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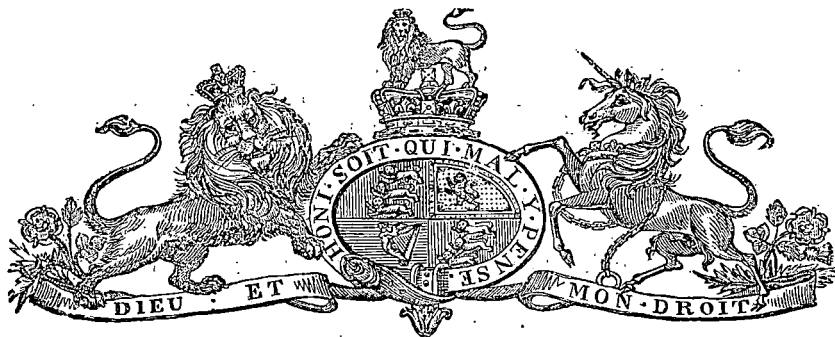
1859.

T A S M A N I A.

NORTHERN BOARD OF EDUCATION.

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1858.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Henty, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
18 August, 1859.



REPORT of the NORTHERN BOARD OF EDUCATION, Tasmania, for the Year 1858.

THE Northern Board of Education have the honour to submit for the information of His Excellency the Governor their Report on the Public Schools under their control in Northern Tasmania during the year 1858.

1. At the commencement of the year there were 25 Schools, and at its termination the same number; the newly opened Schools having been exactly counterbalanced by those which it had been necessary, from various causes, to close during the year. The number in actual operation during any part of 1858 was 28.

2. The average number receiving instruction in these Schools was 1408. As, however, the individuals composing the attendance are in a constant state of change, the above number cannot be considered to include all the Children who have received some portion of their education in Public Schools during the year.

3. From Returns obtained by the Inspector of Schools, it appears that of the total number on the books in December, 1858, upwards of 18 per cent. were under 6 years of age, nearly 43 per cent. under 8 years, nearly 66 per cent. under 10 years, and upwards of 86 per cent. under 12 years of age.

4. On the 31st December there were on the establishment 24 Male Teachers, classed as under:—

MALE TEACHERS	Receiving, exclusive of Fees,				TOTAL.
	£150 per annum.	From £100 to £120 per annum.	From £60 to £90 per annum.	£50 per annum.	
	5	11	5	3	24

And 16 Mistresses or Teachers of Needlework,—

FEMALE TEACHERS	Receiving					TOTAL
	£80 per annum.	£60 per annum.	£50 per annum.	£40 per annum.	£20 per annum.	
	1	1	1	6	7	16

Together with 5 Pupil Teachers receiving from £15 to £20 each per annum; the whole amount paid to Teachers of all classes, in salaries and personal allowances, being £3176 10s. 4d.

5. Of the 25 Schools in operation at the end of the year, 4 were held in buildings belonging to Government or vested in the Board, 13 in buildings occupied free from the payment of Rent, and 8 in buildings belonging to private individuals or religious bodies, and rented by the Board at from £10 to £80 per annum.

6. The amount expended during the year in renting School Buildings was £220 8s. 4d., and to this sum may be added £126 10s. voted towards the Repairs of various buildings of which the gratuitous use has been given during a number of years, making in all £346 18s. 4d.

7. In the district of Westbury a Master's Residence and a Schoolroom have been erected; at Cressy a School-house, including Residence, was far advanced towards completion at the close of the year. The Board have felt strongly the necessity that exists for reducing the sum annually expended as Rent, by erecting permanent School-houses; but have been unable to draw so largely as they could have wished upon the funds voted for that purpose by Parliament, in consequence of the difficulty experienced in raising the necessary local subsidy.

8. In conclusion, the Board beg to observe that their constant aim throughout has been to keep down the annual expenditure to the lowest amount compatible with the efficiency of the Department.

9. The Report of the Inspector of Schools will be appended. While the Board think it desirable to afford the Inspector an opportunity of stating his views upon various subjects connected with the working of the system of Public Education in Tasmania, they wish it to be understood that they do not hold themselves responsible for the opinions which may be contained in such Report.

JNO. W. GLEADOW.
C. A. W. ROCHER.
J. AIKENHEAD.
WILLIAM K. O'KEEFE.
WM. CLEVELAND.

*REPORT on the Schools under the NORTHERN BOARD OF EDUCATION in
1858, by T. STEPHENS, Esq. B.A., Inspector of Schools.*

Launceston, 4th March, 1859.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE the honor to present my Report for the year 1858.

The subjoined Table will show the employment of my time from the 1st January to the 31st December :—

	<i>No. of Days.</i>
Inspection of Schools and Travelling.....	187
Agency, correspondence, and examination of Teachers ...	86
Private business, &c.....	28
Illness.....	12
Sundays.....	52
	365

2. In a country with so scattered a population as this, more time than could be wished is necessarily spent in travelling from place to place. I have, however, been able to visit nearly all the Schools three times during the year, and most of them more frequently. The two extreme points in my District—Falmouth on the east, and Circular Head on the west—are distant from each other by the nearest available *route* about 240 miles. A considerable portion of this between the Mersey and Circular Head is impracticable except to a well-mounted horseman, while visits paid in the ordinary way, by means of the coasting Steamer, are all but useless as regards the promotion of any educational movement.

3. Under the head agency is included the time occupied in preparing plans and specifications, and in other business connected with the buildings which have been erected by the Board. In undertaking this work I have been actuated by the desire of improving the architectural arrangements of School-houses, which are too often planned without any regard to the purposes for which they are required. I would, however, beg to suggest that to superintend the construction of such buildings the services of some professional man should for the future be secured.

4. At the end of the year 1857 there were twenty-five Schools in operation. Four have been discontinued during the past year,—at Hadspen, Torquay, Table Cape, and Cullenswood; and in the three last-mentioned places the want of proper accommodation, combined with the indifference of those who ought to be the most interested, has hitherto prevented their re-establishment.

Four new Schools have been opened during the same period, at Exton, Breadalbane, Perth, and Tarleton, and are progressing satisfactorily. That at Emu Bay, re-opened for a few weeks, has been again closed through the resignation of the Teacher.

5. In an Appendix will be found Summaries extracted from my private Reports, showing the general character of the instruction given, as elucidated at my last Annual Examination, together with other statistics. The Reports on each School are carefully preserved in the Office for future reference.

6. I am glad to be able to report a general improvement throughout my District, so slight indeed as not to be appreciable in statistical records or results of Inspection, but still a movement in the right direction, and one that gives hopes for the future. Still, I regret to say, until a far greater advance be made, the state of Public Education in Northern Tasmania cannot be considered satisfactory. Some good Schools there are, one or two of which would rank nearly with the best of similar character in England; and those who are acquainted with the extraordinary advance which has been made in Education in the mother-country during the last ten years are aware that this is no slight praise. These, no doubt, will extend their influence beyond their immediate neighbourhood, but they form, and in the ordinary course of events must continue to do so, far too small a minority.

7. Of the Religious Instruction as imparted in the public schools I cannot, on the whole, report favourably, and am disposed to attribute this principally to the general misunderstanding which prevails with regard to the meaning of the term itself, although in some cases wilful negligence on the part of the Teacher has been perceptible. Many persons are unable to comprehend the notion of Religious Instruction apart from the use of those formularies and catechisms which were used in their own early education; and while they see clearly that these are proscribed in a country where there is no established form of Religion, they have failed to discover the thoroughly unsectarian character of that religious teaching which is especially adapted for elementary schools. Even where the prescribed time for Religious Instruction has been regularly devoted to that subject, there is often a singular want of judgment manifested in the selection of passages of Scripture for the daily lesson. Those who have not had opportuni-

ties of observation will scarcely credit the fact, that while there exists in the history and narratives of the Bible so rich and varied a store of materials for interesting and instructing young children, those portions are generally the last to be made use of. I have found children under eight years of age wearily spelling through a chapter in Leviticus, St. Paul's Epistles, or in Ecclesiastes (the last is a favourite selection); and when, as I fear is too often the case, they meet with sharp reproof or punishment for want of attention, one cannot be surprised that a dislike to the very name of the Bible is speedily engendered. On this ground alone, though many other arguments might be adduced in support of it, I consider that text-books containing Scripture selections judiciously chosen are best suited for use in our Public Schools. That, however, which is by far the most important branch of this subject is the *incidental* teaching, the cultivation of Christian morality, and this, depending as it does for its very essence on the existence of a vital spirit of Christianity in the Teacher, can be bound by no laws but those of opportunity, and is without the pale of authoritative interference.

8. Among the other ordinary branches of elementary instruction, arithmetic and grammar are taught with the least efficiency. In these, as indeed in most subjects, principles are little attended to or explained, and far too great stress is laid on formulæ and abstract definitions. Here especially it is that black-board lessons, with a constant reference to visible and familiar objects in the use of them, are most valuable. A not uncommon excuse preferred to account for the low standard in a school is, that "these children are so stupid there is no doing anything with them," while the fact that this very stupidity arises from the Teacher's inability to develope their faculties is entirely lost sight of. Next to high principle, *aptitude* for teaching is the most important of a Teacher's qualifications, and without it the most highly educated man is out of place in a school. The study of elementary arithmetic is one that peculiarly calls for the exercise of this gift, and it may easily be made the most interesting, instead of the most wearisome of lessons. Tate's Principles of Arithmetic, and M'Leod's Arithmetical Questions, may, in the hands of intelligent Teachers, do much to remedy the existing evils.

9. In the study of Grammar the Teacher too often forgets that his ultimate object should be to secure for his pupils propriety of language whether spoken or written, and not merely to cram their memories with a host of abstract rules and definitions. I have no hesitation in asserting that the great majority of children leave school before they have advanced one step towards the desired end *by the means employed for that purpose*. In schools of the higher class the evil which I complain of, though equally common, is not of so much consequence, for by reading and unconscious imitation children acquire imperceptibly whatever purity of diction exists in the society in which they move. But the children in our Public Schools have seldom these advantages, and are consequently almost entirely dependent on their Teacher for improvement. I should be glad to see text-books of Grammar entirely discarded from our Public Schools, except for use by advanced pupils in their home lessons, and more careful attention paid by Teachers to the study of the English language. The practice of Composition ought to be an essential feature in the daily routine, and can scarcely be commenced too early. Among the numerous works on this subject sanctioned by the Board, Morell's and Latham's Grammar, and Cornwell's various treatises, are the best that I have met with.

10. As to the other branches of elementary instruction, I have little of importance to add to the remarks made in my Report for 1857. There is still great room for improvement in regard to a more definite and systematic course of lessons in all schools, and a more rigid adherence to the Time-table.

11. The want of a proper spirit of independence in the Teachers of Public Schools has, in many instances, attracted my attention. One of the chief advantages of a state-aided system of education is, that it renders the Teacher to a certain extent independent of the caprice or interference of parents,—a position which the private Teacher can only obtain under unusually favourable circumstances. On some occasions I have found that a whole morning has been spent by senior pupils in filling up what are commonly called Ciphering Books, not the least objectionable among the numerous contrivances for consuming the greatest possible time with the smallest possible advantage. Here I have been told that the production of these is required by the parents as a guarantee of their children's progress. This is only one instance, and one of minor importance, out of many, among which I may mention the want of punctuality in coming to School, the use of a variety of text-books which have been purchased at another School, the neglect of home-lessons, and many other evils, which all tend to show that the Teacher has not assumed that position of authority which is necessary to enable him to succeed in his educational labours. Such a position is, of course, not to be obtained without the exercise of considerable tact and judgment; and it ought to be carefully borne in mind that, unless the cordial co-operation of the parents is secured, the work of education is but half performed. It is not always an easy matter to secure the necessary influence, but it has been done over and over again under the most adverse circumstances.

12. In my Report for 1857 I mentioned, as one of the reasons which necessitated the establishment of a Model School in Launceston, the advantage which untrained Teachers would derive from witnessing the effects of good management and improved methods, together with the producing causes. An Inspector can easily draw attention to defects, and show how they

may be remedied, but few of us like to be convinced that any system can be superior to our own, and unless a hearty inclination is enlisted on the side of Reform no good result need be expected.

13. I have devoted a good deal of time and attention to a comparison of the extent of the means of Education in my District with that of the population, and beg to subjoin in a tabulated form the results which I have arrived at. The columns of the Census Returns include children both under and above the age at which they commonly attend School; and I have therefore made a deduction of one-third, to allow for those who may be under four or above twelve years of age.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT.	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF FOUR AND TWELVE.		
	<i>Census 1857.</i>	<i>Receiving Instruction in Public Schools.</i>	<i>Educated privately or not at all.</i>
Campbell Town	415	105	310
Fingal	226	22	204
Morven	551	132	419
Ringwood	230	54	176
Norfolk Plains	396	135	261
Selby	600	64	536
Launceston	1447	312	1135
George Town	224	37	187
Westbury	578	237	341
Deloraine.....	378	80	298
Devon	591	75	516
Total.....	5646	1253	4383

14. It is hardly desirable to enter into a detailed calculation as to the precise extent of private education. Except in the larger Towns it is so inconsiderable as scarcely to affect the general result. In more than one district I have good reason to believe, from personal inquiries and observation, that the number of Children who ought to be at School far exceeds the number given in the Official Returns; and when allowance is made for increase of the population since 1856, when the Census was taken, it will be evident that the educational deficiency is even greater than the above figures, startling as they are, represent it to be.

15. It is in such districts as Devon that the aid of Government is most urgently required, and yet it is here that the ordinary modes of establishing Schools are most inoperative. The settlers along the North-west Coast are, for the most part, in narrow circumstances,—the recent fall in the price of timber and potatoes, their staple article of export, having proved a serious calamity to men who depended on them almost solely for subsistence. In no other part of the world, probably, are there such formidable obstacles to the clearing and cultivation of land as here beset the settler of small capital, while the difficulties to be encountered in crossing dangerous tidal rivers, and traversing forests, where the track, seldom well defined, is in many places entirely obliterated by the rapid growth of underwood, check all free intercommunication and isolate him almost completely from the notice and sympathy of settled civilisation. The result is the natural one: nor can we be surprised to find in many of these remote settlements an indifference to any concerns beyond those of mere animal existence, when the same is rather the rule than the exception even in the wealthy and prosperous districts.

16. Nor are pecuniary difficulties the only obstacles to the establishment of Schools. In many places it is impossible to define, with any certainty, the future centres of population, and consequently undesirable to erect permanent School-houses. Something, however, must be done; and, as the best expedient which occurs to me, I beg to suggest the employment of a staff of *itinerating* Teachers, who should divide their time between two or more localities according to circumstances, availing themselves of such temporary accommodation as should be procurable. From organisations thus formed regular Schools might afterwards be developed with comparative facility.

17. Before concluding this Report, I beg again to call attention to what I conceive to be the chief impediments to the extension of the number of really good Schools; viz. the difficulty of raising local contributions to meet the grant from the General Revenue for building purposes, and the want of a regular supply of qualified and experienced Teachers. The practical objections to a Rate levied *annually* for the support of Schools do not apply to one levied *once for all* to secure their establishment. If it be really considered desirable to elevate the social status of the Teachers, and to attract as many as possible of a superior class, it is obvious that the first step to be taken is to provide suitable accommodation.

I have the honor to be,
Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

T. STEPHENS.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Northern Board of Education.

APPENDIX.

SUMMARY A.

Character of Instruction.

SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION.	NO. OF SCHOOLS OUT OF 25 IN WHICH		
	ARE REPORTED TO BE TAUGHT.		
	<i>Excellently, Well, or Fairly.</i>	<i>Moderately.</i>	<i>Imperfectly or Badly.</i>
Bible History	7	8	10
Reading	11	12	2
Writing	12	11	2
Ditto from Dictation	10	7	6
Arithmetic	5	13	7
Mental ditto	8	10	3
Grammar	12	9	4
Composition	3	6	0
Geography	13	7	3
Mensuration	5	1	0
Algebra	3	1	0
Natural Philosophy	2	2	0
Linear Drawing	2	1	0
Singing from Notes	2	2	0
Needlework	10	6	0

SUMMARY B.

School Appliances, Discipline, &c.

NO. OF SCHOOLS IN WHICH																				
<i>Premises are</i>			<i>Books are</i>			<i>Registers are</i>			<i>Apparatus is</i>			<i>Discipline is</i>			<i>Furniture is</i>			<i>Fitness for Training Apparatus is</i>		
E. G. or F.	M.	I. or B.	E, G., or F.	M.	I. or B.	E, G., or F.	M.	I. or B.	E, G., or F.	M.	I. or B.	E, G., or F.	M.	I. or B.	E, G., or F.	M.	I. or B.	E, G., or F.	M.	I. or B.
19	4	2	14	8	3	13	10	2	10	13	2	15	6	4	14	8	3	5	11	9

SUMMARY C.

No. of Children on School Registers, aged

<i>Under 6.</i>	<i>Between 6 and 8.</i>	<i>Between 8 and 10.</i>	<i>Between 10 and 12.</i>	<i>Between 12 and 14.</i>	<i>Above 14.</i>
254	328	312	277	134	52

SUMMARY D.

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE.			PRESENT AT ANNUAL EXAMINATION.			ON SCHOOL REGISTERS.		
<i>Boys.</i>	<i>Girls.</i>	<i>Total.</i>	<i>Boys.</i>	<i>Girls.</i>	<i>Total.</i>	<i>Boys.</i>	<i>Girls.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
632	371	1003	647	349	996	845	512	1357