

(No. 12.)



1872.

T A S M A N I A.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

BENEVOLENT SOCIETY, LAUNCESTON.

REPORT FOR 1871.

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, June 25, 1872.



## LAUNCESTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

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### ANNUAL REPORT.

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THE Committee of the Launceston Benevolent Society, appointed at the last annual meeting, having fulfilled their year of office, respectfully submit to the subscribers their report of the result of their labours during that period.

#### *The Objects Relieved.*

1. Under this head your Committee have nothing new to report; many of those on the books of the Society last year are still receiving relief; some have been removed by death; others have recovered from their illness or temporary cause of distress; and a few have left the district either with the assistance of this Society or their friends.

#### *New Applicants.*

2. During the year the Committee have had 229 new applications for assistance, the whole of which have been carefully investigated, and 101 have been relieved, and 128 have not been considered fit objects for this Society to relieve.

#### *Ways and Means.*

3. Under this head your Committee are sorry to report that the funds placed at their disposal have not been sufficient to meet the demands upon them; the result is that they have incurred liabilities to the amount of £32 16s. 1d. They regret this the more because they believe it arises from the want of ability on the part of many, rather than the want of willingness to help. Nevertheless they cannot hide from themselves and the subscribers that many do not contribute who ought to give liberally; and an examination of the list of subscribers, which will be published in the newspapers, will suggest many names conspicuous by their absence. The amount due to the Bank must be paid, either by the Committee or out of future contributions, which necessarily involves a very early collection of funds for present as well as past liabilities. Your Committee would remind the inhabitants of the northern part of the Island that they have no reserve fund in hand to which they can resort in time of need, as is the case in the south, and therefore they trust to their liberality, which has never yet failed when appealed to for a good cause, for further contributions, to enable them to continue the relief so much needed; and they would add, that up to a certain limit, the Government supplement the voluntary contributions by an equal amount. To those who have cast-off clothing to spare, the Committee would urgently appeal, as they could dispose of a large quantity very beneficially, in some cases enabling the poor to attend a place of worship, which they cannot do for want of clothing. A note to any member of committee, or especially to the secretary, would be attended to without further trouble to the donor.

#### *Future Prospects.*

4. Since the last annual meeting of this Society, the Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions have made their report accompanied by recommendations, a work that will well repay the careful study of all interested in the welfare of the Colony. The Commissioners appear to have availed themselves of every possible means of gaining reliable information, and to be actuated by a sincere desire to arrive at correct conclusions; and yet from remarks dropped by incautious witnesses, and misapprehension of the meaning of others, experienced in their several departments, they have drawn conclusions totally at variance with the facts.

Should the labours of the Commission eventuate in a poor law, or their recommendations be adopted and a Charitable Relief Commission be appointed, it will behove the Government to give ample time for the examination of any measure proposed to become law,—more especially will it be necessary to ascertain whether the conclusion at which they have arrived, viz., “that charitable relief should be gradually localised both as respects administration and liability,” would not operate most injuriously in the large towns.

The subject of education of the children of the destitute and improvident classes, referred to in former reports of this Society, appears to have engaged the attention of the Commissioners; and your Committee hope that, in future legislation on this and kindred subjects, the helpless children of the pauper class may be rescued from the dreadful fate to which they now appear to be condemned. Should the operations of your Society be superseded by the Government taking its duties into their own hands, none will rejoice more than those members of your Committee who have for a long period been connected with your Society, because, although they esteem it a high honor to have been placed in the position they have occupied, yet the weight of responsibility taken from their minds will be a relief which none but those who have felt it can estimate.

The following is the aggregate of persons relieved during the year:—81 men, 120 women, and 356 children.

*January 9th, 1872.*

JAS. JNO. HUDSON, *Chairman.*