

(No. 16.)



1877.

SESSION II.

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

BENEVOLENT SOCIETY, HOBART TOWN:

REPORT FOR **1876.**

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Crowther, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
April 24, 1877.



*SEVENTEENTH Annual Report of the Committee of the BENEVOLENT SOCIETY,
Hobart Town, for the Year 1876.*

THIS Seventeenth Annual Report will differ very little from its predecessors, for the Committee is made painfully to realise that "the poor ye have always with you" is ever true. The effects of intemperance and other vices by which the innocent are made to suffer with the guilty, make it constantly apparent that "one half of the world scarcely knows how the other half lives;" and that the cruelty and injustice of those who should be the natural protectors of the weak, the helpless, and the innocent, together with the afflictions to which flesh is heir, make up the causes of the daily need that the hand of charity should be held out to relieve and to comfort the sick and the afflicted, and yet be so guarded that a premium should not be offered to fraud and systematic pauperism.

The daily routine of hearing accounts of distress, taking down particulars of same, affording temporary relief according to the circumstances of each case, devolves upon the Registrar and Visitor, Mr. Witt, who has been connected with the Society from its commencement, and who is and has ever been a sympathetic man, and at the same time a wise, discriminating, and painstaking officer, who will spare no trouble to help the really distressed, and who will put himself to any inconvenience to find out that which is evil, to stay its consequences, and if possible to punish the offenders. Nothing has occurred during the past year calling for special comment; for while oftentimes painful and heart-rending cases come before the Committee, yet there is a satisfaction in recording that there has been a slight diminution in the number of the individuals requiring relief. This may be in part attributable to the carefully investigating every case that comes before the committee, and to the knowledge possessed by the Committee of the habits and characters of so many of the applicants; the records of the Registrar containing valuable information, forming history of cases and families for the past 17 years.

There were brought over from the previous year 32 cases, which comprised 128 individuals. Through the year just past there were 152 cases investigated, of which 144 were relieved, viz., 123 females and 59 males, adults, and 106 female and 117 male children. The cases were 48 illness, 15 widows, 32 destitute, 9 husbands in prison, 16 husbands away, 6 for children—these last relieved without considering the parents, who were drunkards, and could not be entrusted with provision for their own children—15 cases of accident, 3 aged and infirm, and 8 refusals. Many of the parties relieved expressed much gratitude for the help afforded.

The Committee still continue to grant casual relief to persons recommended by subscribers and others, and many parties have been saved from imposture by a reference to the Registrar, who is so well acquainted with the pauper and vagrant community. In some cases where parties were solicitous for relief in money on some pretence "of sick wife," or "child dead," and were referred by the lady or gentleman to Mr. Witt to give such relief to the people as he deemed to be necessary, they have never shown themselves, knowing that their deception and lies would be detected. Wrong addresses are often given to prevent discovery.

Under the class of Casuals bread and soup has been given to 48 persons going into the country to seek employment, or who were waiting day by day to go into the Invalid Depôts.

Temporary work has been given in the wood yard to 41 men (mostly with families), until they could obtain employment. The wood yard is a valuable means of testing the willingness of persons to work for their food, and in the winter season is a great help to the Society in enabling it to relieve the necessitous poor who are recommended as requiring fuel, or being on the books are known to need it.

The operations of the wood brigade in supplying kindling wood to families has been more appreciated during the year, as the sales show 560 dozen bundles as compared with 242 dozen on the previous year. Large orders from Government House have materially helped this branch of work.

The Committee would desire most thankfully to acknowledge the receipt of 40 tons of wood from kind friends, which has been judiciously issued, and has been most gratefully received. The Committee have purchased 20 tons for extra cases of sickness.

Your Committee with much pleasure record the sum of £9 13s. received in small sums towards the purchase of blankets, of which during the winter months a few are purchased at wholesale prices, and are sold again to the poor at cost prices. The subscribers to the Blanket Fund are very thankful for the help; they never could save the money in their own homes. But whilst the Committee have encouraged the frugal, the wretchedly destitute have not been forgotten or overlooked, as loans of marked or branded blankets have been made to these, so that they could not pawn or sell them.

From the Queen's Asylum the Committee thankfully acknowledge the receipt of 14 bundles of old clothes and bonnets, which were dispensed to those to whom they were most useful.

The sum advanced for Lodging Tickets has been very large, owing to the number of persons who, during the winter months, were waiting for invaliding, but who on account of the crowded state of the Depôts could not gain admittance. These were also helped, at the request of the Government, with food at the soup kitchen. Vigilance is still exercised that parties are not encouraged to leave the Depôts, as no applicants who have discharged themselves are relieved. The charitably disposed in our city are often solicited for alms to pay for a night's lodging; if they would but subscribe to the funds of the Society, and make it the vehicle of their charities, they would be saved from often being imposed upon, and the vagrancy that exists amongst this class, who are continually in and out of our Asylums, would be checked.

In cab-hire for the removal of the sick to Hospital during the year £3 2s. has been expended.

The sale of soup has been a little increased, as £9 12s. 5d. has been received under this head. The soup tickets sold by the Registrar, if more largely used by the public, would prevent a good deal of the money, that is at present injudiciously given, going to the public-house.

With reference to the lying-in cases of unmarried women arrangements are now made with the Government that are working satisfactorily.

In all cases of applications for relief the attendance of children at school is insisted upon, or aid is withdrawn. Weekly certificates have to be produced from the master or mistress of the school.

Thanks are respectfully tendered to the Superintendents of the several Invalid Depôts for the weekly returns of those discharged, which enables the Registrar to prevent imposition, and to fill up his record, which is open for the reference of any desiring information.

The Committee are grateful to those friends who have given their support to the Society, and trust for a continuance of kind help by their donations; and they would desire it to be known that arrangements have been made with Mr. D. C. Carson as collector, instead of Mr. John Ayton, who has resigned.

The cases that stand on the books are continually visited by Mr. Witt, who is indefatigable in his work.

The City Missionaries are entitled to the thanks of the Committee for the aid and information rendered by them in the cases of distress that come under their observation.

The following stores have been issued during the year—21,824 lbs. bread, 370 lbs. of tea, 3606 lbs. of sugar, 828 lbs. oatmeal, 847 lbs. of rice, 5722 pints of soup. For making the soup there has been used 4224 lbs. of meat, 535 lbs. of rice, 500 lbs. of barley, 570 lbs. of peas. The soup is varied three times a week.

The supply of good 20 per cent. bread is contracted for quarterly, which the Committee see to be good, light, and wholesome, such as any family in the town would desire occasionally, being made like home-made bread. Fine bread is also supplied in cases of sickness or otherwise.

Dr. *THE Treasurer in Account with the Hobart Town BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.* **Cr.**

1876. RECEIPTS.		£	s.	d.	1876. EXPENDITURE.		£	s.	d.
Dec. 31.	To Balance in Bank, January 7th	177	2	7	Dec. 31.	Bread	106	4	0
	Government Grant	400	0	0		Meat	23	10	6
	Ditto Repayments	68	17	2		Groceries	161	9	3
	Subscriptions	186	15	10		Printing and Advertising	13	18	0
	Deposit in Bank	200	0	0		Fuel for Soup Kitchen	11	12	0
	Interest on Debentures	192	19	9		Wood for Wood Yard	12	4	9
						Repairs to Premises and Fire Policy	12	2	0
						Cab Hire to Hospital, for the Poor	3	2	0
						Lodging Tickets and Rent	11	16	6
						John Ayton—Commission	2	15	0
						Lying-in Cases—Government	78	8	6
						Salary—Registrar	150	0	0
						Salary—Cook	39	0	0
						Deposit in Bank	200	0	0
						Debenture	100	0	0
						Blankets	9	9	2
						Repayments—Mrs. Wilson	3	0	0
						Sundries	2	0	0
						Balance	285	3	8
	TOTAL	£1225	15	4		TOTAL	£1225	15	4

R. ANDREW MATHER, *Acting Secretary.*
WM. WITT, *Registrar.*

Dr. *THE Treasurer in Account with the Hobart Town BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.* **Cr.**

1876.		£	s.	d.	1875.		£	s.	d.
Jan. 1.	To Balance	177	2	7	June 30.	By Payments for Pass Book....	540	3	3
	Government Grant	400	0	0	December 31.—Ditto		400	8	5
	Subscriptions	273	5	6	„	Balance	285	3	8
	Deposit Receipts and Interest Due	210	0	0					
	Interest on Debentures	165	7	3					
	TOTAL	£1225	15	4		TOTAL	£1225	15	4

1877.
Jan. 1. To Balance

£ s. d.
285 3 8

R. WESTBROOK, *Treasurer.*

Audited with the Accounts and found to be correct.

HUGH M. HULL, } *Auditors.*
GEO. SALIER, }