

(No. 11.)



1867.

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

V A C C I N A T I O N.

REPORT FOR 1866.

Laid upon the Table by Sir R. Dry, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
August 20, 1867.



REPORT on VACCINATIONS for the Year ended 31st December, 1866, and for the Month of January, 1867.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit to you two Tables of the children vaccinated in all 1866, and the month of January, 1867.

You will observe that the public vaccinations performed in Launceston and Hobart Town were rather more than twice as many as were vaccinated in 1865. This increase of vaccinations resulted from an alarm of small-pox in Victoria in the month of August, on which occasion I had public notices of the danger posted on the walls of the city. For several weeks thereafter children were brought to my public vaccinations in great numbers. Many were children of the same family never before vaccinated, though born and bred in Hobart Town.

Now that the system of employing public vaccinators paid by the Government has been abolished, and the old system returned to of confiding that office to the resident Medical Officers of the Public Hospitals, it will be well to give a *resumé* of the results of the former scheme. In June, 1863, when small-pox was raging in London, I brought under public notice the unprotected state of the children of Tasmania from neglect of vaccination. The subject was brought before the House of Assembly by one of the Members for the City (Maxwell Miller, Esq.) A Committee was appointed, and many medical witnesses examined. It was shown that large numbers of the population were unvaccinated. The evidence of the House Surgeon to the Hobart Town Hospital showed that "for 5 years he had only vaccinated about 6 per annum." It was proved that the existing compulsory Vaccination Act was inoperative. An amended Bill was introduced, but in the House a general opinion was expressed that so compulsory a measure was unnecessary; and that, were public facilities afforded throughout the Colony for gratuitous vaccination, parents would readily avail themselves of it. The House empowered the Government to take the necessary steps, with the implied understanding that, if the measures adopted were not successful, an amended compulsory Act should be passed. All conversant with the history of vaccination predicted that any system dependent for success on the voluntary action of parents would fail here as it had done every where else. However, public vaccinators were appointed in Hobart Town and Launceston, and in most of the Rural Districts, and commenced operations in November, 1863. In the two months of that year 2425 children were publicly vaccinated, and a great impulse given to private vaccinations. After 30th September, 1864, the House of Assembly declined to sanction the continuance of the public vaccinators in the Rural Districts, but approved of the continuance of those in Hobart Town and Launceston. 3786 children were publicly vaccinated in 1864, more than nine-tenths of these children being considerably above the age under which the existing Law required children to be vaccinated. In 1865 the public vaccinations fell to 257. In 1866 they amounted to 519. Altogether, from the 1st November, 1863, to the 31st of January, 1867, the return of public vaccinations amounted to nearly 7000 children. During these 3½ years there were about 10,000 registered births, and not more than 1000 of them were vaccinated either publicly or privately before attaining the age of Six months, as the existing Law requires. Of the about 8000 public and private vaccinations made in the 3½ years since the late Government of Tasmania took action on the subject, I am confident that 7500 would not have been vaccinated under the previously existing provisions for vaccination, and to which a return has been again made. With the fact now so clearly demonstrated of the previous extensive neglect of vaccination, and of the uselessness of depending upon the voluntary action of parents, even when offered gratuitous vaccination of the most perfect kind, it is clear that no time ought to be lost to enact a workable compulsory Vaccination Act—such as in Scotland effected in the first year of its operation the vaccination of 97 per cent. of the children born, and which in Ireland has produced so large a reduction of small-pox deaths.

Public Vaccinators, approved by the Privy Council, are appointed for every parish in the United Kingdom. All the Governments on the Continent of Europe make public provision for vaccination. In all the neighbouring Colonies public vaccinators for every District are appointed by the Government. A sudden outbreak of small-pox in this Island would find many thousands of persons unprotected by previous efficient and perfect vaccination; and no efforts of the medical practitioners, or expense gone to by the Government, would then avail to save large numbers from a miserable death or hideous mutilation.

In the latest standard work, "On the Science and Practice of Medicine, by Dr. Aitken," Professor in the Army Medical School, published last year, it is said—

"To an almost incalculable extent the protective power of vaccination has been impaired by imperfect vaccination, as shown by Mr. Marson (Medical Officer to the London Small-pox Hospital); a fact which does not seem to be duly appreciated as yet, either by the medical profession or by the public."

"With regard to the means of estimating the efficiency of vaccination, it seems established that a distinct connection subsists between the number and the quality of the cicatrices, and the protection conferred by vaccination against small-pox; so that it may be confidently stated that that vaccination is the most efficient from which the most and the best cicatrices result. The evidence derived from the records of the Small-pox Hospital, collected by Mr. Marson, regarding the superior value of several rather than few vesicles appears to be conclusive on this point."

"These facts have been tabulated by Mr. Simon (Medical Officer to the Privy Council) in the following form, as the result of observations made during 25 years, in nearly 6000 cases of small-pox contracted after vaccination, the persons having been vaccinated in different ways as regards the number and quality of the cicatrices:"—

<i>Cases of Small-pox classified according to the Vaccination Marks or Cicatrices borne by each Patient respectively.</i>	<i>Number of Deaths per cent. in each Class respectively.</i>
CLASS I.—Stated to have been vaccinated but having no cicatrix.....	21½
CLASS II.—Having One vaccine cicatrix.....	7½
CLASS III.—Having Two vaccine cicatrices.....	4½
CLASS IV.—Having Three vaccine cicatrices.....	1½
CLASS V.—Having Four or more vaccine cicatrices ...	½
UNVACCINATED.....	35½

I have the honor to be,
Your obedient Servant,

E. SWARBRECK HALL, *late Superintendent of Vaccinations.*

The Honorable SIR RICHARD DRY, *M.L.C.,*
Colonial Secretary, Tasmania.

SUMMARY of the Returns of PUBLIC VACCINATIONS in Tasmania from the 1st of January, 1866, to the 31st of January, 1867.

REGISTRATION DISTRICTS.	PUBLIC VACCINATORS.	AGES.		TOTAL VACCINATED.	RESULTS.						TOTAL POPULATION BY CENSUS, APRIL, 1861.	REGISTERED BIRTHS.		REMARKS.
		<i>At and under Six Months old.</i>	<i>Above Six Months old.</i>		<i>With Four or more perfect Vesicles.</i>	<i>With Three perfect Vesicles.</i>	<i>With Two perfect Vesicles.</i>	<i>With One perfect Vesicle.</i>	<i>Did not Return.</i>	<i>Unsuccessful.</i>		<i>In all 1865.</i>	<i>In all 1866.</i>	
Launceston..	Maddox, George	24	216	240	185	16	3	—	33	3	13,140 Launceston and Selby. 24,773 Hobart City, Glenorchy, & Queenborough.	431	423	Supplies of fresh vaccine lymph given to numerous Medical Practitioners. * Of the 240 above Six months old, 24 only were under Twelve months old; 80 were at and above Four years old; the oldest Twenty-seven years old, never before vaccinated. Whole families from 2 to 7 in number, previously unvaccinated, numerous. Most of the Medical Practitioners in the Southern Division of the Island, and several in the northern, supplied with fresh vaccine lymph, from unexceptionable cases during the year, many repeatedly.
Hobart Town	Hall, E. Swarbreck	39	240*	279	197	12	5	2	60	3		835	732	
		63	456	519	382	28	8	2	93	6	1266	1155		

1155 Children's births were registered in the Registration Districts of Hobart Town and Launceston in 1866. Probably the unregistered born during the year would be 145 more; say total births 1300. From this number 100 may be deducted as having died before they attained the age of Six months, and therefore under the age at which "The Tasmanian Vaccination Act" requires that all Children shall be vaccinated. 1200 Children, therefore, ought to have been vaccinated either by Public Vaccinators, or Private Medical Practitioners, during the year in these two Districts. The public vaccination of Children under Twelve months old only amounted to about 100. The private vaccinations returned of the same age was only one. Nevertheless as nearly all the Private Medical Practitioners were repeatedly supplied with vaccine lymph by the Public Vaccinators, 50 more under Twelve months old may be added, making a total of 151 out of 1155 vaccinated. It is evident therefore that, notwithstanding the facilities afforded by gratuitous public vaccination, and a constant supply of fresh and perfect vaccine lymph, no less than 1004 Children born last year in these two Districts, and living to be old enough to be vaccinated in accordance with "The Vaccination Act," were not vaccinated. There can be no doubt that in the remaining Registration Districts of the Island where no Public Vaccinators were employed, and where Private Medical Practitioners could not possibly maintain a constant succession of vaccinations, but were dependent for supplies of fresh lymph upon the Public Vaccinators of Hobart Town and Launceston, the proportion of unvaccinated children to births must be much greater. These facts indicate that there are many thousands of unvaccinated Children now in Tasmania unprepared to resist the Small-pox contagion whenever it may get a footing in the community, and that the numbers in future will be still more considerable, from the abolition of Public Vaccinators and the transfer of their duties to the Resident Medical Officers of the Hospital.

The present compulsory Vaccination Act of Tasmania being useless, nothing but the passing of an amended Act, such as has been so successful in Ireland and Scotland, can possibly protect the population of Tasmania from the terrific ravages of some sudden invasion of Small-pox. The recent destructive outbreak in Madagascar gives us warning of what may be the result in our unprotected state. No exertions of the Medical Profession, when the disease is once raging amongst us, will avail to prevent the sacrifice of many lives.

E. SWARBRECK HALL, *late Superintendent of Vaccinations.*

The Honorable Sir RICHARD DRY, M.L.C., Colonial Secretary.

SUMMARY of the Returns made of PRIVATE VACCINATIONS in all Tasmania from the 1st of January to the 31st of December, 1866.

Place.	Medical Practitioners.	Number of Cases operated upon, specifying the Proportions under and over Six Months old.			Number of the foregoing seen on the Eighth Day after Vaccination.	Number where the Results were in every respect successful.	Remarks.
		Under Six Months old.	Over Six Months old.	Total.			
Queen's Asylum, New Town	Coverdale, J.....	—	27	* 27	27	27	Eighty-nine children were admitted during the year upwards of three years old, nearly one-third of whom were unvaccinated. This affords a good index to the proportion unvaccinated in the Island at from 3 to 12 years old.
Hobart Town ...	Hall, E. Swarbreck	1	—	1	1	1	
		1	27	28	28	28	

* Three of the children in the Queen's Asylum were vaccinated by me on the public vaccination day in Hobart Town, all of whom had most satisfactory results: from these the 27 children were vaccinated. Though most of the private Medical Practitioners in the Island were supplied with Vaccine Lymph by the Public Vaccinators in Hobart Town and Launceston, yet not one of the 58 made any return of the numbers vaccinated by them, as they were requested to do, by circular from the Colonial Secretary, when Public Vaccinators were appointed. It is much to be regretted that the Medical Practitioners should be so disheartened by the apathy of the public and the legislature on this subject.

E. SWARBRECK HALL, *late Superintendent of Vaccinations.*

*To the Honorable Sir RICHARD DRY, M.L.C.,
Colonial Secretary.*