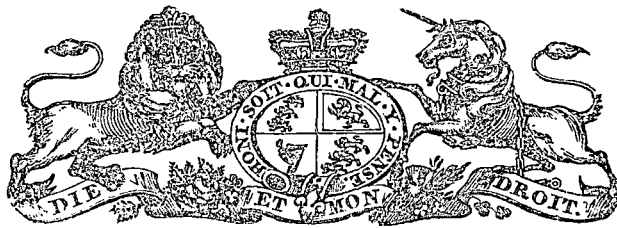


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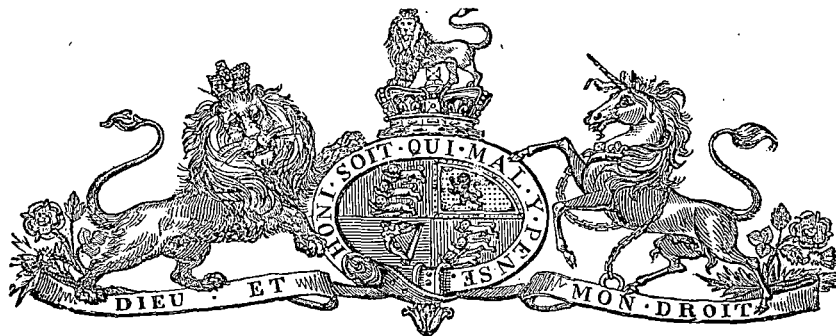
1860.

T A S M A N I A.

NORTHERN BOARD OF EDUCATION.

THIRD REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1859.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Henty, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
27 July, 1860.



THIRD REPORT of the NORTHERN BOARD OF EDUCATION, *Tasmania*, for the Year 1859.

To His Excellency SIR HENRY E. F. YOUNG, *Knight, Commander of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, and Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of the Island of Tasmania and its Dependencies.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

WE, the Members of the Northern Board of Education, have the honor to submit to Your Excellency this our Third Report, comprising a statement of our proceedings during the year 1859.

1. At the end of 1858 there were 25 Schools in operation in Northern Tasmania. During the past year Schools were opened in the under-mentioned places, making a total of 34 in operation between the 1st January and 31st December :—

- | | | |
|-----------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Cressy. | | 6. Hermitage, near Bishopsbourne. |
| 2. Cullenswood. | | 7. Northam. |
| 3. Emu Bay. | | 8. West Tamar. |
| 4. Formby. | | 9. Windermere. |
| 5. Hadspen. | | |

2. The want of suitable accommodation, and the difficulty of procuring competent Teachers, have hitherto rendered unsuccessful the attempts which have been made to establish Schools in six other places where they are much needed ; viz.—

- | | | |
|---------------|--|------------------|
| 1. Avoca. | | 4. Supply River. |
| 2. Chudleigh. | | 5. Table Cape. |
| 3. Cleveland. | | 6. Torquay. |

3. The number of Children returned as having received instruction during the year was 2217. The average number on the Rolls was 1577, showing an increase of 169 ; and the average attendance 1256, showing an increase of 213. The number admitted up to the 31st December was 918 ; and 623 had been withdrawn.

4. It has been found impossible to give detailed information respecting the age of all the children who have received instruction between the 1st January and 31st December, owing to the inaccurate manner in which the Teachers' Returns appear to have been kept in the early part of the year. The following Table exhibits the age of 1226 Children, examined by the Inspector of Schools during the months of November and December :—

Under 4 Years.	4 Years.	5 Years.	6 Years.	7 Years.	8 Years.	9 Years.	10 Years.	11 Years.	12 Years & above.
33	106	126	131	158	148	133	129	108	154

It thus appears that upwards of 50 per cent. are under 8, and only 12 per cent. above 11 years of age.

5. On the 31st December there were employed in the service of the Board 27 Male and 28 Female Teachers, together with 5 Pupil Teachers, at the following rates of remuneration, exclusive of School Fees and House Allowance :—

<i>Male Teachers.</i>		
£ 5 at 150 per annum. 5 at 120 " 5 at 100 " 4 at 80 "		£ 2 at 70 per annum. 1 at 60 " 5 at 50 "
<i>Female Teachers.</i>		
£ 1 at 80 per annum. 1 at 60 " 3 at 50 "		£ 9 at 40 per annum. 14 at 20 "
<i>Pupil Teachers (Male.)</i>		
£ 3 at 20 per annum.		£ 2 at 15 per annum.

6. The whole amount expended during the year in the maintenance of Schools was £4685 5s. 9d. Every endeavour has been made to economise the annual grant; but the sum originally appropriated by the Government for the purposes of the Board—viz. £4000—has, from the first, been wholly insufficient.

7. The sum of £3778 12s. 10d. has been expended in the payment of salaries and allowances to Teachers. It will be impossible, while the emoluments arising from local sources are so inconsiderable, to effect any reduction under this head. Except where augmented from private sources, the salaries are much lower than those which are given in the neighbouring Colonies, though sometimes higher than is justified by the actual merits of the Teachers. Even the higher rates have proved insufficient to attract really competent Teachers. All the Public Schools are attended by children of both sexes; and, as qualified Mistresses can seldom be procured, it has been considered necessary in all cases to engage a Female Assistant or Teacher of Needlework in addition to the Master. From this cause the expense of maintenance appears in several instances to be greater than is warranted by the attendance; but this objection is trifling when compared with those which must arise from the employment of an unmarried man, without such an Assistant, as Teacher in a mixed school.

8. The amount expended in repairs to School-houses was £148 13s.; a portion of which, £44 13s., was devoted to the improvement of premises occupied by the Board free from the payment of rent.

9. The cost of School Books and Apparatus granted during the year, as free stock, was £115 4s. 2d., and that of furniture £74 11s. In several Schools the latter is still reported to be defective.

10. The sum of £1173 19s. 6d. is returned as having been received by the Teachers as School-fees. There is reason to believe that the School Accounts have in several instances been carelessly and irregularly kept; and stricter attention to this point will be enjoined in future.

11. The amount paid as Rent for School-houses was £312 18s. 4d. This item of expenditure has been annually increasing, in spite of the efforts which have been made to reduce it by offers of aid towards the erection of permanent buildings.

12. Other miscellaneous expenses amounted to £237 6s. 5d. A detailed account of the disbursements under the several heads is given in the Appendices attached to this Report.

13. In addition to the outlay mentioned above, the sum of £449 6s. 8d. (chargeable upon the Loans Bill) was expended as the Board's contribution towards the erection of a School-house at Cressy, one-third of the whole cost being subscribed by residents in the District. A sum of £300 has in like manner been raised in the district of Perth, where a new school-house is in course of erection. It is hoped that the excellent example thus set will be followed in other places, where it is at present impossible to procure any but temporary and defective accommodation.

14. The subject of the establishment of a Central or Model School in Launceston, as an important step towards the maintenance of a good standard under the existing system of Public Education, has long engaged our attention. It has necessarily been, at this late period, a matter of extreme difficulty to obtain a site sufficiently central, and at the same time adapted to the requirements of such an Institution. We are glad, however, to report that one has at last been secured, at an expense of £900, not an exorbitant price considering the present value of property in Launceston.

15. The Report of the Inspector of Schools is annexed.

16. In conclusion, we desire to express our earnest hope that suitable provision will be made in the Estimates for 1861 for the Salary of a Clerk to the Board. The whole of the correspondence,

and a considerable amount of routine business of the Department, has been conducted by Mr. Stephens; and it is due to that gentleman to say, that, but for his zeal and industry, the work of inspection must have suffered from the amount of clerical work thus thrown on him. That such has not been the case, is evinced by the progress made during the year, corroborating the testimony of the Board.

JOHN W. GLEADOW, *Chairman.*
 JAMES AIKENHEAD.
 WM. CLEVELAND.
 WM. JOHNSTONE.
 A. J. MARRIOTT.
 W. K. O'KEEFFE.
 C. A. W. ROCHER.
 JOHN WHITEFOORD.

APPENDIX A.

ABSTRACT of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE between the 1st January and 31st December, 1859.

Dr.				Cr.			
	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Proportion of Parliamentary Grant	4363	12	9	Salaries and Allowances of Teachers	3654	19	6
Balance of Expenditure in excess of Grant	353	13	0	Salaries to Pupil Teachers, with Gratuities to Masters for their Instruction	123	13	4
				Rent of School-houses	312	18	4
				Repair and Improvement of ditto	148	13	0
				School Furniture and Fittings	74	11	0
				School Books, Maps, and Requisites	115	4	2
				Miscellaneous; viz.—			
				Salary and Travelling Expenses of			
				Organising Master	129	3	1
				Furniture and Fittings, Office	20	7	6
				Books, Samples of Apparatus, &c. . . .	47	13	1
				Messenger, Office-keeper, Stores	40	2	9
				237	6	5	
				Aid to Infant School, Launceston	50	0	0
TOTAL	£4717	5	9	TOTAL	4717	5	9

APPENDIX B.

RETURN of PUBLIC SCHOOLS under the NORTHERN BOARD OF EDUCATION in operation between the 1st January and 31st December, 1859.

No. 8.)

No.	ELECTORAL DISTRICT	SITUATION OF SCHOOL.	Number who have attended during some part of the Year.			Average Number on Rolls.			Average Attendance.			Number admitted during the Year.	Number who have left during the Year.	Number of Teachers.		Number of Pupil Teachers.	Amount of School Fees received by Teachers.	Amount paid to Teachers of all Classes in Salaries, Gratuities, &c.	Rent of School-houses.	Repairs and Improvements of School-houses.	School Furniture and Fittings.	School Books, Maps, and Requisites.	REMARKS.	
			Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total			M.	F.									
1	CAMPBELL TOWN	Campbell Town	57	54	111	41	34	75	31	26	57	64	37	1	1	—	50 18 10	237 10 0	—	—	—	3 14 6		
2		Ross	67	39	106	26	24	50	19	17	36	26	44	1	1	—	11 19 8	144 6 8	—	—	—	3 1 2		
3	DELORAINE	Deloraine	45	23	68	29	11	40	20	8	28	23	23	1	1	—	36 8 0	105 0 0	20 0 0	—	—	2 12 8		
4	DEVON	Formby	16	14	30	16	14	30	12	14	26	30	3	1	1	—	8 9 1	34 14 1	—	—	4 10 0	5 0 11	School opened, 15 Aug.	
5		Northam	24	10	34	21	11	32	12	7	19	34	3	1	—	2 0 8	32 19 8	—	—	14 4 0	4 0 2	Ditto, ditto.		
6		Emu Bay	13	22	35	11	19	30	12	13	25	31	7	—	2	—	14 14 8	71 4 9	—	—	—	4 2 5	Ditto, 14 Feb.	
7		Stanley, Circular Head	37	14	51	29	11	40	26	9	35	17	11	1	1	—	26 1 1	125 0 0	—	12 0 0	—	4 3 6	[rarily, 18 Aug.	
8		Forest, ditto	13	8	21	12	8	20	7	5	12	14	4	1	1	—	No Return	31 11 8	—	—	—	2 2 11	School closed tempo-	
9		Tarleton	29	19	48	27	17	44	20	12	32	49	5	1	1	—	14 7 9	82 14 4	11 13 4	—	—	1 0 6	Ditto, 1 May to 25 June	
10	FINGAL	Cullenswood	14	16	30	10	14	24	7	8	15	24	2	—	1	—	10 19 3	16 13 4	—	—	—	3 15 11	School opened, 1 Sept.	
11		Fingal	6	14	20	7	13	20	5	10	15	10	20	—	1	—	No Return	8 6 8	—	—	—	0 4 1	School closed tempo-	
12	GEORGE TOWN	George Town	34	24	58	19	12	31	15	8	23	18	22	1	1	—	36 9 6	125 0 0	—	56 0 0	—	4 7 6	rarily, 1 March.	
13	LAUNCESTON	Elizabeth-street	156	44	200	97	37	134	74	30	104	No Return	1	1	2	—	111 2 5	275 0 0	80 0 0	—	—	3 18 4		
14		Margaret-street	98	53	151	66	41	107	40	29	69	52	60	1	1	—	70 15 0	275 0 0	26 13 4	—	—	6 3 7		
15	MORVEN	Breadalbane	18	19	37	16	15	31	12	13	25	8	3	1	1	—	48 5 3	55 0 0	—	—	1 12 0	2 2 9		
16		Evandale	75	38	113	60	23	83	50	21	71	44	22	1	1	1	89 0 6	198 0 0	80 0 0	—	—	5 16 6		
17		Lymington	23	20	43	16	15	31	13	14	27	18	12	1	1	—	31 14 0	105 0 0	25 0 0	—	—	1 8 5		
18		Carrick	51	18	69	37	10	47	24	8	32	31	25	1	1	—	38 19 0	178 6 8	—	—	9 0 0	3 12 0		
19	NORFOLK PLAINS	Illawarra	13	16	29	13	16	29	12	15	27	7	4	1	1	—	45 18 10	125 0 0	10 0 0	10 0 0	—	1 17 10		
20		Longford	69	36	105	50	28	78	45	21	66	36	37	1	1	—	131 8 1	185 0 0	—	7 13 0	—	7 7 11		
21		Perth	26	24	50	22	15	37	19	12	32	25	19	1	1	—	25 18 0	155 0 0	20 0 0	—	3 0 0	2 3 10		
22		Bishopsbourne	40	24	64	26	15	41	21	13	34	36	33	1	1	—	32 1 6	95 0 0	22 18 4	—	—	3 12 3		
23	RINGWOOD	Cressy	24	36	60	17	29	46	15	22	37	60	14	1	1	—	32 18 0	73 19 9	—	26 0 0	20 15 0	6 16 3	School opened, 1 April.	
24		Hermitage	9	12	21	9	12	21	8	10	18	5	21	—	1	—	No Return	27 10 0	—	—	—	—	—	School closed, 30 June.
25		Maitland	19	14	33	15	13	28	13	9	22	11	8	1	1	—	58 4 0	55 0 0	—	—	—	1 13 4		
26	SELBY	Hadspen	16	17	33	11	12	23	9	11	20	33	10	—	1	—	5 2 0	8 6 8	—	—	—	—	—	School opened, 1 Nov.
27		Newnham	31	27	58	19	17	36	13	14	27	20	19	1	1	—	18 4 4	105 0 0	—	—	—	3 10 7	[1 Aug. to 1 Dec.	
28		St. Leonard's	17	20	37	15	16	31	9	18	27	6	7	1	—	—	No Return	82 10 0	1 13 4	37 0 0	10 0 0	0 8 8	School closed from	
29		Windermere	11	7	18	10	6	16	7	6	13	18	2	1	1	—	8 8 10	42 6 11	—	—	7 0 0	4 0 2	School opened, 12 June.	
30		West Tamar	7	2	9	7	2	9	7	2	9	9	—	1	1	—	0 6 10	—	—	—	—	—	—	Ditto, 14 Nov.
31	WESTBURY	Exton	55	39	94	39	31	70	34	25	59	39	21	1	1	—	34 12 9	145 0 0	—	—	2 0 0	3 13 3		
32		Hagley	38	28	66	29	19	48	23	14	37	15	22	1	1	—	102 9 0	184 11 8	15 0 0	—	—	2 14 6		
33		Queenstown	81	69	150	47	42	89	43	38	81	44	72	1	1	1	26 14 0	179 0 0	—	—	—	8 13 5		
34		Westbury	94	71	165	65	41	106	59	37	96	56	31	1	1	1	93 8 8	223 0 0	—	—	2 10 0	7 4 4		
			1326	891	2217	934	643	1577	736	520	1256	918	623	28	29	5	1173 19 6	3778 12 10	312 18 4	148 13 0	74 11 0	115 4 2		

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T. STEPHENS, Secretary.

GENERAL REPORT

On the state of Public Education in Northern Tasmania for the Year 1859, by T. STEPHENS, Esq., B.A. Oxon., Inspector of Schools and Secretary to the Northern Board of Education.

Launceston, 1st March, 1860.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE the honor to present my Third General Report on the state of Public Education in Northern Tasmania.

Since the beginning of 1859, the salary of the late Clerk having been struck off the Estimates for the year by a vote of Parliament, I have discharged the duties of Secretary to the Board in addition to those which devolved upon me as Inspector of Schools. From my previous knowledge, I had no reason to suppose that the correspondence and routine business of the Department would increase to such an extent as has proved to be the case. The amount of extra work which has thus been entailed on me is greater than I could possibly undertake for a continuance, except by the sacrifice of a considerable portion of that time which has hitherto been devoted to my more peculiar duties as Inspector,—a sacrifice which is especially undesirable under present circumstances. At the same time, I know it to be a matter of some importance that the correspondence should be conducted, if possible, by an Officer who has some personal knowledge of the districts, and of those with whom he is in constant communication. I trust, however, that the Board will soon be able to take measures to provide me with, at least, some clerical assistance.

The first point which demanded my attention was the very slovenly and irregular manner in which the School Returns were prepared and sent in. Four only for the month of January—there being at the time twenty-five Schools in operation—had reached the Office on the 15th February, though due on the 3rd of the same month. What was then the rule is now, I am glad to say, the exception; and, though there are still one or two defaulters who give me much trouble, the rest of the Teachers transmit their Returns with fair punctuality.

As to the improvement in the preparation of these documents, I cannot speak so favorably. Teachers of elementary Schools may, as a body, be considered men of fair average intelligence; and yet I have often found—and not in Tasmania alone—the simplest printed instructions most strangely misinterpreted by the majority of those to whom they had been sent. Statistics are, of course, only valuable when it is certain that one and the same principle has been adhered to by all who furnish the data for their compilation; and I have therefore been careful to include, in the Statistical Tables appended to this Report, only those results which I have been able to verify by personal inquiry and observation.

The private Reports which I have from time to time laid before the Board, containing detailed accounts of each School, together with a variety of information which it is impossible to tabulate, will be useful for future reference, and for consultation by those who may be interested in observing the progress of Education in a particular District.

If I have had some reason to complain of being overworked during the past year, I have, at any rate, had the consolation of seeing that my labours have not been altogether in vain. The opening of new Schools is always a matter for congratulation, and especially so in the present instance, because I have reason to believe that those which have come into existence during the year are really doing good. I had hoped, indeed, to have added others to the list ere this, but have been prevented by the common obstacles,—the want of local support, and suitable accommodation.

In the former Report I alluded to the unsatisfactory nature of the religious instruction imparted in the Public Schools, and the general misapprehension that prevails as regards the meaning of the term itself. Adhering, as I do, to the belief that no system of elementary education is a sound one unless based on a religious foundation, and seeing that, as yet, little progress has been made in the right direction, it may not be out of place for me to make some further remarks on this subject.

The supporters of a Denominational, as opposed to a National, system base their objections to the latter principally upon the ground that religious instruction, of any value, cannot be given in Schools attended by children whose parents are professing members of different denominations of Christians. The utter impossibility of providing separate Schools for even the principal denominations, in a limited community, puts such a scheme out of the question as far as Tasmania is concerned; and, were it otherwise, I am not at all sure that the theory of the separationists is sound, even in principle. A somewhat extensive acquaintance with Schools, under both systems, has assured me that, when the best of both kinds are compared with one another, there is little real difference in the results, although the means employed may have been somewhat different.

The common modes of imparting religious instruction may be classed under three principal heads,—the mnemonic, the dogmatic, and the practical. A perfect system would include some features from each of them; but the last is the one which is pre-eminently suited for young children and week-day Schools.

By the first of these modes the memory is alone exercised; and the main object of the Teacher is to cultivate in his pupils an acquaintance with the text and the facts of Scripture. Verses and chapters are committed to memory, and the spiritual progress of the Children is estimated by the manner in which these tasks are learnt. Periodical exercises are instituted, in which the Children are trained to puzzle one another with questions. "You would be surprised, Sir," a Teacher once said to me, "to hear how my children can dodge one another in the Bible." I was, indeed, not only surprised, but shocked, when I saw the careless and irreverent manner in which questions, on the most sacred subjects, were bandied about by these youthful disputants. Sometimes prize schemes are instituted, by which the mechanical proficiency displayed, in answering what are termed "Biblical Questions," is encouraged and rewarded. I subjoin four of these "questions," or rather "conundrums," taken from an advertisement in one of the local newspapers, for the best answers to which prizes had been awarded:—

1. Four eminent believers died on mountains, without either previous affliction or present disease. Name them.
2. Give a text which in five words expresses the history of the world for 120 years.
3. What was the same message four times repeated, and the same answer four times returned?
4. Against whom did the stars fight?

These, and a host of similar questions, may be found in the *Band of Hope Review*, a well-intentioned and, in many respects, useful periodical. Some are innocent enough, others quite the reverse; but one and all are wrong in principle, and must inevitably tend to foster an acquaintance with the letter rather than the spirit of the Bible. The following remarks from the pen of one of the highest authorities on these matters are to the point:—"It is asked, in a lesson common in works prepared for Infant Schools, 'What city fell down at the sound of the ram's horns?' 'What ram had his horns caught in a thicket?' &c. A similar mistake is made when the facts and truths of Scripture are connected by the mere circumstance of their agreeing in number; as, 10 commandments, 10 plagues, &c.; or, 3 feasts of the Jews, 3 great thrones, 3 burning mountains, &c.; or, by their beginning with the same letter. This mode of teaching is opposed to the important principle of creating such associations in children's minds as are essentially valuable. May we not justly fear that their reverence for sacred subjects will be lowered, if they are accustomed to string texts together by letters or numbers? Is not a false value thus attached to an indifferent point?"*

By "dogmatic" instruction, I mean that which is imparted by means of catechisms and other formularies, and under which set answers are committed to memory, and returned to given questions. As the use of such formularies is prohibited in the Public Schools, this mode is confined, in Tasmania, to private and Sunday Schools; though I frequently meet with its results. While examining, recently, a School of the lowest class, I had given some simple questions on the history of Abraham without obtaining any intelligent answers. The Teacher attempted to excuse the children by telling me of their excessive timidity in the presence of a comparative stranger; a common excuse, and, generally, an indication of defective teaching and management. At last I put the direct question, "Who was Abraham?" I had touched the key-note; and a little girl, who had been looking hopelessly puzzled, instantly answered, (the rest of the class chiming in), "Abraham was the father of the faithful, and the friend of God." Not one, however, could tell me who were meant by 'the faithful,'—why Abraham was called their father, &c.; although I am confident that, had I been acquainted with the succeeding questions in the book from which they had been taught, I should have obtained other answers equally prompt, and equally unintelligent. I have selected the above answer out of a number of similar ones, from having met with it, under precisely the same circumstances, in three different Schools. It is a fair sample of the results of rote-instruction, under an incompetent Teacher.

Taking the most favourable view of the above modes, and admitting that dogmatic instruction is necessary at a later period of a child's life, I cannot but think that these or any other modes, which appeal to the head rather than to the heart, are out of place in the routine of an elementary school; and that if such instruction be required it should be given by the Ministers of Religion, or in classes which are under their immediate superintendence. To be at all effective it demands far more than ordinary care and ability in the Teacher, and more than is ordinarily met with. It affords but poor consolation to be told that, though the child does not and cannot understand the words which he repeats, they *may* some day or other be understood and appreciated. And when we notice the glib tone and mechanical manner in which, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, answers to questions in "religious knowledge" are uttered, we must regret to see such pains taken to lay the foundation of a formation which will surely prove a more formidable barrier against spiritual improvement than ignorance itself.

* Dr. Mayo's Practical Remarks on Infant Education.

By a "practical" mode, I mean one in which the Bible, or a selection from it, is taken as the text-book; not to be read, as under some national systems, "without note or comment," but to be treated in such a manner as will make it intelligible and interesting. Trimmer's Scripture Lessons contain all that a judicious Teacher could wish to select from the Old Testament. They are well arranged, and are in all respects superior to the Scripture Lessons published by the Irish Board, which were compiled partly from the Douay and partly from the English version, and which, as might be expected, are approved of neither by Protestants nor Roman Catholics. There is, of course, a right and a wrong way of dealing with the Bible Lesson, even when it has been judiciously chosen. It is too often treated as an ordinary reading lesson, a practice which should be sedulously avoided; for, while the good effect is entirely marred by the imperfect or careless articulation of the bad readers in each class, the instruction is also necessarily limited to a few individuals at a time. The Scripture Lesson is one of the few which can be advantageously given on the "collective plan," and ought, if possible, to be given to the whole school at once; unless there be at least two or three fair readers among the children, the lesson selected for the day should be read by the Teacher himself.

The regulation which prevents Teachers from enforcing the attendance of children whose parents may object to their being present during the hour set apart for religious instruction is a necessary one, but I have scarcely ever known such objections to be raised where the instruction has been of a proper and practical character; where the Teacher has understood that his main object should be, by example even more than precept, to draw a clear line of distinction between right and wrong, and to illustrate his teaching by the lives and acts of good and holy men. There is nothing in the whole range of literature so pre-eminently adapted to the capacities of young children as the biography and narratives of the Bible; and the man who fails to secure the cheerful and reverential attention of his pupils while inculcating the practical lessons to be derived from them, let his literary attainments or intellectual qualifications be what they may, is unfit to be an educator of youth.

I have recently ordered from England, for circulation among our Teachers, a Lecture on Moral and Religious Training, by the Rev. C. H. Bromby, Principal of the Cheltenham Training College. It is full of sound principle and common sense, and ought to be in the possession of every one who is directly or indirectly connected with the work of Education.

In my first General Report I expressed a hope that the range of subjects usually taught in the Public Schools would be extended and amplified by the introduction of such studies as Natural History, Natural Philosophy, &c., which, while they have a direct bearing on the phenomena of every day life, have also a powerful influence in cultivating taste, and in intensifying the general development of the intellectual faculties. At that time, having but an imperfect knowledge of the Teachers, and their actual work in Tasmania, I imagined the state of education to be nearly on a par with that in England, and believed that a little extra stimulus was all that was required to enable us to press forward to such results as those which have been so nobly attained in the Mother-country, under the auspices of the Committee of Council on Education. A more intimate acquaintance with the work itself, and the means employed, has convinced me of my error; while I have also learnt how unreasonable it is to expect great things in a remote Colony like this, at so early a period of its existence. Nor have remoteness and youth been the sole disadvantages under which Tasmania has labored. Since the discovery of gold in Victoria and New South Wales, she has been striving in unequal competition with her prosperous and wealthy Sister-Colonies. And ineffectual, viewed in its bearing on the present question, has the struggle necessarily been; for, while the strong inducements, in the shape of honor and emolument, held out by the adjacent Colonies have drawn away a large number of those whom Tasmania could least afford to lose, they have also aided in attracting to their shores almost exclusively the better class of immigrants, their less favored Sister being left chiefly dependent on her own undeveloped resources. The natural consequence has been that, with a wide field for labour in the work of educating the rising generation,—a work, too, which requires to an unusual degree the most skilful handling on account of the neglected condition and indifference of the mass of the population,—it has yet been found impossible to procure, except in a few isolated instances, any but unskilled and inexperienced workmen. Let me not be misunderstood, while I appear to speak disparagingly of our Teachers. As a body of honest, upright, and hard-working men, they are equal to those of any Country, and very superior to those who constituted the same class in England only thirty years ago. But they are also, as a body, destitute of any special training or peculiar fitness for their work, and must, like newly indentured apprentices, spoil much of it before they learn their business. There is a notion too commonly prevalent that any respectable person is qualified to conduct an elementary School. Nothing can be more erroneous. It is in laying the groundwork of education, at a period of the pupil's life when there is little or no independent action on his part, that the greatest tact and experience are required; when, too, the Teacher's work has not unfrequently to be commenced and completed in the short space of two or three years. And it is the very general defectiveness of this groundwork that has led me into these remarks.

In the olden time reading, writing, and arithmetic were the three subjects which formed the *curriculum* of the elementary School, and were considered to include all that was necessary for the instruction of the industrial classes. The most opposite extremes often succeed one another; and in the reformation of the last few years, along with that spirit of improvement which denounced such opinions as illiberal, and unworthy of the progress of the times, there crept in a tendency to neglect the essentials, among the new and more interesting subjects which were introduced. I do not mean to say that here, in Tasmania, there is any unreasonable variety of subjects touched on in the Public

Schools, or that reading, writing, and arithmetic are not taught, after a fashion, in the very worst, but that these subjects have not received the attention which they demand; and that Teachers, as a rule, have been, in them, satisfied with too low a standard of proficiency.

In a few of our best Schools the reading is as intelligent as could be desired; *i.e.* the Children have been trained to fix the attention of the mind, as well as the eye, on the subject before them: but the effect is too often marred by a hasty and careless utterance. In a few other Schools, while the mechanical part of the reading is satisfactory, it is characterised by a total want of expression, indicating that the exercise is merely one of the voice, and unaccompanied by any corresponding action of the intellectual faculties. In the majority of Schools both these deficiencies exist, unrelieved by any counterbalancing merits. It is quite possible to secure excellence, both as to intelligent expression and clearness of enunciation, but it is not to be done without unremitting attention and labour. I may remark, by the way, that the employment of incompetent Monitors tends more than any other cause to perpetuate a bad style of reading.

Bad writing, and incorrect spelling, which are intimately connected with each other, are most frequently occasioned by defective supervision. Children are naturally disinclined to concentrate their attention on any subject for many consecutive minutes; and every carelessly written or misspelt word tends, most strongly, to confirm the pre-existing defects. Until considerable proficiency has been attained, not a line should be suffered to pass without revision; and the correction should be always made by the child itself. In the generality of cases, especially where the ordinary copy-books, with engraved head lines, are used, the children, after writing the first line, merely copy their own imperfect imitation to the end; and I, thus, very often find the same mistake repeated in every line of a page, and recurring again whenever the same word is met with. The practice, though too common, of setting children to copy these elaborate headings, before they have learnt to form a single letter correctly, is a most mischievous one; and that it is done at the request of the parent, is no extenuation of the offence. This sort of foolish concession to the will of parents, who wish their children to "get on," is the bane of many a School. The following extract from the instructions to candidates for certificates, in England, is worthy of the attention of Teachers:—"Writing, as taught in Schools, is apt to be too small and indistinct. The letters are either not completely formed, or they are formed by alternate broad and fine strokes, which makes the words difficult to read. The handwriting which was generally practised in the early part and middle of the last century was far better than that now in common use. Pupils should be taught rather to imitate broad printing than fine copper-plate engraving." I may add, that the style of writing here objected to is one of the necessary consequences resulting from the use of hard fine-pointed steel pens, for which many otherwise able Teachers have an unaccountable predilection.

It is seldom that I find sufficient prominence given in the time-table of a School to arithmetic; and the ordinary mode of teaching this subject is not such as will compensate for any shortening of the time which ought to be allotted to it. What is chiefly wanted in the Teacher is a thorough knowledge of the principles on which the common arithmetical operations are based, associated with a facility of invention in the selection and construction of questions having a practical application to the business of every day life. There are few children who are not called on daily to apply their powers of calculation to some simple matter, be it only the purchase of articles for their parents at the village shop; and yet it is seldom that they can derive assistance, in such cases, from their School exercises. It is a common practice to push the children forward, apparently with no other object than that of getting them through the book, before any thorough knowledge of first principles, or the elementary rules, has been acquired. This was one of the evils to which I directed attention two years ago; and I am glad to say that, in this respect, much improvement has latterly been perceptible. I still, occasionally, find a class working sums in the Double Rule-of-three, and yet totally unacquainted with the principles of Proportion; while another, professing an acquaintance with Vulgar and Decimal Fractions, and the higher rules, has failed to solve questions requiring nothing more than an accurate knowledge of the tables of weights and measures. Besides avoiding such faults as these, the Teacher, who is really anxious to teach arithmetic efficiently, will let illustration on the black-board, and pertinent exercises in mental calculation, precede every lesson; and "he will also especially avoid that last resource of laziness—setting children to copy Sums for themselves out of Arithmetic Books, and to work them by themselves. *Every sum should be written down by himself from dictation, or the child will fail to learn half what he ought to learn.*"*

As regards the other ordinary branches of secular instruction, I have nothing of importance to add to the remarks which have been made in my previous Reports. It is neither necessary nor desirable to exclude formally any one of them. Every reading lesson should be made an exercise in grammar and spelling, (the latter being principally taught by dictation lessons); while such instruction in geography and history as is ordinarily necessary may be imparted by a proper use of the reading books which are supplied by the Board. It is, however, most important for Teachers to understand that a superficial acquaintance with a variety of subjects will not be considered to compensate for failure in any one of the essentials.

It is much to be regretted that singing is not more generally taught, or, at least, that it is so seldom taught *efficiently* in the Public Schools; and yet, unless the Teacher possess some natural

* School Economy, by the Rev. Jelinger Symons.

talent for music, as well as a cultivated taste, it is worse than useless to urge him to make an attempt to teach it. I have often been surprised that the Tonic Solfa System has not been practised here, such excellent results having followed its introduction in England and other countries. It has always appeared to me to be far better suited for such as our Public Schools than Hullah's or any other system, as affording the easiest introduction to a knowledge of music on a scientific basis; and thus laying a groundwork which will be most useful to the pupil, should he desire in after life to prosecute the study in connection with the ordinary notation. I am not without hopes of inducing some Teachers to give the system a trial.

During the months of June and July, Mr. Pears, who had been acting as Organising Master under the Southern Board of Education, was employed in a similar capacity on this side of the Island, and visited ten Schools. An Inspector of Schools here must ordinarily combine the offices of Organiser, Superintendent, and Inspector in his own person, but can seldom devote much time to an individual School; and must chiefly rely, for effecting improvement, upon criticism, advice, and practical illustration. An Organising Master, on the contrary, is expected to devote himself to a particular School, not merely until he has shown how it ought to be conducted, but until he has got the Teacher into the way of working it on an improved system. In my instructions to Mr. Pears I was careful to dwell on the importance of the latter point; for the Organiser too often does the whole work himself, the Teacher being meanwhile merely a looker-on. The Schools, moreover, which were selected for his operations (though not including all in which improvement was needed) were those whose Teachers I had reason to hope would profit by the assistance thus afforded to them. And yet, although I am well assured that Mr. Pears is eminently well qualified for the duties which he undertook, and that he discharged them with tact and discretion, I have only been able in three out of the ten Schools to perceive, at my subsequent visits, that any permanent effect has been produced. Nor is this a result to be wondered at by those who really understand what it is to be a good Teacher. Let a man be fairly educated himself, and have some natural aptitude for teaching, it is the work of years, rather than of weeks or months, that will alone enable him to attain to the desired standard of competency. If, however, Mr. Pears has succeeded in convincing even a few Teachers of the necessity that exists for their applying themselves more strenuously to the study of their profession, his labours will not have been in vain. To perceive the need of it, is the first and most important step towards a reformation.

It is pre-eminently a matter for congratulation that active measures have been taken to provide what has long been a desideratum in Launceston—a Model or Training School, and that a good site has been secured. Had such an institution been in existence years ago, there would now be little occasion for the reports which I am so frequently compelled to make of incompetent Teachers and ill-conducted Schools; and I trust that nothing may occur to retard its establishment. In large *ordinary* schools, *i. e.* schools conducted by one Master, and containing children of ages ranging from 4 to 14 years, and in which, consequently, if due regard be paid to proper organisation, there must be at least five or six principal classes or divisions, it is absolutely impossible to secure a good standard throughout. And the defective condition of the School, again, tends to increase the evil, inasmuch as the Teacher is unable to derive any assistance from those children whose age might otherwise render them useful as Monitors, and afterwards as Pupil Teachers. I have heard it gravely asserted that, in an ordinary school, a competent Teacher can manage and educate 100 children more easily than 50; and am inclined to think that this extraordinary notion had its origin, like many popular fallacies, from the misapprehension of an important truth. Mr. Stow, the founder of the 'Glasgow Training System,' and one who has rendered invaluable assistance to the cause of Education, is often quoted as an authority in support of the simultaneous teaching of large numbers. But, while he expresses his belief that one Teacher may manage efficiently a class of from 70 to 80 children, he is careful to add, that "they must be of the same age, and of equal mental capacity,"—and this has long been an established axiom among educationists.

It is obvious, then, that the union of two or more schools is, where practicable, a most desirable arrangement; for, while the number of classes need not be increased, the teaching-power is doubled or trebled, without any increase in the expense. And I may be pardoned for observing, that an arrangement such as that which has been recently made in Launceston, by the union of the schools in Elizabeth and Frankland-streets, unaccompanied by the union of their respective staffs of Teachers, must prove the reverse of beneficial; for the single Teacher's labour was thus doubled, and he could not be expected to do justice to a large number of children, of such varying ages and attainments. I have felt it necessary to make these remarks, from having a strong conviction that the utility of the projected Model School will be entirely marred unless a suitable staff of adult assistants be provided at the outset. These, after a time, might be partially dispensed with, and their places supplied by the Pupil Teachers, whom we should hope to train up to their work in a few years. It will, I am sure, be conceded, that too liberal arrangements can scarcely be made when the object is to secure the efficiency of a School, which will be the principal nursery for the training of those who will eventually have to play so important a part as the future Teachers of Northern Tasmania.

I may remark, by the way, that what is true of the Public Schools, is equally so of those of a higher class; and it will be vain to look for a really high standard of proficiency in any, even under the ablest management, until the Head Master shall be enabled, by increased numbers, to introduce a more perfect organisation than is possible in small Schools; and, by increased emoluments, to distribute, under competent Assistants, those pupils who are now necessarily classed together to their

mutual disadvantage. Both these advantages might be secured in the two principal Towns; the one, by the amalgamation of two or more Schools; the other, by means of higher charges, endowments, or, far better, by capitation-grants.

The various schemes which have recently received the sanction of the local Legislature, having for their object the promotion of education of a character superior to that which is at present attainable, must be regarded, by all who are interested in the question, as important steps in the right direction. That they should be altogether free from defects, was not to be expected; but their imperfections are only such as may easily be removed when experience shall have indicated the necessity of alteration. There is, however, a provision in the Act relating to Exhibitions to "Superior Schools" against which I feel compelled to protest, as likely to have, unless amended, an injurious effect. I refer to the Clause which provides that Candidates from the Public Schools shall not compete with those from other Schools, or who have been educated privately.

It can scarcely be supposed that the promoters of this scheme intended to draw a marked line of distinction between the children of the poor man and those whose parents are in better circumstances; and yet this is the conclusion that would naturally be arrived at. Supposing this arrangement to have been made under an impression that candidates from the Public Schools could have no chance of success against those from other Schools, there are still strong grounds for objection. For, unless the Exhibitions be allotted to the *best* among all competitors, without reference to class distinctions, they cannot be expected to act as incentives to a general improvement in Education, nor ought they to be derived from the public funds. It is to be remembered that the education of children, up to the age of 12 years, ought to be nearly the same in both Public and Private Schools. In the latter a wider range may have been entered on at that age, but it is contrary to the principle on which general competitive Examinations are founded to include any subject in which fair proficiency may not reasonably be expected; and no one would designate by such a title the smattering of Latin, Greek, Mathematics, &c., which may have been acquired at the age of 12 years. No one can be more desirous than myself that the study of the higher branches should be encouraged; and it is only experience of the evils resulting from their receiving undue prominence at an early age that has led me to make these objections. As no definite information respecting the Exhibitions has yet been received by the Board, I need not dwell on this subject; and will merely express a hope that such an alteration may be made in the Act as to admit, upon equal terms, all who may offer themselves for Examination, until, at least, it shall be shown that there is so general a proficiency in the knowledge of the English language, and the ordinary subjects of elementary instruction, as to make it difficult to discriminate between the merits of the respective Candidates.

I cannot conclude this Report without recording my obligations to Mr. Burgess, the Secretary to the Southern Board of Education, for his valuable co-operation and assistance during the past year.

I have the honor to be,
Gentlemen,
Your most obedient Servant,

T. STEPHENS.

The Chairman and Members of the Northern Board of Education.