

(No. 7.)



1866.

---

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

---

V A C C I N A T I O N S.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT FOR 1865.

---

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Whyte; and ordered by the Council to be printed,  
July 31, 1866.



*REPORT on VACCINATIONS for the Year ended 31st December, 1865.*

---

*Hobart Town, 25th June, 1865.*

SIR,

As I anticipated, (in former Reports,) the want of an efficient Vaccination Act, and in the absence of any recent alarm of the possible invasion of Small-pox, parents have returned to the old state of apathy and neglect as to getting their children vaccinated, notwithstanding the weekly opportunities gratuitously afforded by the Public Vaccinators in Hobart Town and Launceston.

The history of every place where compulsory Vaccination is not strictly enforced has always given the same results. In the British Isles this has been pre-eminently the case. In England and Wales, though the existing Vaccination Act makes it compulsory, under a pecuniary penalty, that every child shall be duly certified and registered as properly vaccinated before attaining the age of three months, yet the provisions for enforcing the law are so ineffectual, or confided to such negligent authorities, that the law is largely evaded.

In the ten years, 1851—1861, there died in England and Wales from Small-pox 42,071 individuals, of whom 26,102 were children under five years old. Of those above that age, a very large proportion of the whole were men and women between the ages of 15 and 25,—the most valuable members of the population. For every death there would probably be three or four individuals who had been attacked by the disease; and of those who escaped with life, a large proportion would be so mutilated for the remainder of their lives as to be objects of pity to their nearest and dearest friends.

It is stated on the highest authority, “that the fatality of Small-pox when it attacks the unvaccinated is 350 per thousand; that its fatality to such vaccinated persons as it infects is, taking them indiscriminately, 70 per thousand; but, distinguishing vaccinated persons into two classes, those (1) who have been vaccinated in the best known manner, and those (2) who have been badly vaccinated, the fatality of Small-pox, if it infects the former, will be 5 per thousand, if it infects the latter, 150 per thousand; that the risk of the one will be thirty times the risk of the other.”

The Lords of the Privy Council, impressed with the necessity of taking decisive steps to avert so much preventable suffering and mortality, instructed their Medical Officer to have every District in England and Wales visited and minutely inspected personally by eminent Medical Gentlemen, unconnected with the localities. Their Reports are given in the Parliamentary Blue Books—“Reports of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council” for a succession of years, the whole being completed in 1864. The evidence obtained as to the indifference and neglect of parents, as well as the local authorities responsible for the enforcement of the Vaccination Act, was most startling. Public Schools were inspected in which as many as 70 per cent. of the Scholars had no marks of having been vaccinated. Moreover, of the vaccinated children, the marks in a large proportion were so unsatisfactory that the amount of protection from Small-pox afforded would be very small. (*Vide* my Reports for the months of November and December, 1863.) It was also found that all sorts of unqualified persons undertook the operation, though the law nominally does not permit any but duly qualified Medical Practitioners to perform it. Within the last few years, moreover, the Privy

Council will not approve of any Medical Men being appointed Public Vaccinators unless they possess testimonials of having attended as pupils one or other of the Public Vaccination Stations appointed by the Council, in addition to their Medical and Surgical Diplomas. On no pretext whatever is a Public Vaccinator permitted to delegate the trust confided to him to his Pupils or Assistants.

In my Report for 1864 I cited evidence to show what the highest authorities consider the best mode of Vaccination so as to ensure its full protective power, and also the best scheme of Public Vaccination so as to afford the public the most certain means of complying with the law.

It is much to be regretted that the amended Vaccination Bill which passed the Legislative Council last year did not become law. It was based, as far as it could be applied to this Colony, on the Scotch Vaccination Act which passed the Imperial Parliament in 1863, and which has been so eminently successful in its operation.

Of all the children born in Scotland in 1864, "only the small proportion of 2·71 per cent. remains unprotected by Vaccination of all the living children who came under the operation of the Vaccination Act in 1864." The Editor of the *Lancet* exclaims, "When will a like admirable result be shown for England?"

How different might have been the results of Public Vaccination in Tasmania in 1865 had the Bill brought before the Legislative been enacted. The Tables appended to this Report show that of all the children registered as born in all Tasmania in 1865 (3069) the total public and private Vaccinations returned of children at and under six months old, as the existing but useless Act requires all to be done, numbered only 67. Of the 421 Vaccinations tabulated at all ages, those above six months to twelve years old even only amounted to 354. Of these many were members of the same family, who, notwithstanding all the agitation about Vaccination since the Small-pox alarm in 1863, remained unvaccinated: in one instance five children all born and resident in Hobart Town, and the cases of two and three in the same family very numerous. There are now, therefore, many thousands of children born in Tasmania who have not been vaccinated, I will not say efficiently, but in any way. About one-fifth of all the children in the Queen's Asylum, who are not admitted until after three years old, were unvaccinated. Most of the others, moreover, had been vaccinated after admission into the Institution. Should Small-pox break out in the Island there would be a rush to the Medical Practitioners to have these neglected ones vaccinated at once. But a delay of many weeks would necessarily arise before many of them could be properly operated upon, and then there would be a great cry of medical neglect from those who alone would be blameworthy. Out of every five vaccinated seldom more than two are available for vaccinating others, oftener only one would be selected by a judicious Practitioner. The best authorities say that only five charges should be taken from one child. It would take, therefore, a long time to vaccinate the arrears; and I think every conscientious Medical man would feel himself bound to give the preference to those applicants who had not evaded the law. With all the efforts of the Public Vaccinators at Hobart Town and Launceston it has been with difficulty the supply of perfect and fresh lymph has been kept up, and the stock on hand of preserved lymph is therefore necessarily limited. Many parents will not bring their children to show the success or otherwise of the Vaccination on the eighth day afterwards, consequently such cases are lost for the purposes of supplying others. This will be, as it always has been, a frequent occurrence while there is no penalty exacted for the omission, and the voluntary inclination of the parents is alone depended upon. Those most particular to have their children vaccinated from the best of cases are often most selfishly unwilling to give the same advantage to others. Indeed, Medical Practitioners generally feel that of all the duties of their profession Vaccination entails the greatest annoyances. The private Medical Practitioners cannot possibly keep up a fresh supply of cases weekly, no individual having 300 to 500 children births in his private practice. They cannot therefore vaccinate from arm to arm from the most perfect vesicles, as it is laid down by the most reliable authorities it should be done. During last year, as before, the applications were frequent for supplies from the Public Vaccinators, and always complied with. In many instances the applications were often repeated by the same individuals, not because they had failed with the lymph supplied to them, but because all their efforts could not keep up a regular supply from their own patients. Many of the Country Medical Practitioners tell me that they find it impossible to secure the Vaccination of all the children born in their Districts, in the absence of an efficient Vaccination Act, and urge me to spare no efforts to get Parliament to enact one. By the last Mail from England I learn that an amended Vaccination Bill for England and Wales is before the House of Commons. The opinion of the Epidemiological Society was previously sought upon its provisions. The Medical Profession generally think it will be an improvement, but that it does not go far enough. The Scotch Act is generally preferred, and with some slight amendments might be made perfect. It often has been said that no section of the British people would submit to a Vaccination Law such as rendered many Continental Nations comparatively free from Small-pox; but the success of the Scotch Act, which leaves

nothing to the voluntary action of parents, but is stringently compulsory upon all, proves otherwise.

The diminution of deaths from Small-pox in Scotland since the Vaccination Act came into force is most noteworthy and gratifying. "In 1863, the year before the Act came into operation, 816 persons died from Small-pox in the eight principal Towns, indicating a mortality of 1500 persons over Scotland during the year from the disease. In 1864 the deaths from Small-pox in the eight Towns were 679, implying that 1248 deaths over Scotland occurred that year from Small-pox. In 1865, which may be regarded as the first year in which the Act was in full operation, the deaths from Small-pox only amounted to 67, which only implies 123 deaths from the disease over Scotland. Never for the last eleven years has the mortality from Small-pox been half so low; and, making every allowance, it can scarcely be doubted that the general adoption of Vaccination has had considerable effect in reducing the mortality." From this statement, which is only a repetition of the success effected by similar means in other countries, it is apparent that, in the two years merely of the operation of the Scotch Act, about 1626 lives have been saved. Should Small-pox hereafter visit this Island, (and it is at the present time very prevalent in the Cape Colony,) the terrible array of death, the suffering, sorrow, and bereavements produced in numerous families of all classes, that must result, should no efficient Vaccination Act be speedily provided, will sit heavily on the consciences of all those who, either by opposition, neglect, or indifference, stay the timely prevention that it is so patent can be obtained by Legislative enactment, supplemented by Executive enforcement.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

E. SWARBRECK HALL,  
*Superintendent of Vaccinations.*

To the Honorable JAMES WHYTE, Esq., M.L.C.,  
*Colonial Secretary.*

*SUMMARY of the Returns of PUBLIC VACCINATIONS in Tasmania from the 1st January to the 31st December, 1865.*

REGISTRATION DISTRICT.	PUBLIC VACCINATORS.	AGES.		TOTAL Vaccinated.	RESULTS.						TOTAL POPULATION BY CENSUS APRIL, 1861.	REGISTERED BIRTHS.	
		<i>At and under Six Months.</i>	<i>Above Six Months.</i>		<i>With 4 or more perfect Vesicles.</i>	<i>With 3 or more perfect Vesicles.</i>	<i>With 2 or more perfect Vesicles.</i>	<i>With 1 or more perfect Vesicles.</i>	<i>Did not return.</i>	<i>Unsuccessful.</i>		<i>In all 1864.</i>	<i>In all 1865.</i>
Launceston.....	Maddox, George ..	28	97	125	111	7	—	—	7	—	13,140 Launceston and Selby.	461	431*
Hobart Town....	Hall, E. Swarbreck	33	99	132	92	11	4	4	18	3	24,773 Hobart City, Glenorchy, and Queenborough.	838	835†
		61	196	257	203	18	4	4	25	3	37,913	1299	1266

\* Enabled to keep up a good weekly supply of excellent lymph. Longford, Westbury, and Fingal supplied therewith.

† Of those above 6 months old, 58 were from 1 year to 12 years old; many were whole families of children with 5 to 2 unvaccinated, notwithstanding the facilities publicly and gratuitously offered during the previous two years. An unexceptionable supply of lymph has been kept up, and numerous Medical Practitioners, both urban and rural, supplied therewith on application.

E. SWARBRECK HALL, *Superintendent of Vaccinations.*

*SUMMARY of the Returns made of PRIVATE VACCINATIONS in all Tasmania from the 1st January to 31st December, 1865.*

Place.	Medical Practitioner.	Number of Cases operated upon, specifying the Proportions under and over Six Months old.			Number of the foregoing seen on the Eighth Day after Vaccination.	Number where the Results were in every respect successful.
		Under Six Months old.	Over Six Months old.	Total.		
Oatlands.....	Willes, C. J. ....	1	6	7	1	1 *
Hobart Town .....	Smart, T. C. ....	3	34	37	—	37
ditto .....	Bright, R. S. ....	2	14	16	—	16
Queen's Asylum, New Town ..	Coverdale, J. ....	—	104	104	104	103 †
		6	158	164	105	157

\* Two perfect vesicles. Dr. Willes remarks:—"There are numbers of children born in this District remaining unvaccinated; but their parents make so many objections, especially since the Vaccination is no longer paid by the Colony, that it is not easy to keep up a supply from arm to arm. I hope the Government will re-introduce their Bill on this subject during the coming Session, for it is a most important measure."

† The unsuccessful one was operated upon three different times in the foregoing period. The Vaccinations at this establishment were initiated by Dr. Coverdale sending to my public Vaccinations two selected children, from whom the supply of lymph was continued. I see many of the cases during their progress.

E. SWARBRECK HALL, *Superintendent of Vaccinations.*