

(No. 30.)



1878.

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TASMANIA.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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**RAGGED SCHOOL ASSOCIATION :**

**REPORT FOR 1877.**

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Laid upon the Table by Mr. Moore, and ordered by the Council to be printed,  
July 16, 1878.



*TWENTIETH Report of the HOBART TOWN RAGGED SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.*

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YOUR Committee are again able to report that all the three schools of the Association are, on the whole, in fair working order, and that they have during the past year observed a marked improvement in the general tidiness and cleanliness of the children. The behaviour has been good, and the attendance in two of the schools somewhat larger than in the preceding year, but, except in Collins-street, that attendance has not been so large in proportion to the numbers on the roll. In Watchorn-street the number on the books has been 133, in attendance 98; in Collins-street, 142 and 110; in the Cascades Road, 190 and 131; that is, on the whole, 465 on the registers, and 340—being 20 more—in attendance. This increase in attendance is equally divided between Collins-street and the Cascades Road. In looking to these numbers—it may be well to call attention to the fact that the average of absence or irregularity in Collins-street is 22 in the 100; in Watchorn-street, 26; while in the Cascades Road it is as high as 31; showing in this last, with its larger numbers, a failure in the case of nearly every third child. By the use of attendance tickets the master hoped to check this evil, and their regular issue had certainly the effect of securing in some a very close attendance, several children not having been absent more than two half days in six months.

At the public examinations, held by your Committee before the break up at Christmas, the general impression was that the infant classes and those under the female teachers in all the schools were well attended, kindly managed, and efficiently taught. A special feature in the master's classes in Collins-street was the writing: of this specimens were submitted from all the eight boys in the first class, all remarkably clean, neat, and two or three of unusual excellence; whilst the highest class in the Cascades Road read, spelled, and gave the meaning of words with peculiar distinctness and accuracy, and did sums in practice with both rapidity and accuracy.

No reports have been made to us by the ladies who lend such material assistance in these schools; but your Committee are aware that the usual amount of sewing work has been done, and well done, by the girls, and the usual distribution of clothing made. They have also to state that they have succeeded in securing a large and efficient committee of ladies in connection with the Cascades Road, of whom Mrs. Boe has consented to superintend the work, and Mrs. Inglis to act as Secretary. In respect to Watchorn-street—left almost orphaned by the regretted retirement of Mrs. James Salier from its active superintendence—Mrs. Charles Crosby has undertaken for a time the chief labour, but there is clamant need for a few more auxiliaries; and the more so as this school is for the present without a master, and the whole duties are devolving on the two female teachers, Miss Proctor and Miss Williamson.

At the request of your Committee, and by the direction of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, the schools have been during the past year inspected by Mr. Stephens, the Chief Inspector; and his Report, which is addressed to your Secretary, has been printed and submitted to the two Houses. In this Report, after stating in detail his opinion as to the teaching, discipline, and general condition in each division in the three schools, and presenting several important suggestions for your Committee's consideration, Mr. Stephens says:—"Speaking generally of the condition of the elementary instruction in the Ragged Schools, I may say that the results which have been achieved, and the work which has been done, reflect great credit upon the teachers. For the exceptional cases which have been noted, very great allowance must be made. The children in the upper classes are mostly of an age at which the want of a well-ordered home and judicious parental influence begins most unmistakably to show its inevitable consequences, and the difficulties of training them are sometimes increased by the changes in the teaching staff which the Committee is compelled to make. The question of attendance is an important one, and it would be well to adopt a uniform system of recording in the several schools. \* \* \* I am sure that the Committee will cordially agree with

me in considering the discipline and training of these schools to be of infinitely higher importance than the instruction in the elementary subjects. The essence of good discipline is that it be maintained without frequent recourse to corporal punishment; and the teachers are no doubt aware that the latter is to be avoided as much as possible. While I see ample evidence of a kindly and zealous interest in their scholars on the part of the teachers, I fear that their training is neutralised to a considerable extent by circumstances which I have noted under the heads 'premises' and 'management,' some of which are beyond their control."

It may be that in the future conducting of these schools some of the new arrangements suggested in this Report may be effected in the out-buildings and in other directions; but in the meantime there is a matter affecting their foundation, principle, and management, that your Committee find it necessary to submit for grave consideration. They have now to remind you that this Association was established in the year 1854. Its primary object, as then defined, was to be "the gratuitous instruction of children whose parents are unable or unwilling to provide for the same." Its basis was deliberately made wide and broad, in order to be unsectarian and undenominational. Subscriptions have been from the first solicited from all whose charity to the poor inclined them to help; and every subscriber of Ten Shillings has been and is entitled to attend all general meetings of the Association, to make his voice heard, and to vote. So far as your Committee know, this unsectarian and undenominational character has been maintained in all these schools inviolate. The Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments of God, the Lord's Prayer—formulas professedly acknowledged and used by every branch of the Christian Church—have been in daily use; a simple lesson has been read from the historic portions of Holy Scripture; and all beyond this, in the way of religious, dogmatic, or ecclesiastical tenet, has been strictly proscribed. Belonging themselves to so many branches of the Church, and maintaining this rule with such decision that no complaint has ever reached them of its infringement, your Committee have been of opinion that in superintending the careful and judicious employment of a portion of the public funds in the endeavour to rescue a large portion of the rising population from growing up in ignorance or crime, and largely supplementing these funds by their own contributions, their personal influence, and their distributions of clothing and rewards for the encouragement of improving conduct—whilst aiming at no selfish or sectarian ends whatever—they were entitled to claim from all sections of the community the grateful acknowledgment of an important public service. And it is now with extreme regret that, in consequence of the action of the Colonial Legislature in its last Session, and the ground on which the propriety of that action was sought to be vindicated, several members of your Executive Committee have been forced to the conclusion that it is their imperious duty to refuse to deal with a grant of public money which the Legislature, in continuing to vote for these schools, has decided henceforth to recognise as giving a legitimate title to one single communion to claim an issue of public money for its own use, by its own religious agents, and for the avowed purpose of instilling and propagating its own peculiar and distinctive tenets. Your Committee are of opinion that these Ragged or Free Schools, as now organised, cannot be adequately supported by private contributions, nor conducted successfully in the face of divided opinion; and, in view of these difficulties, they venture to recommend that this Association should take immediate measures for handing over its properties and its staff of teachers to the Government of the Colony, and devolving on them and on the Legislature the future responsibility and management of the reclaiming and educating work in which this Association has been now for the last 24 years engaged. And this they believe you can do, if with some regret yet with some satisfaction, in the knowledge that these schools have never been in better condition, never more efficient, nor more regularly attended, nor better organised and officered, than they have been for the last twelve months.

JOHN STORIE, *Hon. Secretary.*

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*THE TREASURER in account with the HOBART TOWN RAGGED SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.*

<i>Dr.</i>	<i>£ s. d.</i>	<i>Cr.</i>	<i>£ s. d.</i>	<i>£ s. d.</i>
To Cash Subscriptions and Donations.....	100 12 4	By Balance from last year .....	..	27 14 6
To Cash from Government—Grant-in-aid..	300 0 0			
To Cash from Government to supplement Subscriptions:— <i>£ s. d.</i>		<i>Repairs—</i>		
Account, 1876—July to Dec.	106 0 6	Brindley .....	18 10 0	
Account, 1877—Jan. to July	31 17 0	Hodgson .....	2 10 0	
	<u>137 17 6</u>	Boucher, 2 <i>s. 6d.</i> ; Salier, 3 <i>s. 6d.</i> , 1 <i>l. 3s. 6d.</i> .....	1 9 6	
	538 9 10	Sundries .....	1 1 3	
To Balance due Treasurer .....	57 12 0	Salier .....	0 1 6	23 12 3
		<i>Tuition—</i>		
		Watchorn-street .....	168 0 0	
		Collins-street .....	158 4 0	
		Cascade Road, 178 <i>l. 6s. 6d.</i> ; less refunded Sansom, 6 <i>l. 16s.</i>	171 10 6	497 14 6
		<i>Sundries—</i>		
		Salier, mats, 16 <i>s. 6d.</i> ; Hunter, 1 <i>l. 2s. 6d.</i> ; Harcourt, 14 <i>s.</i> ; stamps, 1 <i>l. 4s.</i> ; emptying closets, 3 <i>l.</i> ; cleaning schools, 2 <i>l. 1s.</i> , 3 <i>l. 16s.</i> , 12 <i>s.</i> , 4 <i>l.</i> ; prizes, 2 <i>l. 10s.</i> ; fire in- surance, 3 <i>l. 18s.</i> ; loan of hall for annual meeting, 5 <i>s.</i> ; printing and advertising, 4 <i>s. 6d.</i> , 3 <i>s.</i> , 6 <i>s.</i> , 10 <i>s.</i> , 4 <i>s. 7d.</i> , 18 <i>s. 6d.</i> , 14 <i>s.</i> ; stationery & books, 1 <i>s. 4d.</i> , 1 <i>l. 15s.</i> , 1 <i>l. 18s. 6d.</i> , 1 <i>l. 15s. 11d.</i> ; firewood, 5 <i>s. 8d.</i> , 18 <i>s.</i> , 15 <i>s.</i> ..	40 2 5	
				594 3 8
		To Interest at Bank, 3 <i>s. 1d.</i> & 1 <i>l. 15s. 1d.</i> ..		1 18 2
	<u>£596 1 10</u>			<u>£596 1 10</u>

Audited and found correct,

R. A. MATHER.

CHAS. CROSBY, *Treasurer.*