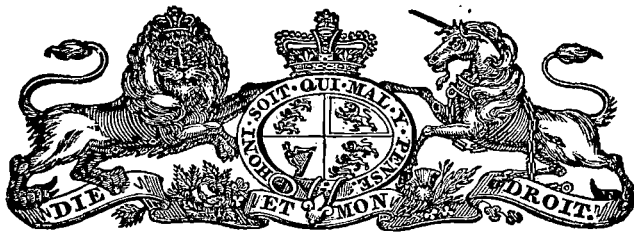


(No. 37.)



1881.

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T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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HEALTH OFFICER—NEW TOWN, SANDY BAY,  
AND WELLINGTON HAMLETS:

REPORT FOR 1880.

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Laid upon the Table by Mr. Moore, and ordered by the Council to be printed,  
July 19, 1881.



*REPORT for 1880 of the Officer of Health for the Towns of New Town, Sandy Bay, and the Wellington Hamlets.*

SIR,

By the official records of 1880 the number of births over deaths, and of emigrants over immigrants, about 2300 human beings were added to the population of all Tasmania, giving an estimated total of 112,300. It will be of great interest to find, when the Census so recently made is published, how near it corresponds or deviates from the estimated population which has been yearly made since the Census of 1870 was taken.

The total registered deaths for all Tasmania in 1880 was 1832, being + 144 more than in 1879; and the death rate, therefore, for the year would be somewhat less than  $15\frac{1}{4}$  per 1000, and differing little from that of 1879. I estimated the population of the Registration District of Hobart to be, in the middle of 1879, about 27,700; and for the middle of 1880, seeing that the births registered 253 more than the deaths, it is probable that the population would not be less in round numbers than 28,000. As will be seen in the Tables following, the actual number of deaths which occurred in the Registration District from the first day of the year 1880 to the last, inclusive of both, was 647, being about 23 per 1000, and agreeing with the death rate of 1879. This is far too high a death rate for a city and its rural suburbs so admirably situated, in one of the naturally healthiest climates in the world. The City of London and the great Metropolis has a death rate somewhat less. Nevertheless, it must never be overlooked in all comparisons of this kind that the constituent elements of the population of the Hobart District is not a normal one as to the numbers living in the various decades of ages, the very young and the very old being disproportionately great to those of middle age, and therefore causing a greater number of deaths than would be the case were the proportions of the ages living a normal one.

TABLE No. 1.

Months of Year 1880.	Deaths in Hobart Registration District.	Above or below 1879.		Above Below 20 Years Mean of the Month.		City share of Deaths.	New Town share of Deaths.	Sandy Bay share of Deaths.	Wellington share of Deaths.
January ....	58	-10		+ $7\frac{15}{30}$		37	14	4	0
February ...	62		+ 1	+ $8\frac{20}{30}$		40	13	1	1
March .....	81		+17	+ $25\frac{5}{30}$		43	26	1	1
April .....	51	- 2		+ $\frac{5}{30}$		29	13	1	0
May .....	36	-14		..	- $8\frac{3}{30}$	19	8	3	2
June .....	56		+ 3	+ $9\frac{6}{30}$		33	18	0	1
July .....	68	=		+ $14\frac{11}{30}$		33	25	1	0
August .....	47	-11		+ $0\frac{18}{30}$		29	11	0	1
September ..	44	=		+ 1		27	9	1	0
October ....	49	- 2		+ $2\frac{14}{30}$		31	10	0	0
November ..	48		+18	+ $7\frac{18}{30}$		22	15	3	2
December ..	47		+ 6	+ $2\frac{12}{30}$		31	8	2	0
	647					374	170	17	8
	569	39	45						
	76						569		

This Table, compared with the corresponding one of 1879, shows that its total of 647 deaths was only + 6 more than that of 1879. The greatest number of deaths in any month of 1880 was 81 in March, while in 1879 it was only 68, in the months of January and July. The smallest number of deaths was 36 in May, 1880, and 30 only in November, 1879. The city share of the 647 deaths in 1880 was 374, being + 5 more than in 1879. The New Town deaths, which include

those of the two Male and one Female Invalid Asylums (numbering on an average about 700, and the mean age of the whole being about 68) was 170, being + 26 more than in 1879, to be attributed to the removal of Invalids from the Cascades Establishment in the Wellington Township to that of New Town; for the former had 37 deaths in 1879, but only 8 in 1880. The share of deaths, 17, in the Sandy Bay Town, 1880, was + 3 more than in 1879. Of the total 647 deaths, 76 were of persons not belonging to the Hobart Registration District, and nearly all died in the public hospital. 1879 had one more of the outsiders' deaths.

TABLE 2.

CLASS.	ORDER.	DISEASE.	JANUARY.	FEBRUARY.	MARCH.	APRIL.	MAY.	JUNE.	JULY.	AUGUST.	SEPTEMBER.	OCTOBER.	NOVEMBER.	DECEMBER.	TOTAL, 1880.	TOTAL, 1879.	TOTAL, 1878.	TOTAL, 1877.	
1. ZYMOTIC.	Miasmatic.	Scarlatina .....	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	..	1	60	
		Diphtheria .....	..	..	1	..	2	2	4	..	1	..	1	1	12	9	21	13	
		Quinsy .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	3
		Croup .....	..	..	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	5	7	5	10
		Whooping-cough .....	2	..	1	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	7	12	3	3
		Typhoid Fever .....	1	2	..	2	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	9	8	17	15
		Erysipelas .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7	3	7
		Metria .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	2
		Catarrh, &c. ....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
		Dysentery .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
		Diarrhœa .....	8	18	11	5	1	2	..	..	..	1	..	5	5	51	35	37	26
		Cholera .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	2
		Other Zymotic .....	..	3	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	2	1	..	..	8	7	2	4
		Enthetic .....	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	8	7	3
		Dietic .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	3	3
		Parasitic .....	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	3	3	5	6
		TOTALS .....			14	23	16	11	7	9	4	2	2	2	3	8	101	98	107
2. CONSTITUTIONAL .....			5	11	11	6	8	6	6	7	6	6	8	5	85	93	80	97	
3. LOCAL .....			24	17	32	21	14	31	30	27	21	29	28	20	294	282	233	322	
4. DEVELOPMENTAL .....			14	9	19	12	7	10	27	9	14	9	7	10	147	148	132	155	
5. VIOLENT .....			1	2	3	1	..	..	1	2	1	3	2	4	20	20	28	28	
TOTALS .....			58	62	81	51	36	56	68	47	44	49	48	47	647	641	630	760	

This table of the diseases causing death in each month of 1880, contrasted with those of the three preceding years, does not, on the whole, tell to the disadvantage of 1880 in that class of diseases which is most influenced by unsanitary conditions. Diarrhœa in the hot months of January, February, March, and December, was most fatal in 1880. Nevertheless, while the Zymotic deaths in 1880 exceeded those of 1879 by 3 only, they were 6 less than in 1878, and 57 fewer than in 1877. In the other four classes of disease the second had 8 less deaths in 1880 than in 1879, the third 12 more, the fourth one less, the fifth exactly the same.

TABLE 3.

Months of 1880.	Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 10.	10 to 15.	15 to 20.	Total under 20.	20 to 60.	60 and above.	Total at all Ages
January .....	16	6	0	1	4	27	11	20	58
February .....	19	2	0	1	1	23	18	21	62
March .....	24	5	1	1	1	32	17	32	81
April .....	9	4	1	0	2	16	12	23	51
May .....	8	3	1	1	2	15	8	13	36
June .....	6	7	1	0	3	17	12	27	56
July .....	10	4	2	0	1	17	8	43	68
August .....	2	4	1	2	1	10	15	22	47
September .....	4	3	0	0	0	7	14	23	44
October .....	10	4	4	0	4	22	9	18	49
November .....	1	3	3	1	2	10	15	23	48
December .....	9	1	1	2	0	13	15	19	47
TOTALS, 1880 .....	118	46	15	9	21	209	154	284	647
TOTALS, 1879 .....	127	43	16	..	23	217	148	276	641
TOTALS, 1878 .....	125	35	..	8	2	212	178	240	630
TOTALS, 1877 .....	131	66	40	17	31	285	197	278	760

This table shows that 1880 had fewer deaths under one year old than any of the three preceding years. Also, at all ages under 20 years a smaller mortality than in 1877-8-9. Between 20 and 60 there were +6 more deaths in 1880 than in 1879, but, on the other hand, less by -24 and -43 than in 1878 and 1877. At all ages above 60, 1880 deaths exceeded those in all three previous years. These details give proof that 1880, statistically considered, contrasts favourably with the three foregoing years.

TABLE No. 4.

*HOBART Registration District.*

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Births.</i>	<i>Deaths.</i>	<i>Births in excess of Deaths.</i>
1870.....	724	504	220
1871.....	773	514	259
1872.....	718	545	173
1873.....	725	584	141
1874.....	783	586	197
1875.....	755	753	2
1876.....	761	605	156
1877.....	809	759	50
1878.....	844	639	205
1879.....	858	648	210
1880.....	900	647	253
	8650	6783	1867

Table No. 4, which is compiled from the births and deaths registered during the year in the public records—the deaths in my Reports being those actually occurring within the year, whensoever registered—shows that the registered births in 1880 greatly exceeded any of the other ten years tabled; while the registered deaths in 1880 were less than those registered in 1875, 1877, 1879,—only 1871 showing a greater surplus of births over deaths than in 1880, and only exceeding the surplus of the latter by 6.

The atmospheric phenomena during the year were generally abnormal, influencing some of the months in sickness and mortality unfavourably, and in other months the reverse, as were shown by my published monthly reports. The most marked phenomenon was that of rain-fall. The total returned by the Pluviometer was 32.02 inches,—exceeding the mean of 35 years by +8.93; and only exceeded in any year from 1841 to 1879 inclusive, by 1849, with 33.51; 1858 with 33.07; 1863 with 40.67 inches. Much the greater part of the rain-fall of 1880 fell in the months of March, April, May, June, July, and August,—the last having 9.53 inches. The other six months had all less than the average rain-fall,—the four last months of the year being 3.82 inches below the mean.

The second and third paragraphs in page 5 of my printed Report for 1879, with respect to nuisances in the City of Hobart, might be repeated. Until all the many miles of streets have efficient subsoil sewers into which each habitation can convey by pipes its sewage direct, instead of, as at present, removing it by open channels where the greater part of it either evaporates or is absorbed by the soil, the public health cannot be what it might and ought to be in a city so admirably located in its such a naturally healthy climate. The water-closet system, where there are no proper underground sewers to receive their contents, has led to much violation of the sanitary clauses of the Police Act of 1863, and great nuisances. In many of the largest habitations in the city, even in some recently built, a cesspit is provided to receive the contents of the water-closet. This cesspit is provided with an overflow-pipe, which conveys its decomposing filth at certain times into street gutters having a long course before they unite with any subsoil sewer. These infractions of the sanitary laws made for the public good are very difficult of detection, despite the vigilance of the City Inspector and myself. Unless we actually witness the offensive matters coming from premises we can take no action that would ensure a conviction of the offenders.

In the suburban townships, except where the main road passes through them, though bye-streets are numerous, it is an exception to find one provided with a street gutter in which the sewage from habitations can flow. Generally, the sewage sinks into the soil, or evaporates in the immediate vicinity of the houses. In none of these towns is there a local authority to which I can appeal to remedy these evils.

It was with deep regret I found that the Bill introduced into the last session of the House of Assembly for an amended "Compulsory Vaccination Act" was not proceeded with. Every year goes on adding to the great numbers of the native born who have not been vaccinated. Notwithstanding the provision made by the Government for gratuitous public vaccination, of the 3739

births registered in 1880, the children at and under six months vaccinated as the existing law requires only amounted to 58 by the Public Vaccinators; and even if the private medical practitioners, which is most unlikely, vaccinated an equal number, there would be still, after allowing for the deaths of children under six months old, at least 3000 unvaccinated. The public vaccinations in all Tasmania during 1880 only numbered 412, and three-fourths of them were at all ages above one year. Of the 171 vaccinated by the Public Vaccinator in Hobart, 10 only were at and under six months old; of the other 161 a large proportion had attained many years of age, even up to 14 years. I can bear testimony to the vigilance exercised by the Public Vaccinator and his assistant to induce parents to have their children vaccinated. At the same time, I can bear witness, when I have visited officially, to the generally very complete and satisfactory result in those vaccinated. Still, an average of little more than three vaccinations per week does not afford the vaccinator choice enough for selecting the best cases for continuing the supply of lymph from arm to arm. The best authorities say that for continuous arm-to-arm vaccination there should be at least 10 children under six months old vaccinated weekly, and this number the births in Hobart District could supply with an efficient compulsory Vaccination Act. Some weeks there were no cases at all. Nevertheless, the private medical practitioners have been liberally supplied with lymph, and I have reason to think that there were more private vaccinations in Hobart in 1880 than for many years past. None of these, however, who came under my observation were under six months old, but were mostly several members of a family above two years old and upwards.

Before closing my report, I would draw attention to the necessity of a legal provision being made for the better housing and feeding of animals. Pork fed in the State of Ohio, U.S.A., has been found, when cured and imported into Europe, so infected with the horrible parasitic disease of Trichinosis, that in France and elsewhere it has been condemned, as it has been by the National Board of Health of America, and some of its most able medical practitioners. It cannot be expected that the flesh of pigs, kept and fed in pits where the manure of horses, cows, &c. is kept, often for months, can be wholesome food, and yet such is extensively practised in this city. These animals are known to be subject to Typhoid Fever and many other diseases which can be communicated to human beings. The places where cows are kept for supplying that important article of diet, milk, are generally filthy, and the poor animals diseased frequently with Tuberculosis, which the researches of some of the ablest of European and American writers show can be communicated to human beings by both flesh and milk.

That such sanitary oversight as the law provides has not been without some effect in reducing sickness and mortality in the Registration District of Hobart since my office was created, I think is fairly exemplified at the present time in the prevailing epidemic of Measles, contrasted with that of the previous epidemic in 1875. In March, 1875, there were 21 deaths from this disease, in the corresponding month of this year (1881), only 2. In April, 1875, 16; in April, 1881, only 4. In the first three months of 1880 there were 53 Zymotic deaths, 4 of which were from Diphtheria, and 3 from Typhoid Fever. During the corresponding months of 1881, the total of Zymotic deaths was only 27, and none of them from Typhoid Fever or Diphtheria.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

E. SWARBRECK HALL.

To the Hon. WILLIAM MOORE, M.L.C.  
Colonial Secretary, Tasmania.