

(No. 36.)



1879.

TASMANIA.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

OFFICER OF HEALTH:

REPORT FOR 1878.

Laid upon the Table by the Colonial Secretary, and ordered by the House to be printed, September 9, 1879.



REPORT for 1878 of the Officer of Health for the Towns of New Town, Sandy Bay, and Wellington Hamlets.

Sir,

I AM gratified to be able to state that the deaths in the Registration District of Hobart (which includes the Towns above named) in this year were only 630, being 130 less than occurred in the previous year of 1877.

In the whole of Tasmania the deaths were fewer than in the previous year by 338 ; as follows :—

TABLE No. 1.

Deaths registered in Country Districts in 1877	923,—in 1878.....	722
Ditto Hobart Town, ditto	759,—in 1878.....	639
Ditto Launceston, ditto	356,—in 1878.....	339
	<u>2038</u>	<u>1700</u>

The Country Districts having 201 less deaths, Hobart Town 120, Launceston 17 ; total 338.

It will be seen that the figures in this Table do not accord with the statement previously given of the deaths in the Hobart Registration District. This arises from the fact that my record of deaths are of those *actually dying* within the year, while the general Statistics are of those *registered* within the year. Although the discrepancy of numbers is but small, yet statistical accuracy requires that such disagreements should be explained.

The estimated population of all Tasmania at the middle of 1878 is 108,525, so that the death-rate of the year amounted to, in round numbers, about $15\frac{1}{2}$ per thousand of the population, and was $3\frac{1}{2}$ per thousand less than the death-rate of 1877. It will be seen by reference to Table No. 1 in my Report for 1877 that 1876 and 1875 had also a greater number of deaths than in 1878, and that 1874 only differed from 1878 by having 11 less deaths. Considering the increase of 5771 in the population from the 31st December, 1874, to that of the same date in 1878, the decrease in the death-rate of all Tasmania was even greater between the years 1874 and 1878 than the previous restricted comparisons indicate.

The following Table (No. 2), arranged in the same way as it was in my Report for 1877, shows the total deaths occurring in each month of 1878, irrespective of the date when they were registered, not only for the whole Registration District of Hobart, but also for the sub-divisions, the City, and the respective Towns of New Town, Sandy Bay, and Wellington :—

TABLE No. 2.

Months of 1878.	Hobart Town Registration District.	Above or below 20 Years mean of the Month.	The City.	New Town.	Sandy Bay.	Wellington.
January	61	+10 $\frac{15}{30}$	45	8	1	1
February.....	62	+10 $\frac{3}{30}$	40	5	4	5
March.....	72	+16 $\frac{5}{30}$	50	10	3	3
April	51	+ 6 $\frac{15}{30}$	26	5	3	4
May	55	+10 $\frac{15}{30}$	35	6	1	8
June.....	61	+14 $\frac{6}{30}$	31	15	2	7
July.....	51	—2 $\frac{11}{30}$	28	17	2	2
August.....	45	—1 $\frac{19}{30}$	23	9	1	6
September	40	—3	26	6	1	6
October.....	46	—4 $\frac{20}{30}$	28	12	3	2
November.....	44	+3 $\frac{18}{30}$	19	8	1	11
December.....	42	—3 $\frac{12}{30}$	27	7	1	2
	630		378	108	23	57
	566					
	64				566	

It is thus evident that 64 out of the 630 deaths in the Hobarton Registration District were of persons brought into the City from other places, mostly cases dying in Hospital from Country Districts. At the census of 7th February, 1870, the City population was returned as 19,092; thereafter I have entered into elaborate calculations with respect to the relative increase of population in different parts of the Island, and I think that I may not be far out if I assume that in the middle of 1878 the population within the precincts of the City of Hobart Town amounted to 21,000. The 378 deaths of *bonâ fide* citizens in 1878 would therefore be about 18 per 1000 per annum, and in comparison with British Towns of a similar number of inhabitants, not excessive, a few having less but many having more deaths. At the same time it must be remembered that the relative proportions of the number living in different groups of ages is not the normal proportion of British Towns, but with a predominant number of those at ages less favourable to life. There are no data on which the numbers of the population in the Towns of New Town, Sandy Bay, and Wellington can be estimated, apart from the Electoral Districts of Glenorchy and Queenborough, of which they only form a part. Moreover, the accumulation of invalids, lunatics, and paupers, &c. in New Town and Wellington would not enable me to draw anything like fair conclusions from the number of deaths recorded against them.

Table 3, as in my Report for 1877, gives the deaths in the five classes from all diseases, but specially enumerating those in the Zymotic class, as being those more directly affected by neglect of sanitary precautions. I have added a column of the total deaths, similarly arranged in 1877, for comparison.

TABLE 3.

CLASS.	ORDER.	DISEASE.	JANUARY.	FEBRUARY.	MARCH.	APRIL.	MAY.	JUNE.	JULY.	AUGUST.	SEPTEMBER.	OCTOBER.	NOVEMBER.	DECEMBER.	TOTAL, 1878.	TOTAL, 1877.
1. ZYMOTIC.	Miasmatic.	Scarlatina	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	60
		Diphtheria	2	1	3	..	2	2	1	..	4	5	1	..	21	13
		Quinsy .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
		Croup	1	1	..	..	1	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	5	10
		Whooping-cough	1	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	3
		Typhoid Fever .....	..	..	2	7	6	1	..	..	..	..	1	..	17	15
		Erysipelas	1	..	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	7
		Metria .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
		Catarrh, &c. ....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
		Dysentery .....	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	1
		Diarrhœa	8	7	15	4	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	1	37	26
		Cholera	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	2
		Other Zymotic .....	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	2	4
	Enthetic .....	..	2	1	1	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7	3
	Dietic	Intemperance, &c.	1	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	3	6
	Parasitic .....	..	..	2	1	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	—
TOTALS			18	14	24	16	10	7	2	3	4	5	3	1	107	158
2. CONSTITUTIONAL			8	13	10	7	5	8	4	2	6	7	3	7	80	97
3. LOCAL			21	18	26	24	26	29	30	29	14	18	25	23	283	322
4. DEVELOPMENTAL			12	13	11	3	8	16	14	10	13	12	13	7	132	155
5. VIOLENT			2	4	1	1	6	1	1	1	3	4	..	4	28	28
TOTALS			61	62	72	51	55	61	51	45	40	46	44	42	630	760

Merely contrasting a total number of deaths in any City, Town, or Country with the total of inhabitants is frequently the cause of most erroneous conclusions as to relative death-rates. Not only is it necessary to give the actual deaths in groups of ages, but the numbers of the population, by census, must also be detailed in the same way to arrive at anything approaching to a fair comparison. In the following tables I therefore give the aforesaid particulars.

Table 4 gives the number of deaths in the Hobarton Registration District, in each month, in eight groups of ages:—

TABLE 4.

<i>Months.</i>	<i>Under 1.</i>	<i>1 to 5.</i>	<i>5 to 10.</i>	<i>10 to 15.</i>	<i>15 to 20.</i>	<i>Total under 20.</i>	<i>20 to 60.</i>	<i>60 and above.</i>	<i>Total at all Ages.</i>
January	22	2	1	1	4	30	13	18	61
February	21	3	4	1	1	30	13	19	62
March	25	4	4	1	1	35	16	21	72
April	9	6	1	0	2	18	19	14	51
May	7	3	3	2	2	17	14	24	55
June	3	3	3	2	2	13	13	35	61
July	7	3	0	0	2	12	17	22	51
August	7	3	1	0	1	12	15	18	45
September	7	3	1	1	2	14	10	16	40
October	7	1	2	0	2	12	20	14	46
November	6	2	1	0	1	10	12	22	44
December	4	2	1	0	2	9	16	17	42
TOTALS, 1878	125	35	22	8	22	212	178	240	630
TOTALS, 1877	131	66	40	17	31	285	197	278	760
TOTALS, 1876	98	48	26	11	20	203	183	227	613

Table 5 arranges the Population of the Hobarton Registration District, as taken at the Census on the 7th February, 1870, to correspond, in groups of ages, with the deaths in Table 4.

TABLE 5.

<i>Divisions of the District.</i>	<i>Under 1 yr. old.</i>		<i>1 to 5.</i>		<i>5 to 10.</i>		<i>10 to 15.</i>		<i>15 to 20.</i>		<i>Total under 20.</i>		<i>20 to 60.</i>		<i>60 and above.</i>		<i>Total at all Ages.</i>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Hobart City	285	263	997	1049	1373	1428	1286	1378	785	1104	4726	5222	3635	4362	676	471	9037	10,055
TOTAL	548		2046		2801		2664		1889		9948		7997		1147		19,092	
Queenborough District	36	31	127	136	170	149	147	160	88	97	568	573	409	533	206	102	1183	1208
TOTAL	67		263		319		307		185		1141		942		308		2391	
Glenorchy District	37	44	173	174	329	253	332	304	133	157	1004	932	593	622	299	71	1896	1625
TOTAL	81		347		582		636		290		1936		1215		370		3521	
TOTALS	358	338	1297	1359	1872	1830	1765	1842	1006	1358	6298	6727	4637	5517	1181	644	12,116	12,888
	696		2656		3702		3607		2364		13,025		10,154		1825		25,004	

The data for the changes in the population of the Hobarton District, or indeed for all Tasmania, are insufficient to ground anything like a correct estimate of the increase of population and the variation of its constituent elements of age and sex. The numerical amount of the population for all Tasmania in the middle of 1878, as estimated by the computations of the able Government Statistician, which I have before given, shows that in the little more than nine years since the Census was taken there has been an increase of the total population of about 9197. At the Census the inhabitants of the Hobarton Registration District formed about one-fourth of the population of the whole island, and therefore on this datum for computation the increase in the population of the Hobarton Registration District would, in the middle of 1878, be about to 27,300. Calculating the registries of births will give some insight also into the probable increase of population in the nine years that have elapsed since the Census. The registered births in all Tasmania in the Census year were 3054,—and of these 724 occurred in the Hobarton Registration District, or, as in the Census of population, in round numbers, about one-fourth. In the following Table I have given the births in every year in all Tasmania, and the share of them in the Hobarton Registration District in contrast:—

TABLE No. 6.

BIRTHS in all Tasmania, and in the Hobarton Registration District.

<i>All Tasmania.</i>		<i>Hobarton Registration District.</i>
1870.....	3054	724
1871.....	3053	773
1872.....	3003	718
1873.....	3048	725
1874.....	3097	783
1875.....	3105	755
1876.....	3149	761
1877.....	3211	809
1878.....	3502	844
TOTAL	28,232	6893

No comprehensive measures have been taken for the amendment of the unsanitary conditions of the Towns, as pointed out by my Reports for 1877 and 1876. Nevertheless a considerable number of local nuisances, injurious to public health, have been abated on my representations.

My remarks on the subject of Vaccination in the Report for 1877 are equally applicable to the year 1878. The returns of the Country Vaccinators not being within my cognisance, I can only form general conclusions of what would be the result of their labours in the absence of an efficient Vaccination Law. With respect to the public Vaccinations in the Hobarton District I can speak of them as a comparative failure. Though 844 children were born during the year, less than half-a-dozen of them were vaccinated before attaining the age of six months, as the useless existing law requires. In fact the total number vaccinated at the Vaccination Chambers in Collins-street was under 150, nearly altogether of children upwards of one year old, and several adults; so that weekly vaccinations, from arm to arm, with lymph from properly selected vaccinifers, could not be effected. During the many months since the Vaccination Establishment in Collins-street was abandoned, and the old and always before unsatisfactory plan of having public vaccinations conducted at the Hospital, there has only been one vaccination performed there. The Report of the Registrar-General of Scotland for 1878 is equally as satisfactory as that for 1875, from which I quoted in my last year's Report the Vaccination Statistics—out of 126,900 registered births, 96·723 per cent. of those which attained the age of six months were duly vaccinated as the law requires. Until Tasmania enforces Vaccination as thoroughly as it is done in Scotland there will always be the apprehension of a terrible Nemesis hanging over the Colony from an invasion of Small-pox.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

E. SWARBRECK HALL, *Officer of Health.*

8th September, 1879.

To the Hon. THOS. REIBEY, *M.H.A.*,
Colonial Secretary, Tasmania.