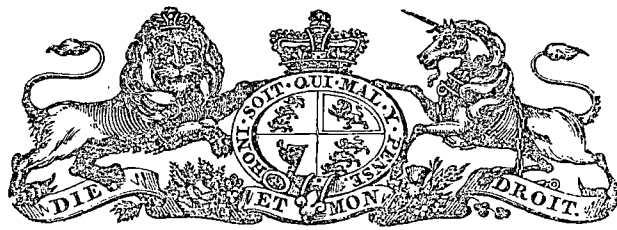


(No. 47.)



1860.

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**HOBART TOWN BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.**

**LETTER OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO COLONIAL SECRETARY ON THE SUBJECT OF A REFUGE.**

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Laid upon the Table by Mr. Henty, and ordered by the Council to be printed,  
September 21, 1860.



*Hobart Town Benevolent Society's Office, 19th September, 1860.*

SIR,

BEFORE the present Parliamentary Session comes to a close, we feel it incumbent upon us to represent to the Executive Government the pressing need of suitable premises for carrying out its work which the Benevolent Society now labours under.

We have now had the charge of the executive management of the Society's affairs for a period of nine months; and, during a season of much depression, of great distress and misery, among a portion of the labouring classes of the Town, we have endeavoured, so far as our means would permit, to carry out the objects for which the Institution was founded: but the result of our experience has been to convince us that the ends aimed at cannot be effectually attained without the possession of a proper building to serve as a *Depôt*, Refuge, &c.

We have found ourselves wholly unable to afford any prompt relief to those unfortunates who, homeless and penniless, are nightly wandering about sleeping either in the streets, or creeping for shelter into some unoccupied building. In some few instances we have provided lodgings for individuals of this class, by giving orders upon the keeper of a lodging-house; but it must be obvious that this round-about course is unsuited to the general urgency of the case, and cannot be resorted to at a late hour of the night.

We have been informed that the kindred Institution at Sydney receives outcasts of this class into its *Depôt* at all hours; that the police are instructed to take them thither instead of to the watch-house, as is the practice here; and that they receive before their discharge in the morning a cup of hot coffee and a piece of bread. It is hardly necessary for us to add, that we strongly desire to be enabled to follow the humane example thus set us in the sister Colony.

We have also experienced great embarrassment in dealing with a numerous class of cases which, especially of late, have been brought constantly under our consideration; we allude to those where the heads of families, the bread-winners, although in good health and strength, profess themselves unable to obtain employment. There are now no public works upon which the Government can find these people occupation; nor can the Corporation, in justice to their regular labourers, furnish them with employment.

The distress existing amongst their families has, however, unhappily been undeniable; and, although we have felt that we ran a grave risk of encouraging idleness and want of energy, we have not felt ourselves justified in withholding relief where absolute destitution was shown to prevail. The only remedy for this state of things—the only test which can be applied to these cases—appears to us to lie in the possession by the Society of a power of affording employment to such applicants: and this, we submit, could best be secured by our occupation of premises sufficiently extensive to permit us to establish on a limited scale a species of House of Industry, where ordinary labourers might be employed in cutting up firewood, artisans supplied with occupation in their respective trades, work given to needle-women, &c. This is not now a fitting opportunity to enter into the details of such a scheme; but we may say that, although we could not anticipate that any profit would accrue to the Society from the labour thus employed, yet the loss would probably not exceed the cost of the rations which we are now absolutely giving away to the unemployed, whilst the moral advantages of granting honest work in the place of the degrading dole of charity can hardly be overstated.

There is also another class of unfortunates (we regret to say a very numerous one) to whose wants a proper *Depôt* would enable us to administer with much greater effect—that of starving families of miserable children, whose parents, from their drunken and debauched habits, cannot be trusted with the rations granted by the Society.

We have hitherto dealt with these cases by contracting with the keeper of an eating-house for the supply to these children of the meals they required ; but we have found this plan both expensive and unsatisfactory ; and we cannot doubt that, in an establishment duly furnished with conveniences for cooking, a far better and economical provision might be made for cases of such a character.

There are many other ways in which a Depôt such as we advocate might be made useful, such as a soup kitchen, the sale of cheap bedding, &c. ; but we do not desire to enter now into a consideration of these, which indeed would be more properly matters of arrangement hereafter in the event of our application being granted. We think it sufficient to have shown how crippled and inefficient the operations of the Society must, in the absence of such an establishment, of necessity be, and to have pointed out how materially our usefulness would be extended by its institution.

The funds of the Benevolent Society, however, being wholly inadequate either to the purchase or rental of suitable premises, we are entirely dependent upon the Government and the Parliament for means to accomplish the ends we have in view ; and sincerely believing that the lower and poorer classes of the community would be greatly benefitted by the institution of such a centre of benevolent action, we feel constrained to urge a strong request that St. Mary's Hospital, admirably suited as it is by position and internal arrangement for such a purpose, should be allotted to our use : or if that be not available, that the Parliament be moved to vote such a sum of money as may suffice to enable us to erect or rent premises elsewhere. Trusting that this communication may receive the most favourable consideration of the Executive,

We have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

ALFRED KENNERLEY.  
HENRY COOK.  
E. SWARBRECK HALL.  
W. TARLETON.  
J. R. BATEMAN.  
HENRY W. WHITTON.  
T. J. CROUCH.

*Members of the Executive Committee of the Benevolent Society, Hobart Town.*

*The Honorable the Colonial Secretary,  
&c. &c. &c.*