and August being least, and April and November most favorable. According to the ten years' average November and September are the most healthy months of the year, and March and July those in which the greatest mortality obtains.

TABLE II.

Months of Year 1884.	Deaths in Hobart Registration District.	Above or below 1883.		Above Below		City Share of Deaths.	New Town Share of Deaths.	Sandy Bay Share of Deaths.	Wellington Share of Deaths.	Invalid Depôts at New Town.
				Ten Years' Mean of the Month.						
January	63	...	- 18	...	0·7	42	15	3	0	12
February	51	...	- 12	...	7·4	30	10	0	2	6
March	52	+ 3	...	...	12·4	29	18	1	1	14
April.....	47	...	- 13	...	12·9	21	14	0	1	7
May.....	70	+ 3	...	10·9	...	39	19	1	1	18
June.....	57	...	- 12	2·6	...	24	27	1	1	27
July.....	72	...	- 3	7·8	...	28	34	1	1	30
August.....	72	+ 0	- 0	13·1	...	38	22	0	3	16
September	51	...	- 17	1·7	...	35	14	1	0	11
October	55	...	- 3	3·1	...	40	7	0	1	6
November	49	...	- 12	0·5	...	33	11	1	3	7
December	67	+ 4	...	13·0	...	40	12	2	3	10
	702	+ 10	- 90	52·7	33·4	399	203	11	17	164
	630					630				
	72	- 80		+ 19·3						

In this table are arranged the monthly deaths for 1884, in contrast, first with those for 1883, and then with the monthly averages for the past ten years. In the latter part of the table each death is arranged topographically, the city and suburban towns having their shares properly allotted. Only on three occasions,—viz., in March, May, and December—were there more deaths in 1884 than in 1883, and then the numbers were very slightly in excess. In August the same number occurred each year; in the other months the totals were in favor of 1884. It is remarkable that the deaths were below the ten years' mean during the first four months, and in excess during the latter eight. The city share of deaths is only 399, which is 108 less than in 1883, and 14 less than in 1882. In 1881, when the Census was taken, the population of the city proper was 21,118; the proportionate increase since then brings the city population to at least 22,726; and this gives a death-rate for the city of 17·55 per 1000,—a very favorable result, but not quite accurate, for some of the deaths of invalids at New Town should be credited to the city proper. The deaths in New Town were 203, but of these 164 were at the Invalid Asylum, leaving 39 for New Town proper, or 6 more than in 1883. The town of Sandy Bay had 11 deaths, the same number as in 1883, and that of Wellington 17, or two more than occurred in 1883. Altogether 630 deaths took place in city and suburbs, leaving 72 deaths to be accounted for. These represent country cases proving fatal in Hospital, deaths at sea registered here, and deaths in the Glenorchy and Queenborough districts.

TABLE III.

Class.	Order.	Disease.	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Total, 1884.	Total, 1883.	Total, 1882.	Total, 1881.	Total, 1880.		
			
1. ZYMOTIC.	Miasmatic.	Scarlatina .....	...	2	...	2	...	1	1	1	1	...	...	...	8	7	4	...	3	
		Diphtheria	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	5	3	4	1	12
		Measles .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	15	...
		Croup .....	...	...	...	...	2	...	1	1	...	...	...	1	5	7	5	8	5	5
		Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20	...	2	7
		Typhoid Fever...	...	...	2	1	3	3	...	2	1	...	...	...	...	12	10	5	...	9
		Erysipelas.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	6	3	1	...	...
		Metria .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	...	1
		Influenza, &c. ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
		Dysentery.....	2	2
		Diarrhœa	7	5	2	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	21	38	32	29	51
		Cholera	1
		Other Zymotic...	1	1	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	4	6	4	8
Enthetic .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	3	2	4	6	2		
Dietic	1	1	1	1	1	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	6	6	9	1	...		
Parasitic	1	...	2	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	1	1	7	3	4	1	3		
ZYMOTIC TOTALS			11	9	8	10	7	6	2	6	5	3	4	3	74	112	79	70	101		
2. CONSTITUTIONAL	9	9	11	7	9	2	7	3	11	9	7	8	92	118	97	82	85				
3. LOCAL	23	21	19	15	32	21	24	41	21	20	26	30	302	359	278	278	294				
4. DEVELOPMENTAL	19	11	13	11	20	23	38	21	12	13	11	23	220	168	196	180	147				
5. VIOLENT.....	1	1	1	...	2	...	1	1	2	1	1	3	14	22	17	25	20				
UNCLASSIFIED .....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...
TOTALS.....			63	51	52	43	70	57	72	72	51	55	49	67	702	782	667	635	647		

This table treats of the deaths with reference to their cause, the deaths being arranged in classes, and those of the first or Zymotic class subdivided into Orders and Diseases; while the totals are contrasted with similar totals for the four preceding years. It is satisfactory to find a large reduction in the number of deaths from Zymotic diseases, the total being 74, or 38 less than in 1883. Of these Diarrhoea has 21 deaths, a fewer number than has occurred from this cause during the quinquennial period. Typhoid Fever, which was prevalent in the autumn, has 12 deaths, an increase of two on the previous year. Scarletina and Diphtheria show a slight increase; but there was no death from Whooping Cough, while 1883 had 20; nor was there any death from Metria or Puerperal Fever, and only one from Erysipelas. Measles, which was very prevalent during the year, hundreds of cases occurring in all parts of the district, only caused one death, the epidemic being much milder in type than in 1881, when 15 deaths took place from this cause. In the other orders the deaths this year were rather more numerous, especially in the Parasitic order, principally Thrush in infants, and three deaths from Hydatid disease. On the whole the year may be considered a favourable one from a Zymotic point of view, though twelve deaths from Typhoid are far too numerous; and I hope that when the new pail system now gradually being adopted is thoroughly established, both illness and deaths from this cause will be reduced to a minimum. In the Constitutional class of diseases the deaths, principally from Cancer and Consumption, were also fewer than in 1883 and in 1882. In the class of Local diseases the total was also smaller, but in the Developmental class, principally deaths from old age, the total was larger for 1884. This is, of course, a favourable sign, and one the satisfactory aspect of which will become more apparent when I consider the ages at death. As showing how little the people of the district are exposed to accident and external disaster, only 14 violent deaths occurred during the year, a fewer number than previously during the quinquennial period. Though no deaths were unclassified this year, as last, I have frequently called attention to the necessity for improvement in the Acts referring to Registration, and I am glad to learn that a Bill for this object is now under consideration.

TABLE IV.

<i>Months of 1884.</i>	<i>Under 1.</i>	<i>1 to 5.</i>	<i>5 to 10.</i>	<i>10 to 15.</i>	<i>15 to 20.</i>	<i>Total under 20.</i>	<i>20 to 60.</i>	<i>60 and above.</i>	<i>Total at all Ages.</i>
January	19	4	0	2	1	26	17	20	63
February	13	2	0	0	2	17	15	19	51
March	5	2	0	0	1	8	18	26	52
April	11	1	0	3	2	17	12	14	43
May	7	3	3	3	1	17	22	31	70
June	6	1	2	2	2	13	5	39	57
July	8	1	2	0	2	13	9	50	72
August	9	4	1	0	4	18	21	33	72
September	9	3	0	0	1	13	18	20	51
October	16	3	0	0	1	20	13	22	55
November	13	3	0	0	1	17	16	16	49
December	18	7	0	0	1	26	15	26	67
TOTALS, 1884....	134	34	8	10	19	205	181	316	702
TOTALS, 1883....	163	70	15	14	19	281	196	305	782
TOTALS, 1882....	129	33	14	6	19	201	162	304	667
TOTALS, 1881....	144	37	7	14	13	215	159	261	635
TOTALS, 1880....	118	46	15	9	21	209	154	284	647

Here are arranged the monthly deaths for 1884, classified according to the age at which they occurred, with a comparison of similar totals for each year since 1880. The total number of deaths under one year, known as the "Infant Mortality," shows out very favorably, for only 134 deaths occurred, there being 163 in 1883. The number of births registered in the district during the same period was 1131; this gives an infant mortality rate of only 11·84 per cent., a highly satisfactory reduction when compared with 17·17 per cent. for 1883 and 14·2 per cent. for 1882. The total number of deaths under 20 was 205, or 76 less than in 1883, while at ages above 60 the deaths during 1884 were greater than in any year during the quinquennium. Perhaps the most satisfactory feature of the whole statistics of this year is that three out of every seven who died had reached the age of sixty years, and two out of every seven were over seventy.

TABLE V.
HOBART Registration District.

Year.	Births.	Deaths.	Births in excess of Deaths.
1874.....	783	586	197
1875.....	755	753	2
1876.....	761	605	156
1877.....	809	759	50
1878.....	844	639	205
1879.....	858	648	210
1880.....	900	647	253
1881.....	887	638	249
1882.....	917	683	234
1883.....	949	785	164
1884.....	1131	708	423
TOTALS	9594	7451	2143
Mean	872.2	677.4	194.8

In this table are compared the births and deaths *registered* in the Hobart district during the year 1884 and the preceding ten years. More births were registered in 1884 than in any previous year,—viz. 1131,—an excess of 423 over the number of deaths, and 258.8 more than the average number of births for the past eleven years.

Passing from statistical details, I may be permitted to point out the various improvements in sanitary matters that have been made during the year, and to draw attention to those evils in our arrangements which in my opinion demand a remedy. And firstly, it is with pardonable pride that I allude to the passing during last Session of Parliament of a further instalment of sanitary legislation in the shape of “The Public Health (Hobart) Act;” which, though as yet it only deals with the City proper, will almost completely revolutionise the system of sewage removal. By its provisions no new cesspits are allowed to be constructed, any defective ones may be closed on certificate of the Office of Health, and *all* must be filled in before 1st January, 1887. Already the benefits arising from this Act are being felt; many houses which previously were unwholesome to live in owing to the near presence of a noisome cesspit, are now sweet and healthy; and though there is an inclination on the part of owners to postpone as long as possible the transformation from cesspit to pail, yet the clauses are so stringent, and there is such an evident desire on the part of the Corporation to thoroughly carry out the Act, that I do not doubt that the next twelve months will produce a marked improvement in this respect.

Under the same Act action has also been taken to lessen the nuisance resulting from keeping pigs, the City Corporation having passed and published a by-law forbidding under heavy penalties swine to be kept within twenty-five yards of a street or dwelling. Changes such as these cannot be effected suddenly; but slowly and surely the people are beginning to understand that they cannot be allowed to cause a nuisance to others while reaping a doubtful advantage to themselves. It would be wise to consider how far the provisions of this Act might be extended so as to include the three suburban towns; for although in cases of nuisance that have occurred, by persuasion or threatening I have hitherto succeeded in effecting a remedy, I doubt if I should be enabled to enforce the provisions of “The Police Act” in case of a refusal.

During the year further progress has been made with the improvement of the Town Rivulet, the section from Argyle-street to Elizabeth-street gradually approaching completion; and when retaining walls are built on each side where necessary, and the bed of the creek is properly laid with sloping sides, and centre invert as far as Mollie-street, a work which will unfortunately take several years yet to complete, the whole will be a grand improvement, and tend in no small degree to conserve the health of the inhabitants. Closely connected with this subject is that of drainage generally. At no very distant date the subject of adequate drainage for the whole of the City and suburbs will have to be faced and fairly discussed; hitherto underground sewers have been constructed in a piecemeal fashion, either by the Corporation or private people, to suit their own requirements. What is really wanted is a thorough survey as to levels of the City and suburban towns, and the arrangement of such a system of drainage as can be carried on according to a fixed plan, even though it should have to be done only by slow degrees. At present many houses have a drain for rain and house-water, but it has no proper outlet, the contents stagnating, evaporating, or soaking away as best they may, a nuisance to the neighbours and inhabitants generally. So far back as 1877, my predecessor wrote—“the longer a thoroughly comprehensive system of sewerage is deferred in Hobart City and its suburban townships, the greater will be the difficulty and cost of carrying it out, and in the mean time there is an unnecessary waste of human life and suffering.”

The presence of Small-pox in the neighbouring colonies has necessitated the examination of all passengers and crews arriving from New South Wales and Victoria ; but in no instance that I am aware of was any vessel quarantined owing to a case of Small-pox on board. When the disease first made its appearance in the colonies a useful alarm was created and recourse was had to vaccination. Now that prolonged proximity has made us more indifferent, it is to be regretted that vaccination, the only true preventive, is falling into disuse ; especially I refer to the urban districts, for the regular visits of the public vaccinators in the country are more effective than the voluntary system adopted in towns. There is a compulsory Act, but its penal clauses are rarely, if ever, enforced.

In my last Report I alluded to the prospect of obtaining a suitable site for a quarantine station, and I may now be permitted to congratulate the Government and the country on the selection at Barnes' Bay of a spot well suited in many respects for the purpose. The necessary buildings are, I understand, approaching completion, and, should occasion require, the provisions of the Quarantine Act could be thoroughly carried out.

The first meeting of an Intercolonial Sanitary Conference at Sydney in November, 1884, marks the year as a progressive one ; and though no very grand results can be expected from an assemblage with only power to recommend such improvements as the establishment of two boundary quarantine stations, yet the unanimity which prevailed showed that if on other grounds the colonies are not yet ripe for federation, in sanitary matters there is little room for disagreement.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

EDWARD O. GIBLIN, *M.D.*
26th May, 1885.

The Hon. ADYE DOUGLAS, Chief Secretary.