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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

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TASMANIAN PRISONERS' AID AND RESCUE  
SOCIETY :

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT, 1892.

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



## TASMANIAN PRISONERS' AID AND RESCUE SOCIETY.

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### SECOND ANNUAL REPORT, 1892.

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IN presenting the Second Annual Report of the Society, your Executive Committee can only submit, with additions, a *resumé* of the interim report furnished in March last.

The work of the Committee has been most heavy during this year, and much time and attention has had to be given to the cases coming under its notice. From the lists which, through the courtesy of the authorities, are furnished fortnightly to the Chairman, 620 cases have been enquired into, and 199 persons have received assistance in various ways since the formation of the Society. When board and lodging is required written orders are given, and thus the funds of the Society are protected from being in any way misapplied. The Society has assisted very many men and women to return to their homes. Money is never given, except under special and rare circumstances, but by endeavouring to procure employment, providing temporary board, supplying tools to those who need them, and the payment of railway fares.

In the interim report your Committee referred to the question of railway fares, and some may remember Mr. A. Riddoch's remarks and suggestions thereon, which are as follows:— "The question of railway fares was a serious one, and one which called for the attention of the Committee and the favourable consideration of the Government. He thought they should form a deputation to the Government, for there was no doubt that this was the greatest strain they had on the small resources of the Society, and he hoped the Government, if they could not grant free passes to those it was proposed to help, should at least make a still further reduction in the fares." Your Committee desire to place before you a clear statement of this matter, as most of you will have noticed something of the report of the deputation to the Minister of Lands in the daily papers. The Executive Committee would state that until recently prisoners who have been convicted at Launceston or other parts of the Colony, and who have been sent by the authorities to Hobart to serve their sentences for the convenience of the Government, were, at the expiration of their sentence, returned by rail to the nearest point to their homes; but of late they have been refused a free pass, and referred to the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, which it feels to be a great drain upon its funds, as, when the Society began its operations and received the support of subscribers and also the Government grant of £1 for £1, no such charge was contemplated. Your Committee deputed some of its members to wait upon the Hon. A. I. Clark, the Attorney-General, to whom they explained the position the Society was placed in, who, whilst expressing himself as favourable to their request, referred them to the Railway Manager, Mr. Back, and at an interview with that gentleman he said that there was no fund set aside for the Government to pay for the return of prisoners to their homes. Your Committee would like here to testify to the willingness always shown by Mr. Back to assist the Committee by allowing it to send prisoners into the country by rail at half rates upon the order of the Chairman; but what the Committee contend is, that as certain prisoners are brought from different parts of the Colony by the Government, the Society should not be charged with the return of these. A deputation of your Committee waited upon the Hon. the Minister of Lands on the 4th July last and endeavoured to put the whole matter before him. Mr. Pillinger, in reply, said he "sympathised with the arguments which had been advanced,

and it seemed only natural and right that a prisoner at the expiry of his term should be sent back to the place where he received sentence. But as to the cost of this, he had thought that it might be conveniently shared by the Prisoners' Aid Society and the Railway Department. The General Manager of Railways agreed to convey these men at half-fare for a term, believing that the Society, with the pound for pound subsidy from the Government, would bear the other portion of the expense. The General Manager had to show the business done on the lines, and he objected to his Department being used as a charitable institution, which it now was in many cases. Whether the Government would be prepared to assist by placing a sum on the Estimates so that the railway returns should not suffer he could not yet say, but he would bring the idea forward in the proper way, and also confer with those having control of the charitable institutions of the Colony to ascertain the best way of dealing with the matter." A few days later the Chairman received the following reply:—"I have consulted the Cabinet with reference to granting free railway passes to discharged prisoners, and regret I cannot comply with your request, as it is considered unfair to extend to prisoners privileges which are denied to hard-working men in the community who have to seek work away from their homes but desire to return, and who, moreover, have not offended the law. If prisoners from the country, when discharged from gaol, are provided with provisions to last them until they reach home by road, this should be sufficient." The Committee did not claim to send prisoners into the country free of charge to look for work, but only that those who have been brought from their homes might, as hitherto, be allowed to return along the line to the nearest point free of charge. The work is one of really assisting the Government, for, as our President remarked at our last meeting, "every prisoner that is reformed and does not return to his evil ways is thus a saving to the country of at least £20 per annum, the expenses of his maintenance," and now the Committee finds itself face to face with another expense.

An urgent appeal has been sent out to the general public and members, which it is earnestly hoped will meet with a ready response, copies of which are laid upon the table; and it may be here stated that the reason for not asking for subscriptions earlier has been in consideration of the great depression which has existed throughout the Colony. Your Committee can truly say that your Society has done good work during the last twelve months. It is very encouraging to note that so few compared with those assisted get again into trouble. There are some old offenders who are continually in and out of gaol, whom it seems under the present conditions useless to help, but where it is seen that there is any desire for reformation and any hope of reclamation a helping hand is stretched out to such, and no deserving case that needs assistance is allowed to pass. Your Committee could point to many instances where the timely aid afforded has been just the needful thing to put them on their feet again, and has enabled them to lead a new and a better life; many who have gone out of those gaol gates without any money, but for your Society would most certainly have returned within a very short time. As the *Daily Telegraph* puts it, "In many instances if the men on leaving gaol were forwarded immediately to their homes they would resume honest labour and probably enter upon a new life, but if they remain in the cities the probability is that they are enticed into drunkeries, and then all reform is lost." There have been cases that have caused much disappointment and the Committee have been deceived, but what of that? it is better even to help some who may prove unworthy of assistance than fail to give the help to any whom it may be the means of saving. The results prove that in most cases it has not been misapplied. Mr. Alfred Jones (the Superintendent of the Gaol) has testified to the benefits resulting in the fact that numbers who leave do not again come under his care, through the labour of the Society. From letters received from Mr. L. R. Castray, the Society's late Chairman, evidence is shown that good work is being done in Launceston by the recently-established branch Society in that city.

The Treasurer's statement shows that the sum of £129 9s. 11d. has been disbursed during the year, and the balance now to the credit of your Society is still £66 5s. 9d.

In conclusion, your Committee desire to tender their thanks to Messrs. B. Shaw, Sheriff; P. S. Seager, Under-Sheriff; A. Jones, Governor of the Gaol; F. Pedder, Superintendent of Police; the Press, and all others who have kindly assisted in their labours.

ROBERT MATHER, *Chairman.*

## BALANCE SHEET.

RECEIPTS.		£ s. d.	EXPENDITURE.		£ s. d.
To Balance .....		151 14 10	By General Disbursement.....		118 14 11
Subscriptions .....		9 13 6	Stationery .....		2 10 3
Cash refunded .....		6 3 0	Advertising and Printing.....		8 4 3
Government Grant.....		25 0 0	Bank Book.....		0 0 6
Bank Interest.....		3 4 4	Balance .....		66 5 9
		<u>£195 15 8</u>			<u>195 15 8</u>

## EXPENDITURE for Five Months ending 31st December, 1892.

To Balance .....	66 5 9	By General Disbursement, as per Bank	
Subscriptions paid into Bank.....	19 19 6	Account .....	60 2 5
Cash refunded, paid into Bank.....	6 17 6	Advertising and Printing.....	0 12 6
Bank Interest .....	1 13 0	Balance as per Bank Book .....	34 0 10
	<u>£94 15 9</u>		<u>£94 15 9</u>
Subscriptions in hand.....	0 7 0	By General Disbursement—Cash advanced	
Cash refunded in hand .....	0 2 6	by Treasurer .....	1 9 9
	<u>£0 9 6</u>		<u>£1 9 9</u>

Audited and found correct.

C. J. PIESSE, }  
E. HAWSON, } *Auditors.*

W. P. BROWNELL, *Hon. Treasurer.*