

(No. 29.)



1879.

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

R A G G E D S C H O O L S :

REPORT FOR 1878.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Crowther, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
September 9, 1879.



RAGGED SCHOOL REPORT, 1878.

THE past year has seen some important changes in the management of these Schools. Two of them have now been placed entirely under the charge of female teachers; teachers of great experience, whose names have been long connected with the Schools, and whose services have secured the perfect confidence of your Committee. Changes have also been made in two of the infant departments; one of the teachers having left for another position, and the second—Miss E. Mitchell—having been put in charge of the upper classes in the Cascades Road School. These changes have not, however, impaired the efficiency of the Schools nor lessened the attendance; the numbers are in fact larger now than they have been for some years. In Watchorn-street the number on the rolls has been for the past year 129, the number in attendance 95; in Collins-street 160 on the rolls, in attendance 117; and in the Cascades Road the numbers have been 204 and 145; that is, on the whole 493 on the books, in attendance 357; being 17 more in attendance than last year, and 37 more than in 1876. It is worth notice that the infant rooms in all the Schools have been crowded: in Collins-street and Watchorn-street the usual average has exceeded 60; while in the Cascades Road it has often been up to 80 and 90.

The sewing of the girls has been carried on as usual, and a good deal of work—said by competent judges to have been creditably executed—was displayed in June last, when the usual distribution of winter clothing was made in all the schools. There are now three very efficient Committees of Ladies, by whose exertions the means are collected, the material provided; and assistance is given by them in preparing and superintending the work.

The Schools were publicly and carefully examined before the Christmas recess by the Secretary and members of your Committee; and of these examinations very fair and favourable reports appeared in the two newspapers of the city.

The Schools are now also, as you are aware, placed under Government inspection; and your Committee submit the few following sentences from the official Report of Mr. Stephens:—"The examination of these Schools occupied from the 6th to the 19th of August, with little intermission; the weather was exceptionally wet and stormy, and visits had to be repeated in order to secure a fair muster in some of the classes. As to the general working of the Schools there is little to add to the remarks made last year. * * The semi-religious character which usually distinguishes the Institution does not appear to attach any longer to these Ragged Schools, *so far as sectarian teaching is concerned.* * * The Schools are undoubtedly doing a good work, and doing it on the whole more satisfactorily than would be possible in an ordinary public school, where the children would be chiefly under the control of young and inexperienced pupil teachers. A lively interest is taken in the children by the visiting Committee of Ladies, whose general oversight and practical co-operation with the teachers are of very great advantage to the Schools."

In their last Report your Committee ventured to suggest that the time might be supposed to have now arrived when these Schools with their staff of teachers might conveniently, and with perhaps small disadvantage, be handed over to the Government, and brought into connection with the general education system of the Colony; but this suggestion has evoked so strong an expression of public opinion, "that Institutions which have done so much in the past for the intellectual, moral, and religious training of the neglected youth of this city" should not be disbanded, but should rather

