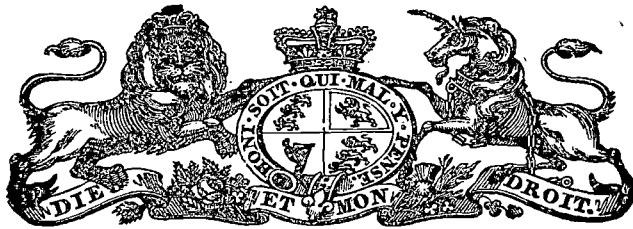


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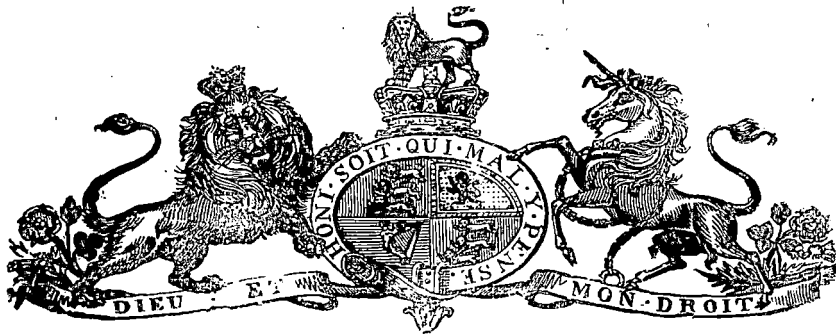
1888.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

SANITARY CONDITION OF THE MUNICIPALITY
OF FINGAL :

REPORT OF THE ENGINEERING INSPECTOR OF THE
CENTRAL BOARD OF HEALTH.

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



REPORT ON THE SANITARY CONDITION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF FINGAL.

To the Honourable the President and Members of the Central Board of Health.

GENTLEMEN,

1. I BEG to present to you the following Report upon a recent visit to the principal townships in the Municipality of Fingal, taken in the order in which they were visited.

AVOCA.

2. In October last year I sent in a Report upon the sanitary condition of Avoca, and made, in the 12th, 13th, and 14th paragraphs thereof, certain recommendations, which were in accord with similar recommendations made in June, 1885, by Dr. Barnard, to ameliorate the condition of the town. At the time of my visit at the beginning of September this year, nothing of a permanent nature had been done to carry out these recommendations. At Foster's hotel the clearing out of the manure from the yard is periodically done, but no water-tight manure cistern has been built. Consequently, in wet weather the soakage runs down over the back yards of the neighbours and over land that will be part of, or immediately adjoin, the new school playground. The liquid manure was being carted away the morning after my arrival, the pit—a hole dug in the ground, without any lining—having evidently been full to overflowing. The open gutter drain from the back yard to the garden is as ill-paved and badly kept as ever, and the cellar is not drained.

At the old *Woolpack Inn* an open trench was cut, soon after my last visit, to drain the cellar. This open trench is now partly filled up by the falling in of the sides, and the water, consequently, is again lying stagnant in the cellar. The house is partly occupied.

The new school buildings were completed, but not occupied. The old school privies were as bad as ever, and their stinking condition made all the more evident by the hurried emptying of the box and cesspit the morning after my arrival.

The only improvement I noticed was that some of the privies had movable pails or boxes instead of cesspits. But no back yards have been paved, no ground floors dried and ventilated by having spouts and gutters, and, from a sanitary point of view, the condition of the place is about the same as before the visits of inspection of Dr. Barnard in 1885, and of myself in 1887.

3. I therefore again urge the Local Board of Health to cause the work to be done that is detailed in the 12th and 13th paragraphs of my Report of October, 1887. In regard to the recommendation made in the 14th paragraph, about 400 yards in length of 9-inch and 6-inch glazed socket pipes laid down Falmouth-street would form a main sewer sufficient to drain the portion of the town most needing drainage; and as there is no necessity that these pipes should be laid at a greater depth than that required to protect them from being injured by the street traffic, the construction of this sewer would not be costly, nor bear heavily on the owners of property benefited by it. For the present I would place the outlet of this sewer at the St. Paul's River, just below the old ford at the north-east side of the bridge. Sewage sent into the river at this point would not interfere with the water supply, which is taken from the Esk above the confluence of the two rivers; and, for the present, the quantity of sewage would be so small as not to affect the Esk below the confluence. If

at any time the delivery of the sewage was found to affect the river, the drain might be diverted along the bank below the police reserve, and a small irrigation bed formed on part of the reserve land to the south east of the railway, for filtering the water before delivery into the St. Paul's River. But this, certainly, will not be necessary at present.

4. I beg to call your particular attention to the condition of the Police Station at Avoca. The building has been repeatedly condemned by the police authorities and by medical men; yet it is still occupied. Police Constable King and his family live in two rooms, separated from each other by the cells, and having no means of communication with each other but by an uncovered yard, through which all the members of the family have to pass, whatever the weather may be, each time they go from the living-room to the sleeping-room. The sleeping-room is 13ft. long by 11½ft. broad, and 7½ft. feet high, and is occupied by the nine members of the family. These dimensions give less than 17 square feet of floor space and 125 cubic feet of air space to each individual. The living-room is one foot longer. As the building has been so often condemned, it has not been worth the while of the authorities to spend any money on repairs for some years past; consequently, notwithstanding all the care and cleanliness of the constable, it has been constantly getting worse and worse. The plaster has nearly all fallen from the walls, which are only of old weatherboards, and from the ceilings under the decayed roof. The windows are mended with old zinc, wind and rain have free entrance, and comfort is effectually banished. I therefore beg leave to forward to you herewith a certificate in writing to the Local Board of Health of Fingal declaring, under the provisions of the 107th section of "The Public Health Act, 1885," that the house occupied by Police Constable King at the Police Station at Avoca is unfit for human occupation or habitation, and to request you, under the provisions of the 11th section of "The Public Health Act, 1887," to make an order directing that such house shall not be occupied or inhabited by any person after the 31st day of January next, and to cause a copy of such order to be affixed to some conspicuous part of such house.

FINGAL.

5. Fingal is situated on the south-east bank of the South Esk River, at the confluence of the Fingal Rivulet with it, and the natural outfall of the surface drainage is toward these streams. The occupied part of the town is built upon a sandy and gravelly plain—apparently of Tertiary drift—and about 760 feet above the sea level. The houses are nearly all well built, and the streets are, on the whole, kept clean and in good condition. The school, police quarters, and public buildings are nearly all comparatively new, and, with the following exceptions, suitable for their purpose. The privy accommodation at the public school requires better drainage; and at the Police Office the cells require better lighting and ventilation.

6. Eventually, if the town increases, it will require proper sewerage, and there are meadows lying along the South Esk that will give facilities for treating the sewage by irrigation. In the meantime the following works should be attended to:—The drain down Gleadow-street should be constructed with glazed socket pipes and continued across the railway, and take up in passing the drainage from Mr. F. Williams's slaughter-house. The drain from the *Tasmanian Hotel* and the brewery ought to be similarly made from the north side of Talbot-street to the north side of the railway, and so should the drain from the Bank of Australasia to the same side of the railway. The ditch along the north side of the railway should also be covered over or cleared out, so as to properly carry off all the drainage sent into it.

7. There are two slaughter-houses in use at Fingal, and, at the time of my visit, the piggeries connected with them were not satisfactory either in regard to position or condition. Arrangements were to be made for their removal. But the practice of keeping pigs to be fed upon slaughter-house offal and refuse is very objectionable, and I should recommend all Local Boards to treat, as the law requires them to do, all piggeries in such connexion as "offensive trades," under the 97th section of "The Public Health Act, 1885," and see that they are duly registered, inspected, and controlled.

MATHINNA.

8. Mathinna is situated still higher up in the valley of the South Esk, near the confluence of Dan's Rivulet with the river. The mean level of the township is about 900 feet above the sea. It is a fair illustration of a town built mainly on "Miners' rights," which authorise persons "to take possession of and occupy the surface of any waste lands of the Crown on any gold-field for the purpose of residence; to put up or remove any building or other erection; to cut timber and to remove the same, and to remove any stone, clay, or gravel from any waste lands of the Crown upon any gold-field for the purpose of building for himself or themselves any place of residence, or for mining purposes." The fortunes of the town follow the fortunes of the neighbouring mines—sometimes there is a large population, sometimes only a small one. At present there are about 150 souls in the township and immediate neighbourhood, and about 100 more in the district. Most of the houses are like what would be expected to be built on "miners' rights," that is, seem to have been originally built for temporary occupation, and the temporary occupation has become permanent without any improvement being made in the building, and little or no provision made for health,

decency, and drainage. Many of the houses have no privies. The water supply is chiefly drawn from the rivulet, which is fed by the surface drainage of the valley, and is, consequently, liable to continual pollution. If it were anybody's business to do so—and I recommend the Local Board of Health to make it its business—a proper well or reservoir might be easily and cheaply constructed on the course of the rivulet just above the township, and a supply secured and kept from pollution.

9. The police station is altogether unfit for its purpose. There are two cells, log-built, and so dilapidated that the doors cannot be closed. The house consists of three rooms, 11ft. by 10ft., 10ft. by 10ft., and 7ft. by 10ft.; all 8ft. high. It is occupied by the policeman, his wife, and five children. It has no spouts and no privy. At the public school the dwelling-house was not occupied, except with rubbish, and was disgracefully dirty. It is built on the hill side, with the back floor level with the ground.

10. I recommend that the Government and Municipal property on the township should be immediately put into a proper sanitary condition; that the water supply of the town be provided for as above suggested; and that, in regard to houses built on "miners' rights," regulations for avoiding nuisance should be framed by the Local Board and approved by the Commissioner of the Gold-field, under the provisions of the 66th section of "The Gold-fields Regulation Act," 1880 (44 Vict. No. 16).

MOUNT NICHOLAS MINING VILLAGE.

11. The coal-mining village of Mount Nicholas is built on the hillside, about 1200 feet above the sea level, and on Crown land leased to the mining company under the provisions of "The Mineral Lands Act, 1884," (47 Vict. No. 10). The present population is over 100. The houses are almost all new, and are scattered about without any attempt at arrangement into streets. No provision is made for drainage, and so the slops, &c. from the houses higher up the hill flow down to those that are built on a lower site. The water supply of many of the houses is also liable to pollution from the same cause. As this is sure to become a permanent township, I would suggest that the Local Board of Health should immediately, in co-operation with the Commissioner of Mines of the district (acting under the 72nd section of the above-cited Act), make regulations for the proper arrangement of the town, the drainage and water supply thereof, and the general avoidance of nuisance therein. Nothing need be done to hamper the mining company, whose interests will be really furthered by proper precautions being now taken. Something like direction must be given to the lines of roadway leading to the houses, so that these roadways may be so far drained as to keep the sewage of one house from interfering with another. And the rivulet furnishing the supply must be kept from pollution, and some provision made for having an accessible and permanent reservoir or covered water-hole. Unless some sanitary police arrangements are made, an outbreak of fever would be an unmanageable calamity.

MANGANA.

12. Mangana is situated in one of the lateral valleys of the South Esk basin, at the junction of various rivulets that drain the flanks of an outlying spur of Ben Lomond. It is about 860 feet above the sea level. It is also a gold-mining village, and all that is above written in reference to Mathinna applies with almost greater force to Mangana. The population is about 200, many of whom live in houses very small in comparison to the number of inmates. In fact, some of the so-called houses are the original huts built when the gold-field was first prospected many years ago by miners who were not sure of staying after the field had been proved, but who have stayed, and married and brought up children in the original hut. The floors are flush with the ground, which has received the household slops of twenty or thirty years; and there is a want of every necessary accommodation and arrangement for making a healthy dwelling.

13. The brook from which the winter water supply is obtained dries up in summer; but at the lower end of the village there is a water-race from the Ben Lomond Rivulet which furnishes a good supply to those who will go the distance to fetch it. The public school and schoolmaster's house are old and dilapidated (I understand they have been closed since my visit); the police quarters are also small and old, and the lockup dilapidated.

14. For the public buildings and for the winter water supply I would repeat the recommendations made in regard to Mathinna, and also the suggestions as to regulations for houses built on "miners' rights."

ST. MARY'S.

15. St. Mary's is an increasing township, situated about 850 feet above the sea level, on the St. Patrick's Rivulet, which is the source of its water supply and the natural recipient of all the surface drainage. All the privies in the township have cesspits, those of the public school being badly drained and in a position that, in rainy weather, makes the playground an unpleasant and unwholesome place. The police-quarters are not well arranged, especially in regard to the stables and the water supply. The slaughter-house connected with the butcher's shop requires reconstruction as regards flooring, wall surface, and drainage.

16. The town could easily and cheaply be supplied with water from the higher part of the course of the St. Patrick's Rivulet. I understand that a neighbouring proprietor some time since made an offer to lay this water on to the town by pipes, on certain terms. I should strongly urge the Local Board, as rural municipal authority, to act under the provisions of the 99th section of "The Rural Municipalities Act, 1865," (29 Vict. No. 8), and make provision for securing this supply, either through the offer made or otherwise. Part of the town, at least, requires draining; but such drainage might be injurious to the existing water supply, and, consequently, one drawn from the upper waters of the rivulet should be secured.

CORNWALL MINING VILLAGE.

17. This village is situated on the side of the Mount Nicholas range, about 1150 feet above the sea level. The population of it is larger than that of the Mount Nicholas mining village. The circumstances are, on the whole, similar, and I would repeat all that I have suggested as to regulations to be made by the co-operation of the Local Board of Health and the Commissioner of Mines of the district, and all that I have said as to the real interests of the company working the mine being furthered by the taking of due sanitary precautions. In regard to water supply, it might be readily and cheaply secured by bringing it on to the village from the rivulet in the valley to the eastward, and its overflow might be used for keeping the drains and gutters flushed. At present the overflow from what is brought from this source is allowed to flow wherever it can, and so adds to the general wetness of the surface. I noted that the privy cesspits at the public school had not been emptied for eight months.

18. All which matters I beg to report to you.

And, in conclusion, I have to express my hearty thanks to the Warden of the Municipality and all the officers for the assistance so kindly given me, and the great kindness and courtesy with which I was everywhere received.

I have the honour to remain
Your faithful Servant,

A. MAULT, *Engineering Inspector.*

Central Board of Health, Hobart, 26th October, 1888.