

(No. 23.)



1876.

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

RAGGED SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION.

REPORT FOR 1875.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Crowther, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
September 12, 1876.



EIGHTEENTH Report of the HOBART TOWN RAGGED SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

THE Report we have this year to present is in some respects very gratifying, and in consequence it may be very brief. In 1874 your committee began the year upwards of £100 in debt; at last year's meeting there was still a balance due to the bank of nearly £30. They have now to state that during the past twelve months they have added four new and handsome class-rooms; added to the teaching staff three new and efficient teachers; increased the salaries of the masters and mistresses to a more adequate amount; met the whole expenses of building, furnishing, salaries, cleaning, and management; and the treasurer, after disbursing £919 18s. 6d., is able to produce a balance-sheet showing a deficiency of less than half the small debt with which the year began. This happy result is due in part to a building grant of £300 received from the Public Treasury, in part to the generous response made both in town and country to the appeal of a few members of your committee. It has been a year in that aspect of almost unparalleled prosperity in the annals of the Ragged School Association, and it inspires your committee with fresh courage to persevere in their work.

As to the internal condition of the schools, they have to report the addition of an infant department in each, in distinct rooms, numerously attended and well taught. The numbers in the whole three schools continue nearly the same. Indeed, for the last five years, during which the schools have had earnest and useful teachers, the numbers have maintained a remarkable uniformity. On the books there have been this last year in round numbers 500, in attendance 340; distributed thus:—At Watchorn-street, on the books 136, in attendance 95; at Collins-street, 156 and 115; in the Cascades Road School, 172 and 127. The somewhat smaller average attendance is to be sufficiently explained by the attack of measles, and then of scarlet fever, which prevailed with peculiar violence in the neighbourhoods from which these children are chiefly drawn, and for some weeks thinned the schools down to absolute skeletons.

The Lady Superintendents have nothing very new to report; one of them says:—"We get on from year to year just in the same way," that is to say, they have the same class of children to deal with; the same industry to stimulate, the same errors to correct, the same charities to provide, the same labour of love to bestow.

In Watchorn-street:—During the past year the girls have much improved in needlework; 70 articles of clothing have been made; materials have been given by Lady Officer, Mrs. Parsons, and Mrs. James Salier. There have been fewer elder girls this year than ever known. They find employment, as the boys do, in picking fruit and at jam makers.

In Collins-street:—The annual distribution of clothing took place in the winter; 200 garments—part made by the children themselves—were distributed among 167 children. At Christmas, after the examination and distribution of prizes, the children were treated to buns and fruit, by the kindness of Mrs. Woolley and one or two other ladies. Among the many ladies and friends who have kindly assisted the school in materials for the clothes and needlework may be mentioned Lady Officer, Mrs. Woolley, Miss Ash, Mr. Mather, Mrs. Webster, and Mrs. B. Dickson.

In Cascades Road:—The girls continue steadily with their needlework under Miss Mitchell's tuition; the attendance of children at the school has increased; and the general neatness and tidiness of the girls is very noticeable.

At the usual Christmas examination prizes were given for general good behaviour, regularity of attendance, and improvement in the ordinary branches taught. Advantage was taken of this occasion for certain members of your committee to fix the special attention of both teachers and children, in two of the schools, on the duty of seeking to improve in cleanliness of person and dress, and gifts of prizes of some value were offered by two members of your committee for the most persisting improvement in these important branches of education during the next six and twelve months.

Besides this public examination the schools have been inspected twice during the year by the Secretary, class by class, and child by child. This inspection occupied on each occasion four entire days. As means will be taken to preserve the results of these half-yearly inspections, they may lead to some important information. Meanwhile this individual inspection has forcibly impressed two important facts :—

1. That not only the general bearing and discipline of the schools, but the progress and work of every class is seriously impeded by regular irregularity on the part of some. Every class in these schools, more especially in Watchorn and Collins-streets, is divided by a clear and broad line into two parts, the regulars and the irregulars; the regulars—about two-thirds of each—comparatively clean, tidy, disciplined, and making fair scholastic progress; the irregulars, untidy, dirty, mischievous, in rags, making little progress, hindering school work, in danger of going to the bad.

2. That the average age is lowering. In one of these schools, with an attendance of 130, we found only two present above eleven; in a second not more than three. In consequence, the master in one school has had no copy-book writing for the last six months, and it has been found impracticable, except in the case of a very small class at the Cascades Road, even to attempt to reach the highest standard proposed in the programme. To secure the voluntary attendance of this class of children, up to an age when the beneficial fruits of education may be expected to begin, is being found more and more impossible, in consequence of the various influences acting on the children themselves, or the indifference or the alleged necessities of their parents. As the Education Act, in its present form, has been found absolutely inoperative in meeting these cases of irregularity and non-attendance, and as your committee have not been as yet successful either in inducing the Government to introduce, or the Board of Education to support, such legislation as they have been led by their experience to deem essential for dealing with them, they can only now invite attention to these depressing facts, and impress on the teachers, and on the members of both their committees, the necessity of using more urgently what influence they can exert for the correcting or the abating of these two evils.

THE TREASURER in account with the HOBART TOWN RAGGED SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

Dr.		£ s. d.	Cr.		£ s. d.
1875.	To Cash Subscriptions and Donations.	205 0 4	By Balance due Treasurer, Account 1874....	29 9 5	
	To Cash from H.M. Government— Grant-in-aid.....	300 0 0	Cash paid Buildings.....	330 0 0	
	To Cash from H.M. Government— Grant for Buildings.....	300 0 0	* Furniture and Repairs.....	27 9 7	
	To Cash from H.M. Government—To supplement Subscriptions	103 8 6	Books and Stationery.....	17 6 0	
	Balance due Treasurer.....	11 9 8	Printing and Advertising.....	8 11 6	
			Fuel.....	6 11 0	
			Insurance.....	3 18 0	
			Sundries.....	2 8 8	
			Interest at Bank.....	5 12 8	
			Tuition : Masters.....	£249 15 10	
			" Mistresses.....	143 5 0	
			" Infant Teachers.....	75 4 8	
			" Monitors.....	7 14 8	
				476 0 2	
			By Cash for Prizes.....	12 11 6	
		<u>£919 18 6</u>			<u>£919 18 6</u>

Audited and found correct,

JAS. E. SALIER, *Treasurer.*

J. W. WOOLLEY, }
CHAS. CROSBY, } *Auditors.*

1st February, 1876.

*To this item has to be added an account not paid amounting to £98 10s. 9d.