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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

V A C C I N A T I O N :

REPORT FOR 1883.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



ANNUAL REPORT on VACCINATION for the Year 1883.

Vaccination Office, 5th May, 1884.

I HAVE the honor to lay before the Government my Report on Vaccination for the year 1883.

The system of Vaccination which was formerly in operation,—viz., the appointment of local Vaccinators for the several districts throughout the Island,—was found to work unsatisfactorily. A chief objection to it was the large expenditure incurred for the travelling allowance, as compared with the small number of Vaccinations performed.

By the Act of 1882 Vaccinators were directed to visit all the stations in their respective districts twice in each month, a third visit during the month becoming necessary for the purpose of inspecting those cases vaccinated at their second visit. Many of these stations were from twenty to thirty miles distant from the abode of the Vaccinator, and frequently, after travelling these long distances, one or two children only would be presented for vaccination, thus making the travelling allowance amount to a sum out of all proportion to the number of cases vaccinated.

At the commencement of 1883 two itinerant Vaccinators were appointed, one for the Northern and the other for the Southern division of the Island. Their duties consist in visiting in rotation the several districts in their respective divisions, so that during the year every district would be visited once or oftener.

They commenced work at the latter end of February, and during the ten months have vaccinated upwards of two thousand children.

It would be unfair to judge from this result as to what may be done in the future. There are necessarily many drawbacks incidental to the introduction of a novel system. The Vaccinators are of course new to the work, and experience is needed to enable them to adopt the best measures for carrying it out.

In former Annual Reports I have had occasion to mention the great apathy exhibited by parents as to the vaccination of their children.

No system of Vaccination will be successful until the penal clauses of the Compulsory Vaccination Act are strictly enforced in the cases of defaulters, and until this is done no fair judgment can be formed of the success or otherwise of the present one.

Dr. Willes, the Southern Vaccinator, says: "So far as my experience goes, the present scheme is essentially a sound one, and is well received by the people. As the Vaccinators become personally known, and the mode of performing their duties is proved to be satisfactory, and the results harmless as well as efficient, I believe that opposition will well nigh disappear. I am not dissatisfied with the result of my own exertions, for where no large number of children have been brought I think the way has been opened for future successful work."

Dr. Payne, for some months the Northern Vaccinator, says: "Of this fact I am certain, that under the present system children are much more effectually vaccinated than they were previously."

There is no doubt that the disinclination of the uneducated classes to vaccination has been greatly increased by notices which have appeared in the newspapers condemning the operation as not only useless as a protective measure, but as being the cause of disease of a loathsome nature in the vaccinated. This prejudice is widely spread; and in order that those who are thus influenced

should not plead it as an excuse for neglecting to have their children vaccinated, the Government have gone to considerable expense in procuring a regular supply of calf lymph. This lymph was in the first instance obtained from a Medical Practitioner in the Colony, but unfortunately this supply proved most unsatisfactory in its results, and the large number of failures shown in the table forming the Appendix occurred for the most part in children where this lymph was used. The animal lymph at present supplied to the Vaccinators is obtained from Dr. Penfold's establishment at Sandhurst, Victoria, and is a vast improvement upon the former.

For about five months of the year whooping-cough was very prevalent throughout the Island, and more particularly so in Hobart. Under these circumstances it was of course necessary to suspend Vaccination during its continuance.

Although the number vaccinated in 1883 was, from the causes above enumerated, smaller than would have been the case under more favourable circumstances, it is still greatly in excess of most of the years preceding it. Excluding the months when the people were in fear of small-pox (which had made alarming progress in Sydney), the number of vaccinations in 1883 were larger than the aggregate of those performed in the five preceding years.

With regard to the arrears of Vaccination, great difficulty will be experienced in carrying out the Act. In former years no record was kept by the Deputy Registrars of the vaccinations performed. Of those children, therefore, who were born before a record was kept it will be impossible to tell who are vaccinated and who are not, without their being submitted to examination. To ascertain the fact it would therefore be necessary to make a visitation from house to house, and no power to make such examination is conferred by the Act.

Appended is a table showing the numbers vaccinated, and the result.

GEORGE TURNLEY, *Superintendent of Vaccinations.*

RETURN of Vaccinations during the Year 1883, and the Results.

| | <i>Total vac- cinated.</i> | <i>At and under 6 Months old.</i> | <i>6 Months to 12 Months.</i> | <i>One Year and up- wards.</i> | <i>Returned on 8th day.</i> | <i>Entirely successful.</i> | <i>Partially successful.</i> | <i>Entirely unsucces- ful.</i> |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Northern Division..... | 783 | 115 | 143 | 525 | 773 | 768 | .. | 5 |
| Southern Division..... | 1543 | 127 | 344 | 1072 | 1185 | 897 | .. | 288 |
| | 2326 | 242 | 487 | 1597 | 1958 | 1665 | .. | 293 |

GEORGE TURNLEY, *Superintendent of Vaccinations.*