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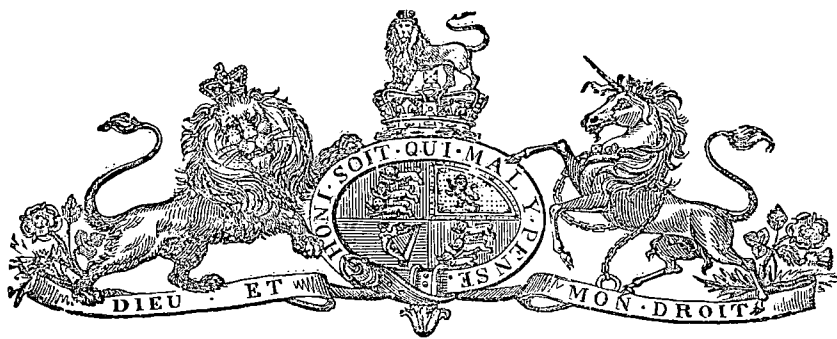
1864.

T A S M A N I A.

QUEEN'S ASYLUM.

REPORT OF BOARD OF INVESTIGATION.

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Treasurer, and ordered by the House to be printed, 26 July, 1864.



Colonial Treasurer's Office, 1st June, 1864.

THE Board appointed by Government Order, dated the 30th April, 1864, and issued under your hand, have the honor to report, for the information of His Excellency the Governor, the result of their enquiries upon investigation of the charges preferred by Mr. Boyd, Superintendent of the Queen's Asylum, against Mrs. Bourne, Matron of the Male Division; also charges by the Superintendent and Mrs. Horan, Matron of the Infant Division, against each other; and a charge brought by Mr. Latham, Head Schoolmaster, against Mr. Harding, Farm Overseer.

The Board met at the Asylum, New Town, on four days; viz.—14th, 17th, 1st, and 19th instant; and, during a careful examination of numerous witnesses in the several cases in the presence of Mr. Boyd, the following circumstances were brought under their notice:—

MRS. BOURNE'S CASE.

On the 16th March, 1864, Mr. Boyd, in a letter addressed to the Colonial Secretary, reported Mrs. Bourne for neglect of duty in having allowed many of the children in the Male Division to be "in a very filthy state;" and referred to the want of cleanliness noticeable in her Division, and the neglected appearance of the children generally; at the same time recommending her removal on the ground of general inefficiency in the discharge of her duties.

The above charges appear to have been founded upon Mrs. Bourne's alleged disobedience of an order from the Superintendent, dated 25th May, 1863, conveying a direction that "the Matron, assisted by Nurse Bridget Shelton, should inspect the Boys every morning, and see that they wore their own clothing, and had laces in their boots;" and also another alleged disobedience of Order No. 83, dated 24th December, 1863, (copies appended, marked B and K respectively).

With reference to the first order, it would appear that, from the time of the Out-door Inspector's appointment (dating some six months back), this particular in-door duty devolved upon that Officer, and is distinctly prescribed, at Section No. 3, in the list of duties compiled for his guidance. The Section runs thus:—"He will assemble all the Boys (except those engaged in domestic duties or as Officers or Servants) and see them all washed, hair combed, &c., neatly dressed, and boots laced, and have them ready for breakfast at the appointed time; the Monitors assisting in charge of their Divisions."

As regards Mrs. Bourne's neglect of the order, the Board has learned from her that she had attended to the duty as far as was in her power; but that it was impossible to keep the Boys always in their proper clothing, as they *would* take their jackets off, and throw them about, and frequently exchange them with each other. They also found, on reference to the Book of Rules and Regulations of the Queen's Asylum, printed in 1862, that the duty of inspecting the Boys for cleanliness and neatness of person every morning was at that time assigned to the Head Schoolmaster (*vide* clause 11, page 5 of Regulations); and the evidence goes to show that that Officer was relieved from the above duty by the Out-door Inspector appointed in November last, although the clause has never been officially erased from the printed book.

Upon careful enquiry respecting the issue of the second order referred to (No. 83), dated 24th December, 1863, the Board are satisfied that, from some omission not accounted for, neither Mrs. Bourne nor the Out-door Inspector had ever seen it until within a fortnight of the date upon which the enquiry was held; and that, consequently, the former was unable to carry into effect the instructions therein conveyed. The duties specially set out for the Matron in the Time Table (a strict adherence to the details of which is enjoined in clause 1, page 13, of printed Regulations, corroborated by the Superintendent himself in his evidence) make no reference to an inspection of the Boys; and, indeed, the manifold occupations therein prescribed would not, in the opinion of the Board, admit of the minute investigation intended by the order quoted without infringing too much on the time allotted to the

Matron's other duties, which, by the removal of the Master Tailor and Shoemaker, have, it would appear, been considerably increased, in the way of mending clothes, putting on buttons, also in issuing boot-laces to the Senior Monitors, and superintending the sizing and fitting of boots, &c. ; for the due performance of which additional work no provision had been made by the Superintendent, while the Matron was supposed to have been occupied with inspections.

The evidence adduced at the enquiry fails, in the opinion of the Board, to establish the charge of "general inefficiency" preferred by the Superintendent against Mrs. Bourne,—a charge resting as it did on the personal opinion of that Officer alone; while, on the other hand, the testimonials produced by the Matron from Mr. Jones, late Superintendent, Doctors Smart and Hall, and the Chaplains of the Asylum, speak of her in very favorable terms on the score of efficiency, as well as regards the motherly kindness and attention shown by her to the children under her charge, both in sickness and in health.

Again, referring to the Superintendent's order, dated 25th May, 1863, the Board cannot but express their surprise that Mr. Boyd should not have discovered Mrs. Bourne's neglect of the instructions conveyed to her on that date until the 15th March, 1864, after a lapse of nearly ten months,—and not even then from personal observation (as admitted by himself), but from the fact of his attention having been directed to the subject.

The evidence of the Out-door Inspector, as well as that of two female Servants, tends to prove, that the uncleanly state of the Boys' heads was so well known throughout the School that those persons did not deem it necessary to bring it under the notice of the Superintendent, who would almost appear to have been the *only* responsible Officer not cognizant of the fact: and it may here be remarked, that Section 4 of the prescribed duties of the Inspector requires him to assemble the Boys every morning after they are washed and dressed for the inspection of the Superintendent or the Matron; but, on questioning him upon the point, he admitted that, during the six months he has held his present situation, he had never acted upon this instruction, nor does it appear in evidence that the Superintendent had ever called him to account for the omission.

The Board have, therefore, under the circumstances as detailed, and on the merits of the case, come to the conclusion that Mrs. Bourne must stand acquitted of the charges brought against her; and that, consequently, the recommendation of the Superintendent for her removal from her appointment as Matron has not been justified by the evidence adduced during the enquiry.

During the investigation it became very apparent to the Board that the printed Rules and Regulations had been so frequently altered since their publication, by orders in the Order Book, and by memorandums not noticed in the said Rules, that it was impossible to obtain from the Superintendent an exact description of the various duties each Officer under him had to perform,—and, in fact, that the different Officers did not comprehend them themselves. The Board, therefore, recommend an *immediate* revision of the Rules and Regulations, in order that the persons severally in charge of a Division may not only clearly understand the nature of their own duties, but the duties of those who are placed immediately under their direction.

MRS. HORAN'S CASE.

The enquiry in this case arose from complaints preferred by the Matron of the Infant Division in a letter to the Colonial Secretary, dated 13th April, 1864, setting forth the want of Domestic Assistance experienced by her in the discharge of her laborious duties in the Infant Asylum, owing chiefly to the circumstance of three of the female Servants being removed from their ordinary work for two hours on five days in the week, and employed at the washing machine, and expressing her consequent inability to carry on the business of her Department in as satisfactory a manner as she would desire.

Mrs. Horan further complains that, on frequently bringing these matters under the notice of the Superintendent, that gentleman has generally replied to her in a hasty and offensive manner; and that he had declined to listen to her suggestions for the proper management of the one hundred and fifty-six children placed under her charge.

She likewise complains that two Servants out of the ordinary staff of her Division had been reduced by the Superintendent about eighteen months ago; and that, although these had been temporarily replaced by returned apprentices, the original vacancies were not filled up when those girls were re-apprenticed.

Mr. Boyd has also forwarded a letter to the Colonial Secretary, covering Mrs. Horan's complaint and explanatory of her charges.

On the first point, Mrs. Horan, during her examination, suggested to the Board that, in order to meet the difficulty caused by the absence of so many Servants at the washing machine, three of the elder girls should be attached *permanently* to her Domestic Staff; and expressed

her belief that, under such an arrangement, she would be enabled to carry out the duties satisfactorily without disturbing the operations of the regular Servants at the washing machine. Mr. Boyd having at once assented to this arrangement, the Board beg to recommend that the suggestion be favorably received by the Government; and that the requisite number of elder girls be duly apprenticed to the Matron of the Infant Division.

In respect to that portion of Mrs. Horan's complaint regarding the hasty and offensive manner of the Superintendent towards her, the Board incline to the opinion that Mr. Boyd is not sufficiently conciliatory in his mode of addressing his Subordinates.

During the course of the enquiry, Mr. Boyd preferred a complaint against Mrs. Horan for having allowed two half bags of ration potatoes to be concealed in a cupboard under the kitchen stairs, where they were discovered by himself on the 15th of April last.

He also charged her with having allowed a can of milk to remain over night unused; and also with having discovered on the 10th April, in a cupboard, one pound of butter more than should have remained on hand. Into these charges the Board instituted a most careful and searching enquiry, and the evidence adduced went incontestably to show that Mrs. Horan's defence completely exonerated her from any improper conduct in the matter: they are, consequently, of opinion that Mr. Boyd was too hasty in making charges against her which he was quite unable to substantiate, and which must, in their opinion, be considered as wholly groundless and vexatious. In justice to Mrs. Horan the Board annex to the Report several testimonials which she has presented; viz.,—from the Roman Catholic Bishop, the Rev. T. J. Ewing, Dr. Benson, and Mr. A. B. Jones.

Mrs. Horan drew the attention of the Board to the large number of Servants who had been discharged or who had left the Institution since Mr. Boyd's appointment as Superintendent, contrasting that number (28) with the number (13) who had left during the two years preceding; and complained that excellent Servants had been discharged by the Superintendent in direct opposition to her wish and recommendation.

On this point the opinion of the Board is, that the Superintendent, who is a single man, cannot have an opportunity of observing the work of the several female domestics with sufficient minuteness to enable him to decide definitely on the competency or otherwise of the Servants; and they therefore recommend that no female Servant should be dismissed by him without placing the opinion of the Matron, as well as his own, before the Colonial Secretary.

The Board having heard in evidence, and satisfied themselves by observation, that the accommodation provided for the Servants during meal times is quite inadequate for their wants, recommend that a suitable table and a few kitchen chairs be placed in the kitchen for their use; the present practice of taking their meals in the dormitories being, to the minds of the Members of the Board, both uncomfortable and objectionable.

They further recommend that the consumption of Port Arthur coal in the kitchen stove be immediately discontinued, and that wood be in future substituted. They are borne out on this point by the Director of Public Works, who has expressed his opinion that the coal in question, being quite unsuited for the purpose, must cause great difficulty in cooking, and will destroy the stove in a very short time.

It having been brought under the notice of the Board that the Matron is required to attend daily at the Purveyor's Stores to receive her supplies, which she sometimes finds difficulty in getting conveyed to the Infant Division, the Board desire to express their opinion that Mrs. Horan should be relieved from personal attendance on these occasions, except at her own option; and that the Superintendent should be instructed to make suitable arrangements for having the supplies carefully delivered to the Matron at her own place.

The attention of the Board was also directed to the great inconvenience attending the supply of water at the Infant Division, which has to be brought a distance of one hundred yards or upwards (from the kitchen) by the several female Servants; the quantity varying it appears from forty to fifty buckets daily. The Board viewed the premises and the watercourse, and were fully satisfied, not only of the inconvenience of the present mode of water supply, but also of the great waste of domestic labour involved in procuring it; the Board would therefore strongly recommend that the water should be properly laid on to the Building at the earliest period that may be practicable.

In conclusion, the Board beg to add that they quite dissent from the views expressed by Mr. Boyd in his letter to the Colonial Secretary, dated 13th May, 1864, as regards the interference of the Ladies' Committee, recognising as they do the great assistance derived from the Report of that body; and they desire to express their opinion that the visits of the Ladies' Committee, being calculated to afford much advantage to the Institution, should be courted rather than be undervalued by the Superintendent.

MR. LATHAM AND MR. HARDING.

This case arose from certain harsh expressions passing between the parties; and during the altercation Mr. Harding gave Mr. Latham the "lie direct" in express terms. The Board did not deem it worth while to go into the merits of the case, considering it sufficient to confine themselves to the fact admitted by Harding that he had used the word "lie" in addressing Mr. Latham; but for which he had offered the excuse that the latter had also charged him with stating what was not true.

At the suggestion of the Chairman, Mr. Harding retracted the offensive expression in the presence of Mr. Latham, who accepted the retraction, and the proceedings thereupon terminated.

The Board forward with this Report, their Minutes, together with the whole of the Evidence, and other documents coming into their possession in the course of the enquiry.

Since preparing the foregoing portion of the Report, the Board have received and considered the Correspondence referred to them by the Honorable the Colonial Secretary, in a Minute dated the 31st ultimo, respecting, amongst other matters, the removal by order of the Superintendent of a Summer-house which had been erected, with due permission, by the Officers of the Institution for the convenience of themselves and their children.

In reply, the Board desire to express their entire concurrence in the views contained in the Colonial Secretary's Minute, that Mr. Boyd was not warranted in giving an order for the removal of the Summer-house; and still less was he justified in undertaking that a more ornamental building should be erected in its stead without the express sanction of the Government, for which he does not even appear to have made application.

The Board do not deem it within their province to enter into the question of allotting portions of ground as private gardens for the Officers; but they cannot refrain from expressing their opinion that, in exacting the removal of Mr. Latham's Flowers and Shrubs, the Superintendent acted an arbitrary part, which the Board think might easily have been avoided by his entering into an understanding with Mr. Latham, that in the event of that gentleman leaving the Institution the Flowers and Shrubs should not be disturbed, but remain thereafter as the property of the Asylum.

CHARLES MEREDITH, *Colonial Treasurer.*

E. J. MANLEY, *Colonial Auditor.*

THOMAS T. WATT, *Collector of Customs.*

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Treasurer's Office, 13th June, 1864.

SIR,

IN accordance with the instructions conveyed in your Memorandum dated the 30th day of May, the Board lately appointed by the Governor for enquiring into matters connected with the Queen's Asylum, New Town, have investigated certain allegations preferred by Mr. John Daley, Contractor, against the Superintendent of the Asylum, and now beg to report the result of their labours for the information of His Excellency.

The following will serve as an outline of the circumstances from which this case has arisen:—

On the 25th of April, 1863, Mr. Daley put in a Tender for painting, coloring, and whitewashing the interior of the Queen's Asylum, at a charge of £150. This Tender, being the lowest received by a considerable amount, was accepted by the Board of Management on the 28th of the same month; and on the 30th Daley received an intimation of such acceptance, enclosing a copy of a specification drawn up by the Superintendent for the guidance of Contractors for the work.

It appears that Mr. Daley waited on Mr. Boyd shortly afterwards, and drew his attention to the material discrepancy existing between the specification in question and his own Tender; and Mr. Daley states also that, on the faith of a verbal promise made to him by the Superintendent that he would see him remunerated for any work not pointed out to him during a preliminary inspection of the premises, he had undertaken to carry out the work detailed according to Mr. Boyd's specification, and has claimed for extra work to the amount of £43 8s.

The Superintendent denies having made any such promise ; and asserts that he had explained to Mr. Daley, in common with the other Contractors, the nature of the work to be done.

Hence arose Mr. Daley's complaint.

The following persons were examined in this case, and the evidence given by each is hereto appended :—

Mr. John Daley, Contractor.
 Mr. A. H. Boyd, Superintendent.
 Mr. Young, Dispenser.
 Mr. Gormley, Contractor.
 Mr. Cheverton, Overseer Public Works.
 Mr. Henry Boyes, Clerk, Queen's Asylum.
 Mr. Latham, Head Schoolmaster, ditto.
 Mr. Henry Hunter, Architect, and
 Mr. Macey, Painter and Plumber.

The Board have decided on recommending payment by the Government to Mr. Daley of the sum of £30 in addition to the amount already received by him, and base their recommendation upon the following grounds :—

1st. That no evidence has been produced by Mr. Boyd in proof that Mr. Daley had seen the Specification, and had understood its purport, prior to his having received a notification that his Tender had been accepted by the Board of Management ; and while they are of opinion from the wording "*Buildings throughout*" in Mr. Daley's Tender that his Contract might, in a strictly legal point of view, be binding upon him on the terms stipulated by himself,—viz. £150,—it is notwithstanding evident to them, that by the words "*the Specification*" he could have referred only to his own Tender, and was to a certain extent misled when making his estimate of the cost of the work ; and had, consequently, tendered at a sum below that which would afford him a fair remuneration for his time and labour, and the outlay consequent upon the purchase of Oilman's Stores and other materials.

2nd. That, in the absence of Mr. Daley's signature to Mr. Boyd's Specification, an important omission in such a Contract, there is nothing to satisfy the Board that he could have been compelled to carry out the Contract in accordance with the particulars detailed in that document.

3rd. That, in order to arrive at some definite knowledge of the quantity and value of the work actually performed by Mr. Daley, the Board directed Mr. Cheverton, Overseer of Public Works, to carefully measure and calculate the same ; and have satisfied themselves, from the Report of that Officer, that Mr. Daley's claim for extra payment does not exceed in amount the sum to which Mr. Cheverton's estimate would induce them to consider him to be entitled.

In conclusion, the Board deem it their duty to draw the attention of the Government to the irregular and unbusiness-like mode adopted at the Queen's Asylum in transacting engagements connected with this case ; and beg strongly to recommend that Tenders for all works at Public Institutions should in future be invited by the Director of Public Works, whose Department is, in their opinion, the legitimate and proper channel through which operations of the kind, involving a large public expenditure, should be conducted, and at whose Office all plans and specifications necessary for the guidance of Contractors would be exhibited to persons interested before making their estimates and sending in their Tenders, while at the same time the services of a practically competent Officer would be constantly available for inspection of Contract Works at every stage of its performance.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servants,

CHARLES MEREDITH, *Colonial Treasurer.*

E. J. MANLEY, *Colonial Auditor.*

THOMAS T. WATT, *Collector of Customs.*

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.