INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is the first dissertation to attempt a history of Tasmanian public education. It is also one of the very few dissertations, at undergraduate or postgraduate level, to discuss any aspect of Tasmanian education.

Certain aspects of public education have not been examined. The State was not responsible for technical education or the Ragged Schools. Technical education was made a State responsibility under the 1885 Act, but the State did not gain full control of it until 1916. As Franklin's Board of 1839 provides a beginning for the period, the introduction of the State high schools in 1913, and a few years later the junior technical schools, sets a date for the end of the period of this dissertation, which is thus concentrated entirely on primary education. The chapter on the private venture schools fits in with this scheme because they were mostly primary schools and were in competition for pupil numbers with the public schools.

A fully developed comparative study was not seriously considered. The history of Tasmanian education in the nineteenth century does not form part of the history of a distinctive society or culture, the presence of convicts notwithstanding. Tasmanian society was a British society and its values, educational ideas and policies were derivative and imitative of Britain and, by the same historical process, the other Australasian colonies. Differences between them and Tasmania there certainly were and many of the differences were political and religious in nature. Neither, however, were first considerations in the organising and planning of the
dissertation because Tasmania's education history lacks the political and religious issues upon which so many educational questions turned in Britain and the other colonies.

Tasmanian education history also lacks the intensity of educational debate of other colonies and, when it did take place, it often came long after debate had been stilled elsewhere and issues resolved. If Tasmanian education history is imitative it is also adaptive and many of the problems of the day, similar in kind to those elsewhere though they may have been, were often problems of adapting ideas and policies to Tasmanian circumstances.

No detailed study has been made of the education of girls or of the place of women teachers in the public education system. They were not distinctive or separate aspects of public education and contemporaries did not believe them to be so. Nevertheless, in the chapters on the private venture schools, in several sections of some chapters and at several places here and there in other chapters, these matters have been examined. The education of aboriginal children has not been discussed as it did not become a part of the public education system until the last years of the period from 1839 to 1913 and the only school at which aboriginal children were enrolled has left almost no records.

In some aspects, sources for the writing of the dissertation are limited. The most serious deficiency is the absence of inward correspondence of the Board of Education and Education Department which is only partly made up by the Director's and Secretary's letterbooks, 1847 to 1851 and 1857 to 1913, and Chief
Inspector's letterbook for 1864 to 1872. General correspondence exists for the period 1905 to 1913 only. Applications for employment as teachers exist for the periods 1862 to 1869 and 1904 to 1905. Only registers of Teachers' Records have survived although Inspectors' Reports on staff, teaching and the organisation of schools are available for the period from 1890 to 1913 and also Inspectors' School Examination Reports for 1898 and 1900 to 1909. Copies of Circulars to Teachers from 1856 to 1908 have survived.

The various records of Local Boards and Boards of Advice, letterbooks, minutes of meetings and attendance returns, constitute very patchy holdings with only one set of records dating from the period before the establishment of the Boards of Advice in 1886. Similarly, the record books of individual schools have fared badly. A mere eighteen have survived from the entire period 1839 to 1913 and, of these, only four date from the days of the Board.

None of the many people who were directly involved with public education, teachers, Inspectors, Directors, Board members, politicians, has left diaries, memoirs or letters. There is one exception only, the autobiography of Governor Denison which contains, here and there, references to Tasmanian education. None of the private venture school teachers left behind any personal papers. Use had to be made, therefore, of newspaper editorials, reports and correspondence columns to develop some understanding of the views and personalities of the people who influenced education in Tasmania. It was, at times, a tantalisingly inadequate recourse. Nothing has survived of the personal papers of parents, although some may be held privately. The
failure of Parliament to publish its debates, at least until as recently as 1979, was partly overcome by making use of the parliamentary reports published in The Mercury.
### Conversions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Conversion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1d (penny)</td>
<td>0.83 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s (shilling)</td>
<td>10 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1 (pound)</td>
<td>$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 mile</td>
<td>1.60 kilometres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 acre</td>
<td>0.40 hectare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Australian Dictionary of Biography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Central Board (Board of Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSD</td>
<td>Chief Secretary's Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Colonial Secretary's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED</td>
<td>Education Department, Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO</td>
<td>Governor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAJ</td>
<td>House of Assembly Journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JHA</td>
<td>Journals of the House of Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JLC</td>
<td>Journals and Papers of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPPP</td>
<td>Journals, Papers and Proceedings of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authorities, (Boards of Advice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Courts of Petty Sessions, Records of Cases Heard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCP</td>
<td>Legislative Council Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Premier's Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLC</td>
<td>Papers of the Legislative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POL</td>
<td>Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWD</td>
<td>Public Works Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPLC</td>
<td>Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Van Diemen's Land became known officially as Tasmania in 1855, although the name had been in common use for some years. 'Tasmania' will be the name used throughout this dissertation.
It is a necessary purpose of this chapter to give meaning to the term 'State'. I take it to mean a form of power and control, duly constituted and legitimated, with considerable, if not total, political and financial authority. Such authority does not permit the State to be neutral or passive. The State constantly participates in the affairs of society, communities, interest groups and individuals. It follows that the State, in times and circumstances that may commonly be of its own choosing, is also interventionist. The State, understood as active power, though capable of delaying or obstructing action, is ultimately required to act, for it cannot maintain neutrality indefinitely.

It does not follow, however, that the State necessarily chooses to act in a partisan manner or that it is susceptible to fall into the hands of party or ideology. The State may act in a paternal manner towards all or some of its citizens and be moved by humanitarian considerations. It may act as a matter of obligation arising from the notion of a contract between the State and citizens. It may also act in response to the prevailing ideas of the times, either as proponent or opponent. It is within this context of a climate of opinion, a body of widely acknowledged ideas existing in society, that this chapter is largely set. Indeed, much of the chapter is taken up with discussion of this climate of opinion from which it becomes clear that the State in the nineteenth century played an active part in the development of education.
and that it did so in a manner that was public and open. The willingness of the State to engage itself in the debate concerning public education and its sensitivity towards the widely acknowledged ideas existing in society enabled the colony to create a system of public education that was firmly and permanently established within a decade and a half of its introduction in 1839. By the middle of the 1850's, the Church of England clergy, having done so much to isolate themselves from the debate and from the affections of many of their congregation, remained the sole dissentients, as representatives of an organised group, from the proposition that the State had the right to establish a system of public education and as a result of which it could assert its authority, inter alia, to determine the nature of religious instruction. It is a singular feature of the history of education in Tasmania, unlike the histories of some of the other colonies, that the struggle between Church and State was shortlived and relatively free of rancour.

It was a sign of the growing interventionist power of the State that, through the agency of government, that is to say, the Governor, Executive Council and Legislative Council, it was able to dispossess the Anglican Church of the control of education and vest it in a Board of lay members. The creation of such a Board was forced upon government by the incapacity of the office of Governor to administer all the affairs of government as they multiplied and expanded. The action was also a bestowing of a mark of confidence in a Board that was made to answer only to the office of governor. With no obligation laid upon it to be responsible to Parliament, the Board, from its establishment in 1839 to its replacement by a Department of Education in 1886, discharged its tasks in a condition of near autonomy.
In law the Board of Education was an institution of State and being so, it was not different in its operations from the system of justice, treasury or any other establishment of government. In practice, however, the Board's autonomy gave it the freedom to take decisions the making and operation of which were constrained only by the expenditure allowed it by government. Otherwise unconfined by Parliament and unchecked, after 1855, by governors or even hindered by municipal authorities in the years following the granting of self-government in 1856, the Board almost took on the form and appearance of the State itself. It is in this sense that the State is discussed in this chapter, for it was during the life of the Board that many of the great issues affecting the State and education were resolved.

The establishment of State control

As the first Governor of New South Wales colony had done, so the early Lieutenant Governors of Van Diemen's Land followed with the establishing of government schools. In 1818, Lieut-Governor William Sorell wrote to his superior in Sydney, Governor Lachlan Macquarie:

I am very anxious to arrange in Hobart Town a means of general Instruction for the Children of the poor free people and of the Convicts.1

Macquarie replied that he would be most happy 'to concur...in any reasonable Plan for instructing the Children of the poorer Classes of People'.2

1 HRA, III, II, despatch from Lieut-Governor Sorell to Governor Macquarie, 10.8.18, p.345.

2 Ibid., despatch from Governor Macquarie to Lieut-Governor Sorell, 24.9.18, p.354.
Commissioner J.T. Bigge, in his Reports, recommended the establishing of two Central Schools 'on the system of the National Establishment for not less than 100 Boys and 100 Girls', with a farm to be attached to the Boys' School.\(^3\) Archdeacon T.H. Scott in his investigation and reports of 1826, strongly recommended:

The formation of Infant Schools, in which the cleanliness, care and discipline are chiefly attended to with some of the rudiments of instruction.\(^4\)

Scott also recommended the building of 20 schools throughout the island for children from the ages of 5 to 8 years and the building of male and female orphan schools.\(^5\) He proposed a general boarding school for the children of free settlers who had made it known that they did not wish their children to associate with the children of convicts. The school was to provide primary and superior education for children of the ages 7 to 16 years, beyond which a boy would be educated sufficiently for a learned profession.\(^6\)

By the time of Governor Franklin's arrival in the colony in 1837, the orphan schools had been built, infant schools in Hobart and Launceston had been established and 30 public day schools, funded by government and supervised by Church of England clergy.

---

3 HRA, III, IV, despatch from Lieut-Governor Arthur to Under Secretary Horton, 28.7.25, p.81.
4 HRA, III, V, despatch from Lieut-Governor Arthur to Colonial Secretary, Earl of Bathurst, 21.4.26, p.157.
5 Ibid., pp.158-59.
6 Ibid., pp.159-60.
were in operation. Under Franklin's direction, these schools were withdrawn from the charge of the church and placed under the control of a government Board of Education, which he established in 1839. Such is the bare outline of the provisions for public education and the education of orphan and destitute children and the very young.

The necessity for government intervention and participation in education was acknowledged on many sides. The arguments on behalf of necessity were not original. There was no need for the pleading of special cases such was the vigour of government encouragement of education and that of private groups and individuals who, between them, had established a Mechanics' Institute in Hobart in 1827 a Collegiate Institution for the Education of Youth and the Advancement of Science and Literature at Launceston in the same year, the two Infant Schools mentioned above and several joint attempts to found fee-paying public institutions.

James Ross, Doctor of Laws, newspaper editor, tutor to Governor Arthur's children, teacher, leading light in the founding of the Mechanics' Institute and the Hobart Infant School Society, wrote, in 1833, The Notebook of Useful, Experimental and Entertaining

7 AOT CSO 8/122/2996 - 3033. Report of Commission of enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges, 1845, Table A.

8 For material on the early years of the Mechanics' Institute, see Colonial Times, 3.2.26, p.4; 5.1.27, p.2; 23.3.27, pp. 2-3; 22.6.27, pp. 3-4; 20.7.27, pp. 3-4; 10.8.27, pp. 2-3; 10.11.27, p.4. See also TC P 374.2 HOB, Rules and Orders of the Mechanics' Institution, Hobart Town, 1828.

9 Mitchell Library 370-6c. Cornwall Collegiate Institution for the Education of Youth and the Advancement of Science and Literature, 1827.
Knowledge, revealing, in its preface, the breadth of his interest in education for all ages and of all kinds:

The want of a college, where something beyond what is usually taught in schools may be obtained, has long been felt in Van Diemen's land. It is not, however, our purpose to enforce the necessity of such an institution in this improving age, nor to enlarge either upon its peculiar advantages, to us in this remote corner of the world, or on the extent of deprivation and injustice which the combined denial of it will entail on our immediate posterity. These are points now universally admitted by all classes of this community.10

His monthly Notebook, containing lessons on atoms, mass, matter, the spheres, sines, tangents and secants and prosody was a form of post school instruction for young gentlemen who wished to become masters of the various subjects.11 It had no meaning for most of the colony's children, but the educational ideas of Ross comprehended the view of education for all:

Our Colonial position demands extensive efforts; we want opportunities of universal education upon sound principles, available alike to every class of the community.12

In another of his publications, Ross wrote:

It is one of the primary duties of a state to advance the spread of useful learning, to provide for the ignorant and unfriended, the assistance necessary to enable them to fill the station allotted them, with honor. We do not advocate a system of pauper relief, we


11 Ibid., passim and p.4.

12 The Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine, No. 4., December 1835, p.172.
have seen enough of perverted poor laws. These things have never helped to check pauperism or to produce any moral good.\textsuperscript{13}

Ross was the most prominent of advocates and publicists for public education in the period of his stay in the colony from 1822 to his death in 1838, but support for his views was common. John Henderson proposed, unsuccessfully, to a society which he founded soon after his arrival in 1829, that a number of schools should be established throughout the island to teach the sciences, the principal arts and handicrafts and foreign and ancient languages.\textsuperscript{14} The curriculum was to be a mixture of classical education with a number of subjects suitable for colonial youths and, like the recommended syllabus of James Ross, may have presumed an educational background in his intended pupils which only a small number could have demonstrated. Notwithstanding, it was also Henderson's intention to extend 'useful' information, through all classes of the community.\textsuperscript{15}

Sir John Franklin, Rear-Admiral and Arctic explorer, who had been made a Fellow of the Royal Society for his attempts to find the North-West Passage, succeeded Lieut-Governor Arthur in 1837.\textsuperscript{16} Franklin's Regulations of 1839 and his creation of the Board of Education, under those Regulations, marks the first attempt by the State to provide a system of public education throughout the island. The Regulations, in

\footnotesize{
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.}, p.171.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} J. Henderson, \textit{Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land}, pp. v-vii.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}, p.v.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} \textit{ADB} 1, 1788-1850 A-H, entry on Sir John Franklin, pp.412-15.
\end{itemize}
}
dispossessing the Anglican clergy of their right of supervision of the schools, earned the immediate hostility of the Church, but the approbation of leading clergy from other denominations and of many prominent property owners, professional men and businessmen. The clergy, representing Catholics, Methodists, Congregationalists, Independents, Presbyterians and Baptists, in an address to Franklin, urged upon him:

That if any system of education is adopted by the Government of a Christian country it should embrace the children belonging to parents of every religious denomination, that the benefits of instruction may be equally enjoyed by all.17

They had the support of many 'Landholders, Merchants and other Inhabitants' who matched the clergy in their determination to defend the new government schools and exclude from them the right and privilege, claimed by the Anglican clergy, that the Church of England creed and catechism be taught to all children in the schools.18 Franklin stood by his regulations which stipulated that:

No commentary or exposition of the Scriptures...be offered by the Conductors nor...the teaching of any Catechism.19

When eleven of the Church of England clergy threatened to withdraw themselves from the schools as religious instructors of the children,20 Franklin replied that

17 JLC 1840. Addresses to His Excellency, Sir John Franklin, on the Government Schools, pp. 5-9.
18 Ibid., pp. 10-35.
20 JLC 1840. Addresses to His Excellency, Sir John Franklin, on the Government Schools, p.39.
it was his hope that doctrinal teaching would be afforded by the Sunday Schools. He seized upon an opinion expressed by one of their number that Saturdays might be set aside for such a purpose.²¹ Forcing the clergy further into a corner, be continued, with no small feeling of triumph:

It gives His Excellency great pleasure to make this announcement; as by this arrangement the obstacles which they have brought forward to their attending to the particular religions of the children appear to be removed.²²

The clergy, as they had threatened, withdrew from the schools. Concessions by the Board to permit a minister to offer special instruction to the children of his own denomination,²³ a concession that was contrary to the principles of the British and Foreign School System upon which the schools had been founded, were to no avail and, in a number of schools, teachers were obliged to give religious instruction in the place of the departed clergy and for which responsibility, the clergy claimed, the teachers were either disbarred by conflicting sectarian conviction or incapacitated by professional incompetence.

In 1843, a report, entitled An Account of the Introduction and Effects of the System of General Religious Education Established in Van Diemen's Land in 1832, was published by H.P. Fry, an Anglican clergyman and J.D. Loch, a parishioner, following their visits to

²¹ Ibid., letter from Colonial Secretary to Rev. William Bedford and other Church of England clergy, 10.12.39.

²² Ibid.

the public schools. They claimed the system was inefficient, a charge which was both incontestable and unfair in that the conduct of the Church of England schools was not one degree more efficacious, as the Reverend Arthur Davenport was to discover eight years later in his Report on Anglican parochial schools.

Fry and Loch also asserted that the schools did not accord with the wishes of a majority of the colony's inhabitants. The Board replied to the charges with a narrative of the errors made by the authors and the counter-charge of wilful misrepresentation.

The Church of England had seriously miscalculated. The effect of the withdrawal of the clergy had been 'to throw [the schools] gradually into the hands of the Dissenters', as the Reverend Doctor William Bedford admitted in 1845 to the Commission of enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges. The conscientious objection that Bedford and others had had to their attendance at 'a school where the Catechism of the Church of England was not allowed to be used' had upheld principles, but had cost the church dearly in numbers. In 1846, the Colonial Secretary, William Gladstone, instructed the new Governor, Sir William Denison, to enquire 'how far the present system [had] done all that might have been


25 AOT NS 373/244. Report on the Parochial Schools within the Archdeaconry of Hobart Town, 1851.

26 PLC. 1843-44. Report of Board of Education for 1843.

27 AOT CSO 8/121/3000. Report of Commission of enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges, 1845, p.64.

28 Ibid., pp.63-4.
reasonably expected in giving vigour and efficiency to the Schools'.

Gladstone informed Denison that experience had shown that:

Efficient Local Superintendence, as distinguished from that of paid Inspectors [could] only be secured, as a General rule, through the means of the Ministers of the various Religious Communities.

In pointing out to Denison that 'the Services of this active and influential class were not made available', Gladstone wrote that he could entertain no hope if the present system 'continue[d] to be exclusively maintained' and urged him to examine:

The Method of affording public aid for the purposes of Education at present pursued in New South Wales.

In carrying out Gladstone's instruction to assist the denominations with public funds, payable at the rate of one penny for each child in daily attendance, Denison was brought into conflict with the Dissenters.

The Dissenters, 'strict adherents of what is called the "Voluntary Principle"', refused to apply for aid of any kind from the Government. The Church of England received 'by far the larger portion of the funds' and, by as much as their schools prospered,

29 AOT CSO 1/31/669. Letter from Colonial Secretary to Chairman, Board of Education, 22.9.46, p.370, quoting extracts from W.E. Gladstone's despatch.
31 Ibid., p.370.
32 Ibid., p.317.
33 Inspector's Report for 1850, p.2.
34 Ibid.
the government schools declined. By 1850, out of 71 public day schools, 59 were controlled by the Church of England, four were Catholic schools and eight only were schools controlled by the Board. The regulations gave the parents the right to decide, by decision of the majority, the kind of system to be followed in their local school. Thomas Arnold, second son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, Headmaster of Rugby School and Denison's choice to succeed Charles Bradbury as Inspector of Schools, considered:

[the] system would appear at first sight to be ultra-democratical, but in practice it [was] exactly the reverse.

The Church of England had its Ministers 'settled in every District of the Island, and [they] naturally enjoy[ed] a preponderating local influence'. It was an influence which they were very willing to use. Arnold, himself an Anglican, though he was received into the Catholic Church before he left Tasmania in 1856, was not deceived by the supposed free choice offered to parents. Such was the completeness of control by the resident Minister over the appointment and dismissal of the teacher and the curriculum that he thought a change of control in the school was 'likely to be extremely rare'. The Catholic Bishop of Hobart, R.W. Willson, in his petition against the bill of 1852 which, amongst other matters, proposed the creation of local education committees, protested that:

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., pp. 3-4.
37 Ibid., p.2.
38 Ibid., p.4.
Because above thirty Clergymen of the Church of England, eleven of the Church of Scotland, besides other Ministers of different religious denominations paid from Colonial funds, would be ex officio, members of local Committees, whereas only THREE Clergymen of the Catholic Church, so maintained, (a fact which must, before long, prove highly detrimental to the social and moral welfare of many in this Colony), would be entitled to that privilege, although the Catholic Community consists of nearly one-fifth of the whole of the inhabitants of this Colony.  

Clergy and laity were even less circumspect:  

As the Bill contains a clause empowering a wealthy majority to determine upon the kind of religious instruction to be given in the Schools, it would have the effect of excluding from such Schools the children of Catholics, who would be generally found in a minority, and of engendering discord and religious strife amongst the inhabitants of this Colony.  

Mistrust of the Anglican clergy was not confined to Catholics. Franklin had shown his colours by the introduction of his Regulations in 1839 which denied the Anglican Church the possibility of control of the public schools, at least until Gladstone's intervention in 1846. The Examiner, a Launceston newspaper, wrote in one of its leading articles in 1842:  

We feel bound to oppose to the utmost, any radical change in our educational plan. We had rather the people were left to shift for themselves, than that the work of instruction should be practically entrusted to a particular church.  

39 VPLC. II 1852, paper 27. Schools' Bill, petition of the Right Reverend Bishop Willson.  

40 VPLC., II 1852, paper 27. Schools' Bill, petition of Roman Catholic clergy and laity against the Schools' Bill.  

The newspaper made sure its readers knew of the issues that were at stake:

What harm does the union of catholic and protestant children, or episcopalian and presbyterian, produce either to the children themselves or the public at large? We have never heard the parents complain - we have never heard the laity of any party find fault - certainly we have never heard any of those classes whose situation in life may incline them to accept gratuitous teaching - and, if it is true, as the Chief Justice asserts, that the clergy of one section of the community object, they assuredly stand alone. 42

The feeling against the attempts by the Anglican clergy to reimpose a near monopolistic control of education and against their exploitation of the penny-a-day system came to a head in 1853, after the failure of the Schools Bill of the previous year to be passed into law. The very maintenance of the Anglican ascendency in education, however, hastened the decline of the penny-a-day system as its unworkability became yearly more evident. In 1853, a Board of Inspection was formed to report on the state of the public schools. 43 The Board, composed of Arnold as Inspector and Secretary to the Board, Dr. John Lillie, Presbyterian, Archdeacon Robert Davies, Anglican and Father William Hall, Vicar-General of the Catholic Church, travelled throughout the island. The members condemned the penny-a-day system as 'a subject of universal complaint among the teachers'. 44 It had failed to provide adequate salaries - 'the chief cause

42 Ibid.
43 VPLC III 1853, paper 46. Report of Board of Inspection on the State of the Public Schools of the Island, 1853.
44 Ibid., p.4.
of the low state of education in the Schools' - and had brought about the establishment of rival schools. Furthermore, they charged that:

A pernicious system of bidding against one another for pupils in order to secure the Government allowance per head had been encouraged.

The Board of Inspection's recommendation that the penny-a-day system be abandoned was accepted. The two churches, Anglican and Catholic, had lost the battle to retain public funding.

It is time to return to the period of the early 1840's to pick up the thread of secular influences on public education. In the same year that non-Anglican clergy and 'Landholders, Merchants and Inhabitants' had petitioned the Governor to hold fast to the regulations prescribing non-sectarian religious instruction, others attacked Franklin, also by petition, on his proposal for a new college. The College, to be a fee-paying institution, had been sanctioned by the Colonial Office and Franklin had approached Dr. Arnold of Rugby to help him find a suitable candidate for the Headmastership. Arnold proposed John Philip Gell, a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, of whom he said that:

He [did] not believe the United Kingdom could have furnished a man who enters upon his work in a better spirit, or who brings to it a combination of more wisdom, zeal and goodness.

45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 VPLC 1837-42. Session 1840, August 15, Minute of Governor concerning the New College, p.177.
This 'young man of the very highest promise' - he was only 23 years of age on his arrival in Hobart - was to be paid £500 a year, a sum which at first appeared to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury to be 'higher than was necessary', but which they later approved.\(^4^9\)

Gell's purpose was to secure 'the education of an order of enlightened gentlemen' in an institution 'permanently established by Royal Charter' and regulated 'according to the most approved precedents among English Scholastic Institutions'.\(^5^0\)

It was too much for some colonists to swallow. In a petition to the Governor they protested that:

However well the monastic system of living and course of education laid down in Mr. Gell's Report may be adapted for training up "gentleman" of aristocratic wealth and pretensions to fill high stations in an old country, to live in ease and affluence on their hereditary fortunes, or on large incomes derived from offices of state, or whatever may be its advantages for educating young men for the learned professions, we submit that it would be misappropriation of public money (to the beneficial expenditure of which all have an equal right to lay it out) in providing for the benefit of a mere fractional portion of Colonial youth.\(^5^1\)

They stated that they had nothing to object to in Gell's proposed course of study, based on Greek, Latin, Euclid, Algebra, Trigonometry, Statistics, Dynamics, Aristotle's Politics, Newton, Butler's Analogy and

\(^{48}\) Ibid.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., p.176.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., p.181.

Whateley's Logic, except that it seemed to them to contain very little that they considered:

Necessary for the complete and useful education of the youth of the Colony, to fit them for the pursuits and occupations for which they will all be destined with few exceptions."

The petitioners regretted that the Legislative Council, ministers of religion and members of the learned professions had not been consulted and that teachers and the colonists had not been given a chance to express themselves on the matter. Among the 284 petitioners were John Lillie, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, John Joseph Therry, Vicar-General, Hugh Murray, wealthy grazier, Henry Howe, tailor and mercer and T. Chisholme Anstey, wealthy landowner, barrister and banker, representing a quite wide social range. There is a biting sarcasm in the language of the petition, a contempt for aristocratic privilege and strong objection to the proposition that it could be imposed in the colony without consent. Neither were the petitioners willing to concede the privilege which the Anglican Church was obliquely asserting, for Gell, though not yet ordained, was, in their eyes, engaging in priestcraft. There is a joy at the prospect of battle in the style and language of the petitioners, as if they had indulged themselves for years past in its anticipation. And they did win their battle. Franklin's successor 'stopped the expenditure of [the] intended college', a move which 'was fully approved of by Lord Stanley.'

Gell wrote to his father that he was

52 Ibid., p.2.

53 VPLC 1845. Minute of Lieut - Governor to Legislative Council, 21.10.45, p.4.
'gardening Greenland in the mistiest ignorance and the iciest selfishness.'

The battle was worth the fighting. The money used on the new college was so much the less that could be spent on the public schools and the proponents of public education in the 1840's and 1850's were as clear-minded about its needs and importance as others had been in the 1830's. John Lillie, in a lecture to a Mechanics' Institute audience on the opportunities of intellectual improvement in the colony, stated that the colonists had brought with them from home 'the first principles at least, of a liberal education' and all were possessed of:

That spirit of liberty and independence which is proper to the inhabitants of a free country.

Lillie, who gave many lectures to members of Mechanics' Institutes or similar groups and who believed strongly in their wider educational value, was egalitarian in his social outlook and singularly free of prejudice in matters of religion:

Surely the fact that reason has been abused is no valid argument against its use, and no fair reason why those who advocate its sober dispassionate application to the momentous subject of religion should be stigmatized and sneered at as rationalists.

54 ADR 1, 1788 - 1850 A-H, entry on John Philip Gell, p.436.
55 J. Lillie, The Opportunities of Intellectual Improvement Chiefly with Reference to the Circumstances of this Community, p.23.
Charles Price, Congregational Minister, like Lillie a keen public lecturer and publicist for government education, asked what were the orders in society—an ignorant multitude and oppressing few, a crouching poor and a few rich? Away with such orders, he wrote:

There is a fount about to stream,
There is a light about to beam.
There is a warmth about to flow
There is a flower about to blow,
There is a midnight blackness changing into grey:

Men of thought and men of action
Clear the way!

Aid the drowning, tongue and pen;
Aid it, hopes of honest men;
Aid it paper; aid it type;
Aid it, for the hour is ripe.
And our earnest must not slacken
Into play:
Men of thought and men of action
Clear the way! 57

Resistance to the spread of public education, he inferred, came mainly from Church of England clergy. The Church, having lost ground, though not the field, after the passing of Franklin's Regulations in 1839, had regained it and more with the introduction of Gladstone's penny-a-day system in 1846. But it had no support in its struggle to retain control, not from Governors, or the Legislative Council or other Protestants. The Catholic Church, though willing to count the pennies, feared the growing control of the Church of England in the localities. The Church of England stood out, during the period from 1839 to the abandonment of the penny-a-day system in 1854, as the only group in society opposed to state provision of education. The arguments of the Church against State

education, as contained in the following extracts from The Tasmanian Church Chronicle, made no headway against its opponents and as little with the parents. Putting the view that the State, being a material agent, was incapable of exercising a hold upon the affections of the child, that the State lacked 'the parental voice, or the pastoral hand' necessary for the child's education and that only the Church could provide a complete education, it followed that the State's influence was harmful:

In any and every case, man is only to be educated by those to whom he can look up with the feeling of attachment and regard. And this feeling is possible towards his Church, towards those who to him are messengers of Divine truth, and the agents whom they delegate - it is utterly impossible towards an education department, the bureau of a Minister of Public Instruction, or the shifting will of a heterogeneous Committee, compounded after a State prescription.  

The writer of the article conceived it to be:

No more incumbent on the State to train the intellect of the people than to train their hands. Government leaves handicrafts to themselves. It requires no man's child to be taught shoemaking and carpentry...a cultivated intellect, with an unsoftened heart, unsettles the balance of man's inner nature and tends to make him proud, seditious, unbelieving, or a villain.  

Ideas of this kind may have appealed to the converted, but they failed to secure a wider audience. The unknown author of a twelve page article on 'Tasmanian Educational Establishments', published the

58 How Shall the State Promote Education? A Reprint from The Tasmanian Church Chronicle for August, 1852, pp. 4-5.

59 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
year before, in 1851, in *The Illustrated Australian Magazine* wrote:

Some sections of the Church in especial display a pertinacity of adherence to former things, as if they were determined to reject the generation of the nineteenth century back into a medieval condition; and in their zeal for a so called religious education are blind to the incalculable importance of secular instruction.\textsuperscript{60}

Of greater concern to the Church was that its ideas failed to convince the parents. The 1845 and 1846 Reports of Arnold's predecessor, Inspector Charles Bradbury, a man of zeal and energy,\textsuperscript{61} superior attainments and strictly moral habits,\textsuperscript{62} made many references to the indifference of parents to religious observance and the teaching of religion in the schools, as did the Commission of Enquiry of 1845:

Many of the children appeared to go to no place of worship at all, and when asked to what church or chapel their parents went, frequently it was answered "father goes nowhere."\textsuperscript{63}

We found it very difficult to ascertain the denominations from the children themselves in [New Town] school... many of their parents go to no place of worship at all, and some of the children to no Sunday school.\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{60} 'Tasmanian Educational Establishments', *The Illustrated Australian Magazine*, 2,11, May 1851, p.264.

\textsuperscript{61} AOT GO 33/67/968. Despatch from Governor Sir William Denison to Earl Grey, Colonial Secretary, 15.8.49.

\textsuperscript{62} AOT CSO 11/37/837. Letter from Members, Board of Education, to Colonial Secretary, 7.1.47.

\textsuperscript{63} AOT CSO 8/121/3000. Report of Commission of enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges, 1845, p.148.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., p.172.
It has often been remarked that the Parents of the poorer classes send their children to school almost entirely for the sake of the secular instruction, or as they call it learning, which is taught, and have, too often, little regard to the religious instruction which is communicated.  

In the largest towns, in particular, the Church of England was losing followers:

In Hobart and Launceston, the children of Independent and Wesleyans predominate, whereas in the Country districts, the children of the Church of England form the great majority in attendance at the schools.

Whatever hold the Church had on children in the public schools, it was evident that it was becoming weaker and more and more dependent on the maintenance of artificial, and thus transient, measures, such as the penny-a-day system. With the abandonment of that system in 1854, the Church of England lost much of its ability to control the direction of public education. With the withdrawal of state aid in the following decade, the Church's influence was further reduced.

The widely held view of the necessity for public education of which the views of Franklin, Denison, Lillie, Price, Ross and some members of the Legislative Council are representative, was not in any sense solid and indivisible. Unity, where it existed at all, lay in the belief and sentiment invested in the view and rarely, if ever, in policy or action in support of the view. The most common cause of division and the cause

65 Ibid., p.130.
66 Ibid., pp. 120-21.
most likely to frustrate purpose was the matter of the sources of public funds for education—in a word, whether they were to be derived from general revenue or by the striking of a local rate.

Under the 1839 Franklin Regulations, the cost of education, apart from fees payable to the teacher, was provided for by general revenue, and to which arrangement the penny-a-day system made no alteration in principle. Governor Sir William Denison, an able military engineer and zealous administrator, on whom Arnold gave his opinion that 'he had a penetrating intellect and certainly a strong, not to say, imperious will', was greatly concerned at the state of the colony's finances shortly after his arrival in 1847. In a Minute read to the Legislative Council in 1848, he gave an outline of the costs to government of public education. Expenditure amounted to £5055 for the 2759 children who were enrolled in the schools. If, however, one-tenth of the population were taken to be 'the minimum proportion which should be under instruction' the number would rise to 6000 and the costs to £10950, or, if fees were to be added, to a total of £14375. The Government, he warned, was unable to bear the burden, 'even were it desirable that so large a share of the expense of educating the people should be thrown upon the Government':

---


68 T. Arnold, Passages in a Wandering Life, p.129.

69 LCP 1848. Minute of Lieut-Governor W.T. Denison to Legislative Council, 9.3.48.

70 Ibid., p.3.

71 Ibid.
In point of fact, however, such a system of dependence upon Government is in itself an evil of great magnitude - it cramps the energies of the people, rendering them indifferent to those benefits to which, if purchased by their own exertions, they would attach a real value.  

He proposed a local rate, throwing the whole expense 'upon the inhabitants for whose benefit they exist'. At the same time as, by this measure, he hoped to restore health to the condition of the colonial finances, he hoped to put an end:

To those feelings of jealous hostility which have, I regret to say, arrayed the members of the different Christian Churches in opposition to each other upon a matter on which it is of the utmost importance that the fullest cordiality should exist.

Appeals to the benefits of local funding for the colonial weal and assurances of the fairness by which the rate would be assessed and raised were turned aside by the Legislative Council and Denison suffered a humiliating rebuff. In the matter of taxation, Legislative Councillors were of a contrary opinion, that the striking of a local rate was manifestly unfair. Such was the decision they came to and all later attempts by Denison and others to dispossess central government of the burden of funding the public schools and locate it in the districts came to nothing. Denison drafted other Bills in 1850, 1852 and 1853, all of them having the purpose, inter alia, of placing responsibility for funding the schools upon the

72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., p.4.
74 Ibid.
The Select Committee of the Legislative Council reported on the 1852 Bill, that the information they had before them was deficient and they promised that 'when they again enter upon the question, they [would] come better prepared'. The Council's arrogance was an expression of its strength in the struggle with the Governor.

In 1856, Tasmania gained self-government. Responsibility for funding many branches of government was assumed by the new two-chamber Parliament. No re-organisation of public education followed, however, upon the winning of self-government. The new Board of Education, which had come into being in 1854 as a result of the Reports of the Select Committee and Board of Inspection, remained in control, although its functions were divided between two Boards in Hobart and Launceston. (The Boards existed from 1857 to 1860, reforming into one Board, based in Hobart, in 1863.) The Board reported annually to Parliament from which it received its annual grant. Its six members were appointed by the Governor. It met from time to time as regulation or pressure of business demanded. The Chairman often had difficulty in finding enough members present to form a quorum. Since its obligation to Parliament extended no further than the writing of a report, Parliament could exercise no supervisory authority over the Board nor regulate its spending or

---

75 AOT CSO 24/138/4484. Draft Bill for the Establishment and Maintenance of Primary and other Schools, 11.4.50; VPLC II 1852, paper 63. Report of Select Committee on the Schools' Bill 1852; VPLC III 1853, paper 13. Message No.3., Schools, 1853.

76 VPLC II 1852, paper 63. Report of Select Committee on the Schools' Bill, 1852, pp. 3-4.
make formal enquiry into its finances, curriculum or standards of teaching.

The State and the organisation and management of education

The structure of the Board, as outlined above, was to remain in operation until its succession by the Education Department in 1886. Henry Butler, surgeon, Speaker of the House, Member of the House of Assembly from 1856 to 1862, was Chairman of the Southern Board from 1857 to 1862 and of the re-combined Board from 1863 to his death in 1885. He was therefore, that rare occurrence, a politician and, at the same time, an administrator. He was also a public figure who served on a number of commissions and boards.77 He was not a quarrelsome or meddling man and he avoided public controversy whenever possible. As Chairman of the Board of Education he was content to let the Inspectors set the pace of educational change. The Board itself interfered very little in the conduct of the schools, teaching, curriculum, the selection of teachers or teacher training and standards, confining its work to the apportionment of the annual grant, buildings and maintenance, the keeping of statistics and arbitration in disputes involving teachers and the Board or teachers and parents. In many ways, its work did not differ from the rather routine duties of Local Boards.

Since the Board was not responsible to Parliament in the way that a Department was fully responsible and as the Chairmen and the Board assumed a general

77 ADB 3, 1851 - 1890 A-C, entry on Henry Butler, pp.315-16.
supervisory rather than a regulatory role over the employees of the Board, the matter of making policy and carrying it out fell to the Inspectors to a degree unknown in any other Government Department. The period of about ten years from 1858 to 1869 was, in this regard, a crucial time for public education.

It is a period marked by the ideas and policies of Thomas Stephens, as Inspector for the Northern Board and, later, Inspector for the re-combined Board. Stephens was born into an Anglican clerical family in Westmorland in 1830. His brother, William, was foundation Headmaster of Sydney Grammar School and proprietor of The New School in Sydney, which he founded. At both schools he was known for his advanced ideas in education. He later became Professor of Natural History at the University of Sydney. The career of Thomas, the younger son, was very similar, Thomas was a graduate in Classics at Oxford who arrived in Tasmania in 1856, at the age of 26, to become subwarden of Christ's College, an Anglican school at Bishopsbourne. He was appointed Inspector for the Northern Board in the following year, Inspector for the whole island in 1863, Chief Inspector in 1868 and Director of the new Education Department in 1886, a position he held until his retirement in 1894. He was a keen member of the Royal Society of Tasmania from 1858, giving 27 papers, most of them on geography and geology, a founding member of the Council of the University of Tasmania, Vice-Chancellor for a short period and Fellow of the Geological Society of London.

78 ADB 6, 1851 - 1890 R-Z, entry on William John Stephens, pp. 197-98.

79 Ibid., entry on Thomas Stephens, p.196.
Stephens, who had never taught children, nor even had he been trained as a teacher, set himself the life-long task of improving the quality of teachers and teaching. His first Annual Report in 1857, emphasised the need for a Model School in Launceston as a means of training new teachers and untrained teachers already in the schools.\(^8\) Thereafter, in each of his Reports and in his testimony to various committees and commissions of enquiry, he never failed to raise the matter. The quality of the Tasmanian public education system was set by the quality of the training given to teachers. On this point Stephens would not compromise. He devised a policy for the achievement of his purpose at the very outset of his career. The policy took a number of forms, but at all times and no matter what shifts he made in his tactics, Stephens' policy was based on the exclusion of parents and other members of local communities from the organisation and management of education, the day-to-day running of the schools, the framing of the curriculum, the conduct of lessons and, as important as any other move on his part, the effective denial of access to the teacher by the parent. His intention was to make the relationship between parent and teacher so formal and regulated that contact, other than by approved means, was made sterile and so infrequent as to become meaningless. In this scheme, it was the Board of Education and its Inspectors that were to receive the greatest benefit. With the exclusion of the parents and, thus, the subordination of their role to one of compliance with the needs and demands of the Board, Inspectors were able to impose a direct control of the teachers. Stephens' first indication of his policy was in his 1858 Report:

The want of a proper spirit of independence in the Teachers of Public Schools has, in many instances, attracted my attention. One of the chief advantages of a state-aided system of education is, that it renders the Teacher to a certain extent independent of the caprice or interference of parent, — a position which the private Teacher can only obtain under unusually favourable circumstances.  

Stephens objected to the time wasted in 'filling up what are commonly called Ciphering Books,' but even more so to the capitulation by the teacher to the parents who regarded completed Ciphering Books 'as a guarantee of their children's progress.'  He also mentioned the lack of punctuality, the use of a variety of text-books, the neglect of home-lessons and many other evils:

Which all tend to show that the Teacher has not assumed that position of authority which is necessary to enable him to succeed in his educational labours.

In his next report, he attacked the practice of children being instructed to copy 'elaborate headings, before they [had] learnt to form a single letter correctly' as 'a most mischievous one':

It is done at the request of the parent [which] is no extenuation of the offence. This sort of foolish concession to the will of the parents, who wish their children to "get on" is the bane of many a School.

81 Northern Board of Education. Inspector's Report for 1858, p.6.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 Northern Board of Education. Inspector's Report for 1859, p.10.
85 Ibid.
Stephens in 1863, in his first report for the whole island, raised, not for the first time, the matter of 'the want of a definite standard of organisation and instruction applicable to all Schools':\(^86\)

This is required partly to protect them from the unreasonable demands of some parents, but chiefly as an official guide to bring prominently forward those points which are considered by the Board to be of primary importance.\(^87\)

There is no doubt that Stephens perceived the joining together of the two Boards into one, and his own position of authority within it, as the best opportunity so far afforded him to bring his policies of excluding parents from the schools and raising the standard of teaching to the forefront of his campaign to reform public education:

Now that the whole of the Primary Schools are under the management of one Board, there is no longer any reason for delaying the introduction of measures upon which the efficiency of Schools and Teachers mainly depends.\(^88\)

In 1865, new Rules and Regulations of the Board formalised Stephens' policy of excluding parents from the public education system:

During the hours devoted to common instruction, visitors shall have free access to every Public School, - but as spectators only, not as having any right to ask questions, or interfere in any way with the business of the school.\(^89\)

87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
Stephens, in 1864, had brought in a scheme of classification and instruction, the first step in his ambition to raise teaching standards. Alongside it was his plan for raising the social status and the professional standing of the teachers. He wrote of the occupation of teaching as a profession, but as one which needed regular supervision by the Inspectors. Bureaucratic control of education would be complete, he said, when the number of Inspectors could be increased sufficiently to secure uniformity in practice in each school throughout the island.

By 1877, Stephens felt confident and bold enough to say that visits by parents to school did 'much more harm than good', by drawing teachers into conversation and interrupting the routine of business. He enlisted the aid of members of the Local Boards in his cause:

> With few exceptions [members] seem to be aware that the interference of any local residents with the conduct of the School, by examination of the children, or otherwise, would be very embarrassing to the teacher and detrimental to general efficiency.

It is a revealing statement because it shows Stephens' continuing lack of confidence in the abilities of his teachers. He was unwilling to expose the teachers to the criticism of parents or to allow the parents the merest say in the setting of standards.

---

90 Inspector's Report for 1864, p.21.
91 Northern Board of Education. Inspector's Report for 1864, p.6.
92 Chief Inspector's Report for 1875, p.27.
93 Chief Inspector's Report for 1877, p.9.
94 Chief Inspector's Report for 1882, p.10.
It is a notion too common with parents, that their children cannot be doing well at school if they have not many exercises and lessons to prepare at home... It is reasonable that parents should wish to see some outward visible signs of their children's progress; but this want can be met by the exercises that are done in school under proper direction being taken home at the end of each week for the parents' inspection.95

Stephens had forced the parents to submit to his will - there were no complaints at his treatment of them - and he had gained the unspoken agreement of members of Boards of Advice that they should cease to have any right to participate and express their views, as he had denied to the parents the same right to speak their minds on teachers and the quality of their teaching. The protest, in 1882, of the Reverend J.M. Bayley, Chairman of three Local Boards in the Huon District, that he was 'powerless to ask a child a single question without the permission of the teacher'.96 was remarkable for its singularity.

Stephens' long campaign to keep parents out of the schools was very effective. It was so effective that William McCoy, Director of Education, though expressing pleasure at the increasing interest shown by parents in the schools in his Report for 1911, wrote:

It is to be regretted that more teachers do not realise the value of...gaining the interest, sympathy and support of the parents. There is need everywhere for greater co-operation between the home and the school.

95 Chief Inspector's Report for 1884, p.12.
The old idea that education is solely the business of the teacher dies hard.97

The second part of Stephens' plan for the reform of the public education system was the reviving of Denison's scheme to make the funding of education a local responsibility to be paid for out of local rates. Thomas Arnold, one of Stephens' predecessors, was a centralist, believing that the bureau system 'prevalent on the Continent of Europe [had] certainly been attended by extraordinary success',98 but his influence with the new Board was cut short by his resignation and departure from Tasmania in 1856. Stephens was equally a centralist in his policy of retaining central control over the teachers, their recruitment, training and conduct, the curriculum, inspection and examination, but he also believed that support for and a sustaining interest in the schools would come only from local participation and contribution. He observed, in 1862, that two school communities had responded to the resignation of their teachers by contributing to the expenses of building teachers' residences. He was hopeful that other districts might react in similar ways and he looked forward to the time when school management would become more localised. But one of the conditions for the passing of some responsibilities from the centre to the periphery was the acceptance by the localities 'to take upon themselves at least a portion of the [financial] burden which now [rested] wholly upon the [centre]'.99 His confrère at the

97 Director's Report for 1911, p.2.
Southern Board was of the same mind. Stephens rather cautiously proposed that some districts were ripe for the introduction of School Committees and he expected the efficiency of the schools in those districts to improve as a result. Their function would be confined to the raising of money almost exclusively and their authority in the schools would be limited:

> The Teachers now enjoy an immunity from capricious and improper interference with their work which is almost unknown elsewhere, and it is a privilege which I should be sorry to see abridged. 

His hopes for the prospects of local funding being introduced were high. In 1862, he wrote, in a letter to William Henty, Colonial Secretary, that 'everybody seem [ed] to be prepared for local taxation.'

The incidence of the local rate, however, was a stumbling block. Some people - Philip Hoskins Gell, M.L.C., was such a person - objected to a rate based on the valuation roll and favoured the burden being distributed, 'according to the means of the population', with those parents who educated their own children being made exempt. In his letter of reply Stephens conceded the fairness of such a view, although he could not 'see any way of reducing it to practice'. He thought it more equitable to place:

100 Southern Board of Education. Inspector's Report for 1868, p.9.


102 AOT CSD 4/37/444. Letter from T. Stephens to Colonial Secretary, 7.6.62.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.
A trifling burden upon landed proprietors, the future aristocracy of the country, than upon any other class.\textsuperscript{105}

He repeated his view that government should only give grants-in-aid, that is, grants which depended upon local communities also making their contributions. Had he and the Board to contend only with division of opinion concerning the levying of the rate, some arrangement may have eventually been agreed upon. The greater obstacle, however, was the flat refusal of many local magnates, professional men, business men and clergy to even discuss proposals for local education rates. Ten years before, Stephens and the government of the day had attempted to introduce local rates, but the Anglican clergy objected to the idea of local responsibility for education, even though funding was not, at that stage, a part of the proposal then being put in Denison's 1852 Schools Bill. Bishop Willson and many Catholic clergy and laity petitioned against the proposed school committees \cite{notes 39 and 40 above} for fear of their voices not being heard against those of the larger Protestant denominations. The Anglican clergy also objected to dominant groups within committees deciding which religious creeds would be taught in the schools.\textsuperscript{106} They objected, even more so, to the contemplated elections and their tendency:

\begin{quote}
To excite the evils of canvassing and discord, and opposition between different bodies of Christians.\textsuperscript{107}
\end{quote}

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{106} AOT CSO 24/195/7228. Resolution of the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Hobart Town to consider the Education Bill now before the Legislative Council, 5.8.52.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
Local responsibility of any kind was condemned by them on a third ground:

> There would be no uniformity of [education] system in the Colony generally, nor security for the continuance of one system in any one district from year to year.\textsuperscript{108}

The Reverend J.J. Fitzgerald, parish priest of Campbell Town and Ross, made similar objections in 1862 to proposals that Municipal Councils and Local Boards be made responsible for education in their districts:

> Already these Councils have created in every district in which they have been established, enmities and party strife which will never be healed. The foundation and root of Municipalities is the craving of the lower class of a district to get magisterial power into their own hands.\textsuperscript{109}

He described the amount of ill-feeling in his district as 'incredible':

> The educated and more respectable of the settlers are made to smart, by having over them men of inferior attainments, returned by the votes of the least educated of the community.\textsuperscript{110}

Fitzgerald was also concerned that the vesting of the appointment and supervision of the school teacher in the Local Board:

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
Would engender a system of nepotism, ruinous alike to education and to the teacher's independence.\textsuperscript{111}

Stephens was eager to join the public debate and influence opinion to the full extent that his office and personal qualities would lend their weight to the strength of his arguments. It was his conviction that while it was commonly held to be the case that school committees languished in the absence of invested authority:

On the other hand, it is certainly not unreasonable that those who are so placed in a position of authority should be charged with a due proportion of the expense.\textsuperscript{112}

It was a neat reversal of the argument that authority should follow from the obligation to raise taxes. Whether the local contribution should be derived from subscription or rates was a matter that he was willing to leave to the judgment of 'the districts themselves to decide',\textsuperscript{113} but of one thing he was certain:

No system can be considered satisfactory so long as the schools are regarded as institutions which are solely the concern of the government, and in which the people themselves...are not called upon to take any real or practical interest.\textsuperscript{114}

By 'real or practical interest', Stephens did not contemplate much more than the people providing financial support. His meaning certainly did not include a say in the running of the schools.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Mercury 29.8.62, p.8.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
A number of municipalities, newly created by the Rural Municipalities Act of 1858, were willing to take an interest in education, but the thought of having to render a practical interest was unpalatable to them. Petitioners from the Oatlands Municipality viewed the Bill of 1863 proposing, *inter alia*, local education rates, 'with much alarm, believing that it would lead to the imposition of a burthensome local taxation for educational purposes alone'.

The petitioners, pointing out that 'the machinery of municipal action in the colony [was] only now in its infancy', considered that the colony was 'not sufficiently ripe in the history of nations to justify the government casting off the national character of public instruction'. The *Mercury* reported the proceedings of a public meeting at Ross and the speech of the local teacher, Mr. Duncanson, who 'quoted a high authority' on:

> The undesirability of levying local rates for educational purposes as the richer and more populous districts would...have less to pay than the poorer, where help was most required the school rates would fall on a certain class, while others would escape altogether - according to the present system every member of the community pays an equitable share.'

The Bill was not enacted and the matter of local contributions was finally put to rest after the members of the 1867 Royal Commission recommended that the funding of education not be left to local option but 'made imperative by the Legislature'.

---


116 Ibid.

117 Ibid., p.3.

118 Ibid.

1882 Select Committee nor the 1883 Royal Commission Reports attempted to reverse the Commissioners' recommendation.\textsuperscript{120} The campaign for local funding lasted for about twenty years, from Denison's Minute of 1848 to the recommendation of the 1867 Royal Commissioners. It had never had a wide enough support to enable it to win the day, but its defeat made little difference to the way in which the Board, and Stephens in particular, were able to maintain funding for public education, keep parents and Local Board members out of the classrooms and retain central Board control over the teachers.

The third part of Stephens' plan for reform of the public education system was that which lay closest to his heart, namely, the improvement of the quality of teaching and the training of teachers. These important aspects are discussed in the chapter on curriculum.

The fourth part of Stephens' reform plan was closely tied to the third part. Stephens and his fellow Inspectors constantly urged upon the Board and Parliament the necessity for a staff of Inspectors sufficient in number to discharge their primary tasks of examination of the children and the examination and

classification of the teachers. Stephens gave testimony to the 1867 Royal Commissioners in which he outlined the bureaucratic system of a central education authority in its ideal form and the place of the Inspector within it. He said, in reply to a question, that:

The functions of the central authority [should] be simply confined to seeing that the rules and regulations [were] carried out.121

He gave his opinion that the absence of a central authority in some American states would probably lead to 'the inefficiency of the school, and too great dependence by teachers on local authorities.'122 The very thought of teachers in Tasmania being similarly dependent on local authorities and, thus, parents, was too much for Stephens to contemplate. He said he could not conceive of a national system of education 'without an efficient central authority.'123 He was asked who should be the judge of the proficiency of the pupils, of teachers' qualifications and 'the general state of the schools'. In each case, he replied, 'the Inspector.'124 He was then asked:

Would not your arrangement leave a very large discretion with the Inspector, and one liable to provoke much controversy?.125

Stephens replied:


122 Ibid.

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.
I propose to leave nothing more to the Inspector than is left to him under the English regulations, or those of the neighbouring colonies. Under my proposal he would be bound by fixed regulations, equally intelligible to the Inspector and Teacher.\(^{126}\)

This precisely regulated machine, as Stephens had described it, was strongly recommended by the Royal Commission who, in criticising the inadequacy of the inspection of schools, proposed an increase in the number of Inspectors.\(^{127}\)

Stephens throughout the years of his Inspectorship fought hard not only to persuade the Board and Parliament to increase the number of Inspectors, but also to decrease their work-load and thus improve their efficiency. In the period from the re-forming of the two Boards into a single Board to the last year of the Board's existence, 1863 to 1884, Stephens mentioned inspection of the schools in each of his annual reports. He raised the matter of excessive travel on nine occasions, undue work load on sixteen occasions and understaffing seven times.\(^{128}\) In 1875, the problem of excessive work and understaffing came to a head with a request from the Board to the Colonial Secretary for the appointment of an additional Inspector at a salary of £400. Figures were supplied which showed that the proportion of schools which had not had their annual inspections had increased over

\(^{126}\) Ibid., pp.4-5.

\(^{127}\) Ibid., pp.xviii-xx, xxix.

\(^{128}\) Inspector's and Chief Inspector's Reports for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>21.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>8-9.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>21.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>26.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>17.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>28.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>24.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>27.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>26.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
recent years - 1870, 7%; 1871, 4%; 1872, 32%; 1873, 43%; 1874, 41%. The Government, after agreeing to the appointment of one Inspector, changed its mind and proposed that two Inspectors be appointed at salaries of £250 each. They favoured the appointment of young unmarried men:

To whom absence from home and arduous exertion in constant travelling would not be so irksome as it would be in the case of "middle-aged married men", to whom, as the Colonial Treasurer put it, "a saddle would not be so convenient as a seat at home from day to day, and from week to week." Butler dug his heels in and dismissed the choice of two young men as being 'inadequate to meet the requirements of the [Board]' and as being:

Subversive of that undivided authority absolutely essential to the due preservation of discipline. The subversion that Butler spoke of was the breakdown in authority that would occur if young men 'without experience in inspection' and 'entirely incompetent to organise' were to be engaged. Butler and the Board had in mind a choice of two men 'regularly trained to the scholastic profession in the best English institutions' and whose 'conduct of Schools in [the] Colony ha[d] been singularly successful.' They were 'men in the prime of life [and] in good health.' The battle was worth the fighting and James Rule, one

129 HAJ XXXI 1876, paper 81. Additional Inspectors of Schools. Papers and Correspondence, p.3.
130 Ibid., Memorandum from Colonial Secretary to Chairman, Board of Education, 15.2.76.
131 Ibid., p.13.
132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
of the two experienced men that the Board had in mind, was appointed. Such was the importance placed by the Board on the maintenance of discipline over teachers and the exaction of the highest efficiency in administration. A similar battle for a third Inspector was fought in 1881 after repeated requests by the Board in 1877, 1878, 1879 and 1880 had been ignored. As before, the Government gave in only after protracted correspondence and argument. The two battles having been fought it seems that, thereafter, the staffing problem was largely overcome, for no complaints of that kind were made by the Board or Department to the end of the period to 1913.

Over a number of years, dissatisfaction with the Board of Education had been building up within Parliament and outside. The early murmurings expressed an uneasiness that Tasmania was not getting value for its money and that the work of the Board was largely concealed in unnecessary obscurity.

John Davies, editor and proprietor of The Mercury, who had been transported as a boy of 18 for fraud and who was spoken of as 'a bad character, audacious and impudent' in his gaol report was a constant critic of the Board and its administration. In 1867, Davies, 'in the nature of an indictment against [it]', attacked the Board for neglecting the education of three-fifths of the colony's children by the expending of £12,272 on the education of children whose parents could afford to pay for their education as against the spending of £359

134 AOT CSD 13/39/557. Letter from Chairman, Board of Education, to Colonial Secretary, 31.8.81.
135 ADR 4, 1851-90 D-J, entry on John Davies, pp.27-8.
only on those whose parents could not afford to pay.\textsuperscript{136} Being well aware of the fact that a Royal Commission into Education was about to be appointed, Davies drove the point home that the Tasmanian people were getting poor value by showing that the State was spending more on education for each pupil than was spent in England and elsewhere and that an equally poor return was had by it.\textsuperscript{137} Adelaide, he wrote, had 22 public schools with 1208 pupils in average daily attendance, 'supported at an expense of £1093'; Hobart had seven schools with 811 pupils and an expenditure of £2015.\textsuperscript{138} Davies believed there had been 'a break-down in the system' and that the Royal Commission should 'look closely into the matter'.\textsuperscript{139} Davies moreover, thought little of the quality of education that the Board offered to pupils in its schools:

With all the flourish they (that is, the Board members) make about raising the standard of education in the colony, they do not think of offering gratuitous education in anything beyond the most elementary branches of learning, and very little in those branches.\textsuperscript{140}

Davies thought that such instruction did not amount 'to more than a tithe of what many an Irish boy pick[ed] up at a [hedge] school'\textsuperscript{141} The Mercury published, at much the same time, a letter signed by Civis who criticised the Board for spending 17\% of its grant on

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{136} \textit{Mercury} 3.5.67, p.2.
  \item \textsuperscript{137} \textit{Mercury} 6.5.67, p.2.
  \item \textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
administration, a point which the newspaper had made much of in one of its previous issues when it had accused the Board of concealing part of the costs of inspection in defiance of 'every principle of fair accountantship'. Civis wrote:

The management of the details of the educational system by an unpaid Board...is wrong in principle. We cannot expect any set of men to give their serious attention week after week to business of a complicated nature, unless they are paid for doing so; and if it be as some assert, that the secretary of the Board of Education is virtually the Board, there is nothing to wonder at. Each member holds an irresponsible position; and however blind or remiss may be their acts as a body, there is no one in particular to be blamed.

The allusion to Stephens, Secretary to the Board, was not without result, for Stephens was replaced in the following year by a full-time Secretary.

The Mercury not only charged the Board with inefficiency and lack of responsibility, it also came close to accusing it of conniving to conceal its activities from public scrutiny:

A fixed grant for public education was what, three or four years ago, was contemplated by the Board, so as to avoid the unpleasantries of Parliamentary discussions as to the management of the department when the annual vote was asked for.

The Board was also accused of excessive secrecy, especially since it had developed the practice of instructing members of the press to leave its meetings

142 Mercury 22.6.67, p.2.
143 Mercury 10.5.67, p.2.
144 Mercury 22.6.67, p.2.
145 Mercury 1.4.72, p.2.
whenever they were 'about to deliberate on matters of real public interest'. Clergy of the Congregational Union complained that the dominance of Anglican and Catholic members on the Board 'tend[ed] to the promotion of denominational objects' in the schools, some of which were 'virtually denominational schools'. The Mercury took the opening of the Free School in Hobart in 1872 to be an unstated acknowledgment by the Board that:

It ha[d], as a body, failed to achieve the object for which it was appointed, namely, the education of the youth of the colony as a whole.

Henry Butler, Chairman of the Board of Education, was held responsible for the Board's ineffectiveness and he became increasingly the object of public criticism. In 1872, The Mercury reported that the Board had wasted 'hour after hour, and day after day in paltry discussion' concerning the training of pupil teachers in singing and drawing. The editor resented being told that he, among others of the general public, knew little of the importance of the subject and being informed of:

How necessary it was that they should sit at [the Chairman's] feet and learn wisdom.

The editor thought that the pupil teachers ought to be thankful that the Chairman had not the power to 'tyrannize over them, since he would evidently exercise it with so good a will'.

146 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
148 Mercury 3.5.72, p.2.
149 Mercury 2.10.72, p.2.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
Philip Smith, one of the wealthiest graziers in the colony, accused the Board of the same inefficiency as the pages of The Mercury had reported for almost a decade. In a petition to the Legislative Council he offered a sum of £1000 for the establishment of a training school to provide an adequate supply of teachers, 'without which there [could be] no success.' He laid down, in effect, the condition that the honorary Chairman of the Board of Education be replaced by a 'paid Officer'. Smith had already written an open letter to the clergy of all denominations with the purpose of rousing them 'into the conviction that [they] ha[d] too long delegated [the] question [of education] to the laity'. He expected that the Government and Legislature would do nothing, an opinion which events were later to confirm. He mentioned a number of instances of the Board's ineffectiveness and of the lack of interest shown by Parliament in the question of high expenditure for a poor return. He argued that:

Every department [had] a paid head except education, and just as anybody formerly was supposed to be good enough for a schoolmaster, so Dr. Butler was appointed, for no better reason than because he was a politician; and the results we see in general dissatisfaction in and out of Parliament, and in the Inspectors' reports which never meet the eye of the public and, it is to be feared, seldom his eye. Nothing but a certain deadness and indifference among us can account for our long forbearance.  

Letters were written by Smith to the Colonial Secretary, eleven in number, between December 1874 and 1876.

152 [JLC XX 1874, paper 75. Public Education, petition of Mr. P.T. Smith.]

July 1876, to none of which did the Colonial Secretary reply except for two letters in which he offered the vague hope that the matters raised would be attended to in the year following and one other which was a simple acknowledgment.\textsuperscript{154} Smith claimed in his open letter, that the Lower House was 'capable of nothing but small criticisms' and that 'Ministers in the present position of parties dare[d] not provoke the hostility of a single supporter.'\textsuperscript{155} Stephens was instructed by Butler to give his views on the practicability of establishing a training school. He told Butler what Butler wanted to hear. The buildings and the engaging of a suitably trained staff would incur considerable expense. The use of existing buildings and their conversion into a Model School would be preferable and would involve little more than 'a concentration and improvement of the existing Pupil Teacher system'. Stephens was unwilling to support the proposal for a training school unless accompanied or preceded by other changes, including the organisation of an adequate staff of Inspectors:

For many years to come the chief part of the work of training must be done by the Inspectors if it is to be done at all. The Training School, under proper management, would be a most valuable auxiliary to the work of the Inspectors, but can never supersede them, nor can its results be made appreciable until after the lapse of years.\textsuperscript{156}

Stephens likened the establishment of a training school, 'without the other necessary reforms', to:

\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 5-9.

\textsuperscript{155} \textit{Ibid.}, letter dated 19.8.74, (also printed in \textit{The Mercury}) p.4.

\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Ibid.}, letter from T. Stephens to Chairman, Board of Education, May (no day) 1875, pp.9-10.
The construction of half a dozen miles of first-class railway in a country altogether unprovided with roads.\textsuperscript{157}

Stephens went out of his way to prevent the Government incurring expense and to ease its political difficulties. In an earlier letter, which Butler used to bolster his own position, Stephens had even suggested that the Monitor system - than which no more unsatisfactory means of training teachers had ever been devised - could be improved by the referring of Monitors to him before they were assigned to their schools in order that he may 'supply their want of experience and necessary knowledge of their business.'\textsuperscript{158} That Stephens should have contemplated for more than a moment the propping up of a system that had never given satisfaction suggests that he saw political or personal advantage in his doing so. To assist in the destruction of a proposal for a training school, which was a superior form a training to the existing Pupil Teacher system, the very system which he had, in any case, condemned as imperfect,\textsuperscript{159} and to argue that a Model School training was preferable to that undertaken in a training school,\textsuperscript{160} was to deny the experience that Britain had had of training schools over a period of more than thirty years and was, indeed, to directly contradict his own words of one year later, when he wrote:

\begin{quote}
It seems at last to be generally admitted that the establishment of a Model or Training School is an imperative necessity, and I have shown in other reports that there need to be
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., p.10.

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., letter from T. Stephens to Chairman, Board of Education, 3.7.72, p.10.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., letter from T. Stephens to Chairman, Board of Education, May (no day) 1875, p.10.

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
no objection raised on the score of expense, when the character of the particular institution which we require is properly understood.\textsuperscript{161}

In 1876, a Select Committee recommended that Smith's offer of £1000 be not accepted on the ground of the expense of building a training school.\textsuperscript{162} With Smith's departure for England in 1877,\textsuperscript{163} the matter was dropped, although Smith left his money in trust and the accrued amount, with an additional £500 given by his sister, went towards the building of the Philip Smith Training College in 1911.\textsuperscript{164}

The attempt to replace the honorary Board of Education with a paid head or a Minister, for Smith had later proposed either arrangement as a condition of his offer,\textsuperscript{165} was taken up again in 1882 by a Select Committee whose sole charge it was to enquire into 'the system of education in Tasmania and the central control thereof.'\textsuperscript{166} The Committee came into being as a result of the Board's mis-handling of the case of a teacher named Kerner, who had engaged in outside employment, that of conducting a religious service, in breach of Board regulations. The Board's treatment of Kerner provoked widespread indignation and it became the butt of many attempts at humour both within the colony and

\textsuperscript{161} Chief Inspector's Report for 1875, p.29.
\textsuperscript{162} JHA XXXI 1876, paper 111. Report of Select Committee on a training school for teachers, 1876.
\textsuperscript{163} ADB 2, 1788-1850, I-Z, entry on Philip Thomas Smith, p.453.
\textsuperscript{164} Director's Report for 1911, p.2.
\textsuperscript{165} JHA XXXI 1876, paper 111. Report of Select Committee on a training school for teachers 1876, p.4.
\textsuperscript{166} JHA XLIII 1882, paper 106. Report of Select Committee on Education 1882, p.iii.
outside. The *South Australian Advertiser* seized on the Board members' refusal to receive a deputation on the teacher's behalf and made the most of their blunder:

No deputation had ever been admitted into their august presence, and they were not going to be interfered with by gentlemen who "however respectable they might be," had no special right to lecture them. Deputations might go to the Government or to Ministers of the Crown, but to the Board of Education, never! They were irresponsible, and they meant to continue so.  

The pettiness of the members, 'only worthy of the smallest men, altogether carried away with an idea of their own importance', wrote the *Advertiser*, was enough to force the inefficiency of the Board finally into the light of day. The Select Committee found that there was 'a striking absence of system and harmony in the operations and functions [between] the Board' and its associated bodies and individuals, the Chief Secretary, Chief Inspector, the two Inspectors and the Local School Boards.  

It heard evidence from Stephens, Rule, several teachers, Chairmen of Boards, and others, most of it testifying to the remoteness of the Board from the schools and teachers and its failure to consult and inform those, such as Stephens and Rule, whose advice and experience would have been of the greatest value in its deliberations. The Committee stated that the time had come to abolish the Board and 'place the whole system under one paid head official...directly responsible to a Minister of the

167 Quoted in *The Mercury* 2.8.82, p.6.
168 Ibid.
170 Ibid., for example, pp. 3,5,13.
Crown'.\textsuperscript{171} The \textit{Mercury} thought little of the Committee and its labours which had, in any case, occupied only five weeks of the members' time:

The public and the Press have been saying the same thing for a long time past, and the Committee has so far only repeated with authority what has been urged by a thousand different voices for at least several years.\textsuperscript{172}

The \textit{Mercury}'s editor thought the Select Committee's Report might result in 'a little work for the Government Printer,' but no other benefit was likely to follow.\textsuperscript{173}

No immediate benefit did follow from the Select Committee's work, but a Royal Commission was established in the following year. The scope of its enquiry was much wider than that of the Select Committee. In fact, the Commissioners were asked to examine all aspects of public education. They gave good attention to the matter of central control, examining several members of the Central Board, including Butler, Stephens and Rule and a number of teachers. The Commissioners noted that all other Australian colonies had placed central control in the hands of a Minister. They wrote:

Nominally, the Chief Secretary is recognised as the central power in educational matters under existing laws and regulations, but, in practice, he is a \textit{roi fainéant}, without responsibility or authority. He may criticise the proposals of the Central Board (his Mayor of the Palace) in respect of a school porch; he may impede improvements of school buildings by his indirect power over the public purse, - but as to the vital details of public education he is as

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid, p.vi.
\textsuperscript{172} \textit{Mercury} 14.9.82, p.2.
\textsuperscript{173} \textit{Mercury} 25.9.82, p.2.
powerless and as irresponsible as the children who attend our schools.174

The examples of the other colonies, and also those of Canada, France and Holland, were the motivating forces for the Commissioners' recommendation that a Minister of the Crown replace the Board. Not even the abuse of political patronage and the undue exertion of political influence, as had been revealed by the Victorian Royal Commissioners the year before,175 nor the preference expressed by Butler for the Director to be made directly responsible to the Governor-in-Council, rather than to a Minister,176 were considered of sufficient weight to turn the Commissioners away from their recommendation of ministerial control and responsibility.

The Bill of 1885 that was eventually introduced provided public and parliamentary debate of viewpoints and propositions that had been exhaustively treated on many earlier occasions and especially after the Reports of the 1882 Select Committee and 1883 Royal Commission. After the second reading of the Bill, during which the Attorney-General had spent two and a half hours introducing it, the editor of The Mercury wrote:

We are disposed to think that he spent a great deal of his time unnecessarily in proving conclusively what everybody was agreed upon already.177

The newspaper assumed the real battle would rage round the question of whether the ministerial duties would be

175 Ibid.
176 Ibid., p.xxxv.
177 Mercury 27.8.85, p.2.
added to those of an existing minister or whether a new ministry would be created. The *Mercury* was in favour of a Board to deal with 'the details of the practical work' and a Minister' to deal with all the principles'. 178 The *Examiner* protested that:

Ministers should take a firm stand, not only on this, but other similar subjects and strenuously oppose the creation of new offices in a colony which [was] already overgoverned to a ludicrous extent. 179

If money were to be spent, the newspaper argued, it should be spent on 'raising the levels of teachers' salaries' and not on the creation of 'unnecessary and highly paid officials'. 180 Edward Braddon, who had had administrative experience in India over more than 30 years and political experience in Tasmania for six years, 181 was the main inspiration behind the 1883 Royal Commission and the 1885 Bill. 182 He thought the duties should be taken up by one of the existing four responsible Ministers, none of whom he considered to be overburdened with work. 183 That opinion prevailed and the Act allowed for the appointment of a Minister and a Director and the replacement of the Board by a Department of Education. 184 The Local Boards were replaced with Boards of Advice, a change which made little difference to attendance rates, regularity of


182 *Mercury* 27.8.85, p.2.

183 *Mercury* 9.9.85, p.5.

attendance or the quality of teaching, as the chapters in this dissertation on attendance, enforcement of attendance and Boards will show.

Tasmania maintained the system of fee payments by parents until 1908, long after free education had been introduced into the other Australian states and New Zealand. The concern in this section of the present chapter is with the differing attitudes of Stephens, Rule and others towards free education and with the difficulties faced by the State in its attempts to provide, out of government revenue, the means of supporting children at school whose parents did not pay fees.

To take the second point first. The State not only provided a system of public education for which fees were charged, it also gave financial support to the Ragged Schools. From 1862, a system of free certificates was introduced into the public schools and, ten years later, a Free School was established in Hobart, to be followed by another at Launceston. Thus, a principle of public support for parents eligible to qualify under the regulations for the free education of their children had been integrated with a system of financial and administrative assistance - Board of Education Inspectors examined and inspected Ragged Schools - for parents of children who were not in attendance at the Board's schools.
The costs of providing free certificates are not easy to estimate. Teachers were paid a capitation fee of 4d., later 3d., for each 'free scholar', as such children were known, but the cost of fees foregone can only be estimated, as Stephens indicated in a rather different context in 1877.\textsuperscript{185} The direct loss to the State was the amount paid each year in capitation fees:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & (1) & (2) & Proportion \\
\hline
1865 & £359 & £11304 & 3.1 \\
66 & 434 & 11303 & 3.8 \\
67 & 470 & 11673 & 4.0 \\
68 & 497 & 10978 & 4.5 \\
69 & 586 & 11564 & 5.0 \\
70 & 722 & 12040 & 5.9 \\
71 & 850 & 12337 & 6.8 \\
72 & 742 & 12170 & 6.0 \\
73 & 629 & 12272 & 5.1 \\
74 & 620 & 12865 & 4.8 \\
75 & 593 & 13906 & 4.2 \\
76 & 615 & 14624 & 4.2 \\
77 & 558 & 14705 & 3.7 \\
78 & 519 & 15409 & 3.3 \\
79 & 473 & 15951 & 3.0 \\
80 & 459 & 16027 & 2.8 \\
81 & 475 & 17612 & 2.6 \\
82 & 420 & 18727 & 2.2 \\
83 & 363 & 18472 & 1.9 \\
84 & 388 & 19708 & 1.9 \\
85 & 385 & 21263 & 1.8 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

(1) = Capitation Fees \textsuperscript{186}

(2) = Total Expenditure on public education \textsuperscript{187}

\textsuperscript{185} Chief Inspector's Report for 1877, p.11.

\textsuperscript{186} Annual Report for 1885, p.7.

\textsuperscript{187} Annual Reports for:

- 1865, p.13
- 66, p.11
- 67, p.11
- 68, p.11
- 69, p.13
- 70, p.13
- 71, p.13
- 72, p.13
- 73, p.13
- 74, p.15
- 75, p.15
- 76, p.15
- 77, p.29
- 78, p.23
- 79, p.23
- 80, p.25
- 81, p.25
- 82, p.25
- 83, p.23
- 84, p.27
- 85, p.25
The loss suffered from uncollected fees and the payment of capitation fees was, in some years, a large part of the education budget. The capitation fees also formed a high, though declining, proportion of the fees collected:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Capitation fees</th>
<th>Fees collected</th>
<th>Proportion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>£359</td>
<td>£4003</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>3887</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>3658</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>3905</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>3931</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>4377</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>4056</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>3868</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>4340</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>4933</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>4797</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>5181</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>5401</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>5883</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>6148</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>6254</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>7067</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>7173</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>7383</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>7887</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>8030</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures provided the members of the 1883 Royal Commission with sufficient evidence to persuade them that the main argument used against free education, namely, that with its introduction local interest would decline, was far from convincing:

If the best or only local interest to be sought were that of fee-paying parents and if parents had hitherto exhibited an interest in schools proportionate to the fees they paid,

188 Ibid.
there might be more force than can now be discovered in this line of reasoning.\textsuperscript{189}

The Commissioners pointed out that, in 1881, the cost of education was £50,208, the cost of buildings included, and that fees amounted to only 12\% of this total.\textsuperscript{190} Their recommendation that education be made free and that the charge be met out of consolidated revenue was not accepted by the government which argued that the State could not afford the additional expense. When the question of free education was put to Members of the Legislative Assembly in 1885, they were unwilling to put an extra annual burden of £8,000 on government - the Treasurer thought the figure to be two or three times that amount - and the vote in favour of free education was lost 20 to 4.\textsuperscript{191}

In 1900, the Minister, Stafford Bird, responded to a resolution from the Legislative Assembly to abolish fees, saying that the additional taxation would amount to £15,000 each year. He asserted that the great majority of parents were 'quite well able and not unwilling to pay the fees now demanded'\textsuperscript{192} and he asked who would pay the new tax:

Is it right to levy a tax for this purpose on those who have no children, or on those who are paying at other schools for the education of their own children? I know the answer will be "Let the burden fall on the general taxpayers". Are the taxpayers willing to pay

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{189} JHA XLV 1883, paper 70, Report of Royal Commission on Public Education 1883, p. xvii.
\item \textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{191} Mercury 3.9.85, p.3.
\item \textsuperscript{192} JPP XLIII 1900, paper 65. Free Education. Statement in connection with the proposal to abolish the payment of fees in state schools, 1900, p.6.
\end{itemize}
that price in order that State School Education may be entirely free?\footnote{Ibid.}

The Council of Churches, Northern Tasmania, and the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Tasmania were in no doubt that the taxpayers were willing. The Council was 'heartily in favour' of free education\footnote{AOT PD 1/124/44. Letter from President and Secretary, Council of Churches, Northern Tasmania, to Premier, 10.9.00.} and the Assembly 'rejoice[d] greatly in the recent resolution.'\footnote{Ibid., letter from Clerk of Assembly of Presbyterian Church of Tasmania to Premier, 15.9.00.} The \textit{Clipper}, ever an advocate of free education,\footnote{See, for example, these editorials in \textit{The Clipper} 1.8.96, p.2; 24.7.97, p.2; 27.8.98, p.2.} wrote, in reply to Bird's question:

\begin{quote}
[Bird] in past years a professed champion of Free Education, croaked dismally about the expense... The speech will interest the public inasmuch as it embodied just one more turning of Mr. Bird's loose and shapeless coat.\footnote{\textit{The Clipper} 1.9.00, p.2.}
\end{quote}

The newspaper made no attempt to answer Bird's question of who was to pay, preferring to quote figures which showed Tasmania's enrolment and attendance rates to be inferior to those of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.\footnote{Ibid.} \textit{The Mercury}, on the other hand, feared the worst:

\begin{quote}
The latest proposal is to add another considerable sum to expenditure in a free and light-hearted manner. This is a sort of financial madness and one without method. Saving by the spiggot and losing by the bung-hole is a very common state of affairs, both
in public and private life, but it is one which brings a household into the insolvent court and a community to a burden of taxation by which the spirit is crushed out of the worker.\footnote{199}

Widely differing estimates of the immediate and later costs of free education varied from Bird's £15,000 to a Parliamentarian's estimate of £25,000\footnote{200} and The Mercury's £50,000.\footnote{201} The Bill to make education free was rejected in the Legislative Council and Bird's proposal to continue the collection of school fees and transfer the sum collected to a general fund\footnote{202} was eventually embodied in the Education Department's regulations.\footnote{203}

The subject of free education was revived again in 1908. In the Legislative Council, the Attorney-General, in moving the second reading of the Bill, argued that the ancient causes of opposition to free education no longer obtained:

The question of free education had been put off because it was said they could not afford it. But they had of late surpluses every year and it was estimated that in the current year they would have a substantial surplus.\footnote{204} The costs were now estimated to be as little as £5,000,\footnote{205} although some Members thought that the expected closing of private schools would increase

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{199} Mercury. 3.9.00, p.2.
\item \footnote{200} Ibid., 11.9.00, p.2.
\item \footnote{201} Ibid., 27.10.00, p.2.
\item \footnote{202} Ibid., 10.11.00, p.3.
\item \footnote{203} Annual Report for 1901, p.1.
\item \footnote{204} Mercury 18.11.08, p.6.
\item \footnote{205} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
public expenditure on schools, teachers and inspectors.206 One Member was impressed by the fact that the Lower House had already passed the Bill and by the need 'to keep Tasmania to the front among the States of the Commonwealth.' 'It is only £5,000', he added, 'and the sooner we pass it the better'.207 The Mercury gave a sigh of relief at the passing of the Bill.208 The Examiner found itself on the side of the Parliamentarians and, gritting its teeth, declined to show its customary alarm at the thought of increased government expenditure, merely saying that the measure might be deferred so that teachers could be given improved salaries.209 The Tasmanian Mail, which many years before had deplored the 'Americanising of [Tasmanian] institutions', especially the views of 'a few educational theorists' concerning free education,210 thought, in 1908, that a 'mere £5,000 scarcely seem[ed] worth worrying about.'211 The Daily Post applauded the passing of the legislation for which it, and its predecessor The Clipper, had campaigned for so long. The editor entitled his leading article, 'Free Education: A Democratic Principle.'212

Opposition to free education and support for it rose and fell, as the Attorney General had indicated in 1908, upon movements in consolidated revenue and expenditure. The two strong impulses for the

206 Ibid.
207 Ibid.
208 Ibid., p.4.
209 Examiner 14.9.08, p.4.
210 Tasmanian Mail 9.1.86, p.17.
211 Ibid., 21.11.08, p.25.
212 Daily Post. 16.9.08, p.4.
abandonment of fee payments in the period after the 1885 Act, the first in 1900, the second in 1908, were related to government surpluses and anticipated surpluses as the absence of organised attempts to make public education free were a consequence of deficits, anticipated deficits and accumulated deficits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Surplus (£000)</th>
<th>Deficiency (£000)</th>
<th>Aggregate Deficiency (£000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td>128</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
<td>93</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-05</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05-06</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-07</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07-08</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These impulses, however, should be viewed alongside the long campaign by James Rule, in particular to make education free. And that campaign, although not fought single handedly, by any means, could not be fully developed as long as Stephens remained as Rule's departmental superior.

Stephens' views on free education were identical with his views on the financing of public education. He opposed free education because it relieved parents of the obligation to provide for their children and he

supported the financing of education by way of a local rate because it imposed and sustained a similar obligation. Stephens' long held view was that 'some special provision for destitute children may be necessary', but that many parents, far from showing an incapacity to pay fees, demonstrated a most obvious unwillingness to pay them. Two years before, in 1872, he had been asked by the Chairman of the Board of Education to report on 'the advantages that [would] probably arise from the establishment of Free Schools in Hobart Town and Launceston.' Stephens scorned the views of 'amiable theorists who [saw] only one side of a question' and who believed:

That the amalgamation of the waifs and strays of the streets with the children of respectable parents [would] produce the happiest results to all concerned, the advantages of a higher social intercourse extending ultimately to the parents of the former class.

Stephens, insisting that children at the public schools should be clean and 'with at least decent clothing, let [they] be ever so poor,' added that 'the admission of some [of them] would be a gross injustice:

To the industrious and independent poor who [were] striving to bring up their families decently, and to pay the school-fees out of their small earnings.

214 Chief Inspector's Report for 1874, p.27.
216 Ibid.
217 Ibid.
218 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
It was 'absolutely necessary that scholars should attend with fair regularity, and that the home lessons, etc, [should] be regularly prepared.'\textsuperscript{219}

He wrote:

Neither of these conditions [was] fulfilled, as a general rule, by free scholars, and the lower the social status the greater the difficulty.\textsuperscript{220}

He wrote of the refusal of some parents of children to send them 'when they cannot be well dressed' and, in effect, he accused the parents of 'find[ing] it convenient to plead poverty, and get their children admitted as free scholars'.\textsuperscript{221} There was a punitive touch to his report:

The conclusion arrived at by the Board, as expressed in the proposed regulations, is, in effect that parents who will not pay some small contribution towards the cost of their children's instruction are not to have a discretionary power in the selection of their school.\textsuperscript{222}

He wrote of his confident expectation that one of the beneficial results of the establishment of Free Schools might be:

That many parents who now took advantage of free certificates [would] immediately begin again to pay school fees, as they [had] always [done] before they found out the way of getting them paid out of the public funds.\textsuperscript{223}

Almost twenty years later, in 1891, Stephens was necessarily involved, as Director of Education, in a

\textsuperscript{219} \textit{Ibid.}, p.2.
\textsuperscript{220} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{221} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{222} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Ibid.}
disagreement between the Senior Inspector, James Rule, and the Minister of Education, Stafford Bird. Rule, in a Special Report, had expressed his views on free education. Bird objected that the matter, being one of public policy, had been raised in his report. Rule resisted his Minister's instruction that he should excise the section dealing with free education from his Annual Report. Stephens was then told by Bird to write a memorandum on Rule's Report. In the memorandum, he expressed his agreement with some of Rule's sympathies concerning 'the ameliorating [of] the condition of teachers and poor parents', but he could not admit 'that a change in the system would operate in the way described in his Report'.

Stephens then set about demolishing Rule's case for free education by stating that increases in attendance would not take place if free education were to be introduced. On the contrary, he wrote, as a result of inquiries he had made, from time to time:

Cases of non-attendance point[ed] to the [parents'] desire to make a profit out of their children's labour and the culpable indifference of some parents to their children's interests.

Stephens argued that in the towns, if fees were abolished, new schools would need to be built at extra cost to the State and some teachers would suffer losses of income while others gained.

In his testimony to the 1883 Royal Commission, Stephens stated that if it were only a matter of

224 JPP XXIV 1891, paper 132. Sacred History lessons in state schools, special report of the Senior Inspector of Schools, with memorandum from the Director of Education, p.6.

225 Ibid.

226 Ibid.
providing teachers 'with a sufficient and tolerably certain income', that in itself would constitute a 'very strong argument' in favour of making the schools free to all.227 Indeed, increased costs, he wrote, would be a secondary consideration, although, at the same time he went to some lengths to show that, in his estimation, £20,000 would be needed to purchase sites and put up buildings and another £10,000 would be needed each year for school maintenance.228 Yet he used English attendance figures to prove the fallacy of the argument that compulsory education was incompatible with the payment of fees.229 Stephens concluded his testimony with this rejection of the principle of free education:

Three of the essential conditions necessary for securing efficiency in schools are already provided for by our system, - the competency of the teacher as tested by examination, his practical skill as determined by periodical inspection, and the stimulus given by partial dependence upon the people among whom he works. If the last be removed its place has to be supplied by a variety of checks, which are harassing to the teachers, complicated in their operation and unsatisfactory in their results.230

Stephens' repudiation of an externally imposed remedy for Tasmania's education problems, such as the abolition of fees, was the other side of his long held conviction that the remedies had to emerge from within, from reforms to teacher selection and training and teachers' salaries.


228 Ibid.

229 Ibid.

230 Ibid.
James Rule, a Northumberland man, was the youngest son of a slater. He was born in 1830, the same year as Stephens. He was trained as a teacher at St John's College, Battersea and later taught at a school in Monmouthshire, taking an active part in Chartist demonstrations. He emigrated to Tasmania in 1854, having failed to make his fortune at the Ballarat diggings, and became successively teacher, headmaster, Inspector under the Board of Education and finally Director of Education. Unlike Stephens, Rule believed that the public education system was being held back by the continuation of the system of fee payments and he made the introduction of free education his life's work. At the time of his retirement in 1900, brought on by poor health, he wrote:

I had hoped to have strength left to remain in the service until several necessary reforms were brought about; not the least of which is one I have persistently advocated these last forty years, viz., the abolition of the school fees system in State Schools. Rule made a number of expositions of his view. In 1877, in his first Annual Report, he wrote of the pauperising spirit that the free certificate system encouraged among labourers, artisans and small farmers, and the great hardships that teachers suffered by it. There was no middle course that could be followed. The free certificates would, in the name of equal sharing of the burden of financial responsibility, have to yield to a totally free system. In the following year, he described the system as 'radically bad' and explained what he meant by the pauperising of parents:

231 ADR 6, 1851 - 1890 R-Z, entry on James Rule, p.71.
The institution of Free Schools, "Ragged" or "Public," side by side with the Public Schools in which fees are paid, is no improvement on the Free Certificate system, but rather the reverse; for while it offers to mean parents that are well off the same opportunity of pauperising themselves by shirking an obligation willingly borne by others, worse off, but more independent in spirit, such schools mass together without sufficient mixture of better elements those unfortunate children, who, in addition to the immediate instruction of teachers, need more than others the environment of a wholesome public opinion in the playground strong enough to neutralize that of the slums.\textsuperscript{234}

It is an interesting statement, heavily charged with Chartist ideology and sentiment. The Free Certificate system and Free Schools created social inequality; their removal would bring about equality among parents who could not, or would not, pay fees. The Free Certificate system, and the system of compulsory fee payment of which it was a part, pauperised the entire class of parents, whether they did or did not pay school fees. Pauperisation of the whole of society was the consequence of the pauperisation of parents, for the pauperisation of the spirit was infinitely more damaging than the enforced payment of fees. Instead of bringing notions of equality and social justice to the Tasmanian people, public education bred inequality. This view was quite contrary to Stephens' belief in the kinds of equality and sharing of public burdens which the enforcement of fee payments and a local rate would bring about.

There also existed between the two men a practical difference: the sustaining in Stephens of a dogged persistence in the pursuit of fee collection, despite the unlikelihood of any improvement taking place, and

\textsuperscript{234} Inspector's Report for 1878, p.13.
the immediate acknowledgement by Rule that no improvement was possible. Fee payment, to one, was morally elevating; to the other, it was degrading. To one, all fees could be collected if only the collection system were to be improved; to the other, the system had reached its level of efficiency. Until the system were to be abandoned altogether, Rule believed, no improvement in school attendance was possible. The moral distinction that Stephens made, that the difference between parents was not between those who could and could not pay fees, but between those who would and would not, was not a distinction that Rule was disposed to emphasise. That there were parents who cared little for the education of their children was well acknowledged by Rule, but acknowledgement fell short of passing moral judgment upon parents.

Rule's conviction that education should be made free was a view taken up by the Royal Commissioners in 1883. In putting arguments similar to those that Rule had made on previous occasions, they denied the strength of Stephens' main argument that parents should not be relieved of responsibility for their children's education. The Commissioners, when asked why a parent should 'escape from the cost of his child's education any more than from that of its food and raiment', answered that:

The legal responsibility of the parent as to those necessaries is one of very limited degree, and equally limited should be the

235 Inspectors' Reports for 1879, p.12; 1882, p.12; 1884, p.12.


amount of education which the parent is compelled to provide at his own cost.\textsuperscript{238}

The argument was sufficient for their purpose, though hardly convincing, and the Commissioners moved on to surer ground by putting the case for the principle of free education:

The State forces education upon the people not so much in the interest of the individual as for the advantage of the whole community; not that the prospects of the individual may be improved by knowledge, but that the commonwealth may not suffer loss through his ignorance; and it is but equitable, as it certainly is logical, that the cost of such education should be regarded, not as the price payable by the individual for so much teaching, but as an insurance premium to be paid by the public for immunity from the evils that would arise from wide-spread ignorance.\textsuperscript{239}

Alfred Taylor, Librarian of the Tasmanian Public Library, in a pamphlet which he published in 1885 when it appeared that Parliament, in its debates on the Education Bill of that year, would not make education free, pointed, as the Royal Commissioners had done in 1883, to the lack of logic in some of the arguments. He stated that.

When the State makes education compulsory, insists upon a child being sent to school, and punishes the parent for non-compliance with its mandate, it assumes parental control over the child in so far as it overrides the wishes and intentions of the father, and takes upon itself the responsibility which the father fails to discharge.\textsuperscript{240}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{238} Ibid., p. xvii.
\item \textsuperscript{239} Ibid., p.xvi
\item \textsuperscript{240} A.J. Taylor, \textit{Free education: a word in favour of the system}, p.2.
\end{itemize}
Taylor argued that it was therefore illogical for the State to throw obstacles in the way by making education compulsory without making it free.241

Unless education is made free as well as compulsory, the State actually does that for which it punishes the parent: it places a stumbling-block in the way of the child's education.242

He showed, by reference to the experience of several American states, that attendance did not suffer when education was made free, as opponents of free education had anticipated. On the contrary, he wrote, attendances rose.243 As for the argument that free education pauperised the spirit and independence of the people, Taylor quoted the words of the State Superintendent of Virginia:

[Public] education is education by the public for the public good. It does not mean charitable by free. To say that a community in providing a benefit for itself, is doing an act of charity, is a solecism...Nobody stultifies himself by calling a free bridge a charity.244

The arguments of Taylor, Rule and the Royal Commissioners were resisted by the editor of The Mercury who spoke of a quite different obligation that the State should discharge:

It is no part of the State's business to perform the duties which properly fall upon parents, but to make the parents themselves do their duty. Unless it be contended, and it has not been yet, that it is not the duty of the parents to educate their children, there can be no doubt that the first thing which the State ought to do, is to enforce

241 Ibid.
242 Ibid.
243 Ibid., pp.2-3.
244 Ibid.
the moral obligations of the citizen, and only where it is unable to do that ought it to undertake to fulfil these obligations itself.245

It was very much the kind of argument that Stephens had used. Taylor had tried, without success, to shift discussion away from consideration of moral values. In tackling the argument of his opponents that 'it was not the duty of the State to provide free education', he stated:

[This] argument owes its force to the manner in which it is stated - the word "duty" leading the debater aside from the consideration of the real question at issue, viz: whether it would be "wisdom" on the part of the State to provide Free Education.246

Debates in Parliament rarely rose above the level of assertions that free education would reduce levels of attendance,247 that it pauperised the people248 and that it would destroy 'the interest which parents took in education'.249 The editor of The Mercury stated that there did not seem 'to be any sound reason why [the State] should provide free food for the mind any more than it should find food for the body' and suggested that nobody, 'outside of extreme Socialists', would entertain such a proposition.250 Taylor, no doubt, would have wished to use a quite different word to 'food'.

247 Mercury 2.9.85, p.3.
248 Ibid., p.4.
249 Ibid., 3.9.85, p.3.
250 Ibid., 2.9.85, p.2.
The interest aroused by the recommendations of the 1883 Royal Commission and debates on the 1885 Education Bill seemed to exhaust discussion on free education for some years thereafter, as James Rule remarked in 1891.\textsuperscript{251} In 1900 and 1908, as shown above, argument, much of which had become tired and repetitive, gave way to considerations of cost. The statement to Parliament of Stafford Bird, the Minister, in 1900, made no reference at all to arguments, pro or contra, and he confined himself entirely to matters of cost.\textsuperscript{252} The debates of the mid-1880's had been absorbed by both parties and tacit agreement had been reached by the turn of the century that only the matter of cost stood in the way of making education free.

Compulsory education was, of course, the other great matter that was central to the relationship between the State and education. It is dealt with in two separate chapters on compulsory attendance and its enforcement.

\textbf{Views concerning the State and Education from c.1860}

In the first section of this chapter, entitled the establishment of State control, a number of views

\textsuperscript{251} JPP XXIV 1891, paper 132. Sacred History lessons in state schools, special report of the Senior Inspector of Schools, with memorandum from the Director of Education, p.4.

\textsuperscript{252} JPP XLIII 1900, paper 65. Free education. Statement in connection with the proposal to abolish the payment of fees in state schools, 1900.
concerning the relationship between the State and the education were raised and discussed. In this section, later views, from the period of consolidation of the public education system in the 1860's onwards, will be examined.

In 1860, a Commission was appointed to enquire into the state of superior and general education in the colony. The Commissioners asked, 'Whether it [was] right that Government should interfere at all in the education of the people?' They acknowledged that much difference of opinion existed, 'many holding that such interference has a tendency to deaden the sense of individual responsibility.' If it was believed that the State ought to provide education, then, the Commissioners argued:

The measures themselves should be large and liberal, having in view the equal benefit of all persons and all classes in the community.

As to 'the objects towards which all Public Education ought to be directed', they stated that if the end of education were to be the education 'of those that cannot afford to educate themselves' there would be no limit, the principle once conceded, to the State providing food, clothing and houses also 'for all who [could] establish the like plea of inability'. The Commissioners feared, moreover, that, even if the principle were to be conceded, the practical problem of discriminating between those that could and those that

254 Ibid.
255 Ibid.
256 Ibid.
could not afford to pay would be so considerable as to create 'a general disturbance in the equilibrium of the social machine'. Discussing this object as a fallacy, they went on to dismiss another fallacy, the object of public education as the suppression and discouragement of crime, on the reasoning that the object 'would fail from its narrowness of view':

While bent upon exterminating the more noxious weeds from one portion of the public field, others would spring up abundantly in those portions which it passed by — and plants, which, if cultivated might bear the best and noblest fruit, would wither and perish simply from being left to themselves.

'The true object of Public Education', they stated, 'can be nothing less than this':

To influence the whole body politic, to raise the standard of intelligence among the whole people; to cultivate and improve those gifts of GOD which are scattered everywhere; and to raise the State itself, as a whole, to the highest possible condition of moral and intellectual excellence.

There is no hint in the Commission's Report of the possibility of conflict between Church and State. There is no suggestion that the State would seek discord rather than harmony, that it could be mistaken in its perception of the best interests of the individual, class or society or that its intentions would be misunderstood or mistrusted. The Commissioners put their trust in a State — presumably they meant the political leadership of the State —

257 Ibid.
258 Ibid.
259 Ibid.
260 Ibid.
261 Ibid.
which was capable of bestowing on the people 'liberty without extravagance' and 'wise oversight [without] iron rule'.

It was a buoyant, optimistic outlook that was shared by John Davies, proprietor and editor of The Mercury. A cross-grained, combative man, Davies was possessed of a strong public spirit and he gave much of his abundant energy to the cause of education. In 1859, he reported on the munificence with which public men had responded to requests for aid in the building of schools:

Knowing how much the social happiness of a people depends upon [the cultivation of moral feelings by education] we have always considered that it ought to be one of the chief aims of every government to secure the education of the lower orders.

James Allen, a witness before the 1867 Royal Commission, made, according to the Commissioners 'the most sweeping and decisive objection to the abstract right of State interference in Education'. Allen avowed that the spread of education should be left to the voluntary efforts of the people, that the only part that the State should play was that of 'aiding and promoting voluntary efforts [rather] than by centralisation and direct control' and that the State should provide assistance only for those who were unable to pay for it. He made use of the arguments of John Stuart Mill, that the State should pay only for

262 Ibid., p.11.
263 Mercury 12.2.59, p.3.
265 Ibid.
the children of the poor, to show that, in Tasmania, the State neglected this most important of all obligations. Of the £12,671 spent on public education in 1865, only £354, he said, was appropriated to the children of the poor.

The Commissioners had permitted Allen's arguments more space in their Report than those of others and they dealt with them also at length, though, in places, in peremptory fashion. The principles of free trade, they wrote, had 'no application to the education of the people.' To the charge that the State had failed to do more than the people would have done for themselves, they replied:

It is open in such a case to every one to indulge in those conclusions which best harmonize with his speculative opinions without danger of being refuted by facts.

The Commissioners pointed out that both the National Society and British and Foreign School Society in England avowed the necessity of legislative assistance if the children of the humbler classes were to be rescued from ignorance. Allen and other witnesses, had contended that the State should confine its interest to the education of the classes whose situation, either from poverty, orphanage, or crime, obliges it to assume special relations to them.

The Commissioners asked:

266 Ibid.
267 Ibid.
268 Ibid., p.v.
269 Ibid., p.vii.
270 Ibid.
271 Ibid., p.viii.
Is an eleemosynary principle the only one that should be recognised? or, Are not all classes in a community equally entitled to share in the benefits, of whatever description, which are dispensed at the cost of the Revenue to which all contribute? They thought it 'not, immaterial' to state that Allen admitted that he had not inspected any of the schools in the colony. From another witness, who also held voluntaryist views, the Commissioners gained admissions that he only knew of the public schools 'from hearsay' and that his knowledge of the lower classes was similarly founded.

The six Commissioners, each of whom had held honorary positions with the Board of Education or had been active in other ways in the public education system of the colony, chose their witnesses with care, or at least gained from them answers which favoured the case which they finally put in their Report. Several of the witnesses were Inspectors or teachers with the Board, teachers at Ragged Schools or members of the Board and were thus supporters of the principle of State intervention in education. Two other witnesses, each unconnected with public education, the Anglican Bishop of Tasmania and the Catholic Vicar-General, said that they regarded it as the State's duty to bring education to the working classes and 'the poorer classes'. The work of the Commissioners, in short, amounted to a well constructed, argued and detailed justification of the principle of the provision of

272 Ibid., p.ix.
273 Ibid., p.xiii.
274 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
275 Ibid., p.22.
276 Ibid., p.29.
education by the State. They seemed to take particular pleasure in quoting the words of Dr. Frederick Temple, Headmaster of Rugby School:

Education is one of the few charities that is perfectly safe... no neighbourhood ever yet was demoralized by the presence of a well-managed Free School.²⁷⁷

The Commissioners concluded, from the evidence that had been put before them, that there was 'perfect unanimity as to the two fundamental principles':

(1) That it [was] the duty of the State to provide for primary education; and

(2) that it [was] not an undue interference with the liberty of the people to make education compulsory.²⁷⁸

They made use of statistics from Baden, Pennsylvania, New York City and New York State, Great Britain, France and Tasmania - although in the latter case, their cause was not helped by the small size of the statistical sample, 43 in number - to show that public education tended to reduce crime.²⁷⁹ They acknowledged the contrary views of Herbert Spencer and Henry Thomas Buckle, but persisted in their own view.²⁸⁰ They also stated their conviction that labour became more efficient as the intelligence of the labourer improved and they regarded the proposition as being self evident and therefore not in need of discussion.²⁸¹ The national wealth, they asserted, was increased 'by

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p.xiv.
²⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. xv - xvi.
²⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. xiv, xvi.
²⁸¹ Ibid., p.xiv.
elevation of the labour standard.' The Commissioners asked 32 individuals, almost all of whom were Masters of Superior Schools, if they regarded the provision of primary education as part of the duty of the State. All agreed that it was the State's duty and none of them thought it was an undue interference with the liberty of the people for the State to impose compulsory school attendance. It was quite plain to the Commissioners that, by 1883, the right of the State to provide education for all children and to compel their attendance had long since ceased to be a matter of debate. The problem of State and education that James Allen raised before the Commissioners of 1867 and their lengthy response to it, had put a resolution on the matter.

The State's defence of public education

In the first part of this chapter, dealing with the establishment of control by the State, it was emphasised that the demand for public education was a strong demand and that much of the resistance to it came from the Church of England clergy and laity and from some individuals whose intention it was to establish schools for a minority of pupils at the public expense. That ground, having been covered, will not be gone over again. What does emerge from the discussion in that section of the chapter is the strong defence of public education by groups and individuals and their protests against privilege, thought by many of them to be Anglican and aspiringly aristocratic in

282 Ibid., p.xvi.
283 Ibid., pp. 127-28, 131-32, 186.
nature. There is no mistaking the purpose of the editor of *The Colonist* in his attack, in 1833, on those un-named members of society who supported the establishment of:

An aristocratic seminary where plebian art would not contaminate the delicate and pure growth of patrician haughtiness and effeminacy.\(^2\)\(^8\)\(^4\)

He continued:

This is what we want here and none of your patrician colleges - cheap education and good to be within the reach of all, to bring the higher and lower classes nearer together, and thus preserve that link of connexion in after-life, which is the strength of a people.\(^2\)\(^8\)\(^5\)

Robert Murray, editor of the *Austral-Asiatic Review*, wrote, in 1828:

Give us but the Schoolmaster and we care not for the subtleties with which Churchmen of every sect, more or less perplex the great fundamental doctrines of our religion. The Schoolmaster will soon settle all that.\(^2\)\(^8\)\(^6\)

The privilege of church and aristocracy was greatly reduced by the introduction of Franklin's Regulations, the abandonment of Gladstone's penny-a-day system, the commutation of state aid, the centralising of the administration of education in a single Board and the establishment by the denominations of their own schools in the 1840's and 1850's. Privilege re-appeared, however, in the form of exhibitions to private schools.

The Commission of 1860 was established to enquire into 'the state of superior and general education in

\(^{284}\) *Colonist* 22.2.33, p.2.

\(^{285}\) *Ibid*.

\(^{286}\) *Austral-Asiatic Review* 1.5, December 1828, p.556.
the colony. The Commissioners were of the opinion that:

The efforts that have hitherto been made in this direction are so respectable, and have accomplished so much in spite of surrounding difficulties, that it would be both impolitic and unjust to drive them out of the field by new State Schools, with which they would be unable to compete.\textsuperscript{287}

The advantages of having 'a symmetrical School system' would not be sufficient, they argued, to compensate for the injury that would be inflicted on 'the voluntary energy of the people.'\textsuperscript{288} Their intention, however, was not only the negative intention of elimination of competition:

We fall back, then, upon the alternative of assisting such Schools, and those particularly which have the strongest claim to assistance.\textsuperscript{289}

They proposed the establishing of no fewer than 54 annual Exhibitions to be made available to boys over the age of 14 years and tenable, in equal numbers, at the Hutchins School and High School in Hobart and the Grammar School at Launceston.\textsuperscript{290} The Headmasters of the two first-mentioned schools and the Chairman of Council of the second school were among the few witnesses, eight in number, who were invited to give testimony.\textsuperscript{291} The Commissioners also recommended that the three schools should receive 'money' payment...as provision for the tuition of the Exhibitioner'. They


\textsuperscript{288} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{289} Ibid., pp. 13-14.

\textsuperscript{290} Ibid., p.13.

\textsuperscript{291} Ibid., p.3.
were very generous. They suggested that £1260 be paid to the three Headmasters each year. The Exhibitioners were to receive £540, or £10 each. They were not put off by the fact, which they mentioned in their own Report, that the grant of £12,000 for public education in 1860 had been over-spent by £3,000. The £1800 they proposed for expenditure on Exhibitions was therefore a great burden and it amounted to a cost to the taxpayer of £333 for each Exhibitioner.

The principle was accepted by the Government, although only three Exhibitions were provided for. Stephens and Rule were opposed to the scheme from the outset. Stephens protested in 1872, that it had failed to excite competition among teachers or 'general emulation among the children' and that preparation of candidates took place during school hours 'to the great disadvantage of the rest of the school or during the Teacher's private time':

In the present circumstances of public instruction it is desirable that the whole weight of the influence of the Board and its Inspectors should be primarily devoted to the establishment of a thoroughly efficient standard of general instruction in the Public Schools, and to the interests of the many who need the aid of the State, rather than of the few who are in a position to help themselves. It must be borne in mind that the Public Schools are attended by children from all classes in the community and that...it is not possible for any boy to successfully compete for an Exhibition, whose parents are not in a position to obtain for him the means of private instruction, or who is not taken in hand, on personal grounds, by a competent instructor.

293 Ibid., p.8.
294 Chief Inspector's Report for 1872, p.29.
Attempts to repeal the legislation concerning Exhibitions and the scheme providing scholarships for candidates to continue their studies at university level were bitterly contested. Arguments in Parliament that the money expended could be better spent on the education of the poor, that the scheme was 'a fraud upon the colony' and 'a monstrous proposition' were unavailing. The Mercury had 'not one disparaging word to say about the Exhibitions system. The editor of Walch's Literary Intelligencer, a journal of literary news and comment, in 1870, reported a speech by the Premier, Frederick Innes, in defence of the scheme and wrote an editorial in his support. In the following year, he was reported in the same journal as defending superior education against:

Those petty and purblind economists whose highest ambition it seems to be to make a beggarly saving by cramping the minds of the rising generation to their own narrow and sordid standards.

In 1881, Stephens tried, yet again, to have the scheme abandoned by presenting the awards, and the examinations which preceded the granting of them, in a new context:

The problem of the present day is how to counteract the injurious effects almost inseparable from all schemes of competitive examination, the prizes in which are obtained by scholars set apart and specially prepared, and sometimes so prepared by sacrificing the interests of their fellows.

295 Mercury 23.7.64, p.4.
296 Mercury 29.9.64, p.4.
297 Walch's Literary Intelligencer November 1870, pp. 213-14.
298 Ibid., October 1871, p.166.
299 Chief Inspector's Report for 1881, p.10.
In 1893, the year in which Stephens wrote that the Exhibitions only served 'to swell the ranks of those who look upon any kind of manual employment as beneath their notice,'\textsuperscript{300} the Premier, Henry Dobson, informed the Minister of Education that, the Government's revenue having declined as a result of the depression, the 1893 grant for education would be reduced by 5 per cent.\textsuperscript{301} Stephens warmly supported Dobson's proposal that the scheme of paying for exhibitions be abandoned.\textsuperscript{302} In 1896, two years after its abandonment, Rule reviewed the entire scheme since its introduction in 1860.\textsuperscript{303} He claimed it had created a false criterion by which to judge the comparative merits of schools and teachers'; that the annual selection of twelve children was too small to have a beneficial effect on the total school population aged from ten to twelve years and that many parents of successful candidates would, in any case, have sent them to 'secondary schools in due course'.\textsuperscript{304}

Indeed it was noticed in many cases that persons in comfortable circumstances availed themselves of a State school only as a stepping-stone to an exhibition for their sons and daughters.\textsuperscript{305}

As if to safeguard against the re-introduction of the Exhibitions system, Rule, in 1898, revealed that, during the 34 years of existence, the scheme had cost

\textsuperscript{300} Director's Report for 1893, p.8.
\textsuperscript{301} AOT PD 1/58/82. Memorandum from Premier to Minister of Education, item 7, 23.3.93.
\textsuperscript{302} Director's Report for 1893, p.8.
\textsuperscript{303} Director's Report for 1896, pp. 6-7.
\textsuperscript{304} Ibid., p.6.
\textsuperscript{305} Ibid.
the State £22,435 for the 249 pupils who had been awarded Exhibitions,\textsuperscript{306} or £90.2s.0d. for each Exhibitioner. In that year, 1898, the cost to the State of each pupil in average daily attendance at the public schools was £3.2s.11d.\textsuperscript{307}

It was a perception of some people that a purpose of public education was the provision of domestic servants for the houses of the comfortably off. The demand for both farm and domestic servants was always high and was especially so in the 1880's. The various institutions, such as Industrial Schools, the Asylum for Destitute Children and Reformatories, had been the usual sources of supply, but they were not always able to meet the demand. In their evidence to the 1883 Royal Commissioner, John McFarlane, Governor and Treasurer of the Boys' Home, and the Reverend Charles Bromby, Dean of Hobart and Chaplain of the Girls' Industrial School, both stated that the demand for farm and domestic servants far exceeded the supply.\textsuperscript{308} The Commissioners, in seeking explanations for the short supply and, quoting the words of Matthew Arnold, doubted if Tasmanian children were being over-educated to the extent that 'every labourer would be an artisan and every artisan a clerk':

\textsuperscript{306} Director's Report for 1898, p.9.
\textsuperscript{307} Ibid., p.7.
\textsuperscript{308} JHA XLV 1883, paper 70. Report of Royal Commission on Public Education 1883, pp. 8,24.
This is the language we have all heard so often from those who think that the development of society, can be arrested because a farmer's wife finds it hard to get a cook-maid. It is sufficient to say to those who hold it that it is vain for them to expect that the lower classes will be kind enough to remain ignorant and unaltered merely for the sake of saving them inconvenience.309

James Rule was well aware of the sources of discontent in Tasmania:

The desirableness of a high standard of education for people generally has been proved over and over again; but still it is not uncommon to hear expressions of opinion to the contrary among the wealthier sections of the community. The chief reason for this is the difficulty they have experienced in obtaining good servants.310

He objected strongly to the blame being put onto the public schools for the shortage of domestic servants and, wearing his Chartist feelings on his sleeve, he wrote, in 1893, that the instruction in State Schools was 'to dignify honest useful work of all kinds' and:

To lift the scholars above the false pride of being rich and the false shame of being poor: though no doubt, the widening of people's intelligence enables them to understand more clearly and feel more keenly, the need for melioration in their condition, and must tend to produce discontent among those who suffer under evils they consider remediable.311

Rule was quite aware of the connections between the complaint that children in the public schools were being 'over-educated', the shortage of domestic servants and the complaint, commonly heard also in the

---

309 Ibid., p.xxiii.
310 Senior Inspector's Report for 1889, p.10.
311 Senior Inspector's Report for 1893, p.11.
1880's, that children were suffering from 'over-pressure'. Justitia, writing to the editor of The Mercury in 1885, blamed the English Revised Code of 1862 for the problems of over-pressure, over-education, the shortage of domestic servants and what he called 'the labour question', by which he may have meant that 'species of Communism' which in recent years, in republican France, had been responsible for the introduction of free, compulsory and secular education.\footnote{88} In 1884, Rule wrote that, in his opinion, over-pressure was not a problem in the public schools or that, if it were so in a few schools, then the parents were at fault for demanding too much of their children.\footnote{89} By the late 1880's, complaints of over pressure, over-education and the shortage of servants had run their course.

From time to time, attempts were made to make the penalties for the non-attendance of children more severe. In 1875, a deputation from the Ragged School Association to the Colonial Secretary recommended certain changes to the 1868 Education Act and the 1873 Amendment Act. The three members of the deputation were well known for their work for a number of charitable institutions in Hobart. Among their five recommendations was the following:

That a clause be inserted to constitute truanting a penal offence, to give the Bench power to punish the children themselves who obstinately, rebelliously and regularly truant, by flogging, solitary confinement,

\footnote{88} Mercury 26.8.85, p.2.
\footnote{89} Senior Inspector's Report for 1884, p.12.
bread and water diet, and where necessary or expedient to sentence them for from three to five years to the Boys' Home or some similar institution.314

The deputation may have been influenced by an article in the Quarterly Review which described the effectiveness in some American states of the treatment of 'boys obstinately truanting'.315 The Colonial Secretary asked the Board of Education for its views on the recommendation. Henry Butler thought the proposition to be one of 'extreme rigour'; Henry Hunter, architect to the Board and an active worker for charitable institutions,' disagreed with it'; James Whyte, MLC, thought it 'ridiculous'; one other thought the proposition 'impracticable and also wrong in principle' and a fifth agreed that the proposition was 'severe', but thought 'it would have a deterrent effect on the most hardened'. He thought some parents should be imprisoned for 'defying the Magistrate [and] having no money to pay no goods to distrain' and he did not consider that such parents, being criminally neglectful of their children, could be 'too severely dealt with'.316 The deputation's four other proposals concerned amendments to existing legislation. The opinions of the Board members on the recommendations varied, but, by and large, they were unwilling to support the requests for change. The deputation's proposals, especially the proposition concerning the punishment of truants, were extreme and, therefore, not too much attention should be given to them. But the whole incident shows how the Board of Education was

314 AOT CSD 10/23/347. Deputation from Ragged School Association to Colonial Secretary, 7.6.75.

315 Ibid., letter from Rev. J. Storie, Secretary, Ragged School, to Colonial Secretary, 31.7.75.

316 Ibid., deputation from Ragged School Association to Colonial Secretary, 7.6.75.
reluctant to take any measures which would, as the Colonial Secretary informed the deputation, by their impractical nature, 'fail to realize the advantages they seem[ed] to anticipate'.\textsuperscript{317} More important, the tone and intent of the Board members' replies clearly indicates their concern for the welfare of the children and their willingness to accept, \textit{in loco parentis}, responsibility for their protection.

This section deals briefly with public perceptions of the standard of public education in Tasmania. A more detailed consideration of standards of instruction is found in the chapter on curriculum.

Charges that children were being over-educated were not confined to a flurry of public discussion in the 1880's, however, and the public schools often had to be defended against charges that the standard was too high, 'exceed[ing] what [was] necessary or befitting the station and prospects of the larger class of scholars who attend[ed] them'.\textsuperscript{318} The Royal Commissioners, in 1867, were aware that such impressions were 'more or less widely entertained'\textsuperscript{319} They asked lay and ecclesiastical visitors to the schools if public school children evinced at Sunday Schools, 'either less or more intelligence than other

\textsuperscript{317} \textit{Ibid.}, letter from Colonial Secretary to members of the deputation from the Ragged School Association, 2.9.75.

\textsuperscript{318} \textit{HAJ} XV 1867, paper 44. Report of Royal Commission on Public Education 1867, statement of the Commissioners, p. xv.

\textsuperscript{319} \textit{Ibid.}
children' and they reported that the differences were not significant. The Commissioners, expressing their own opinion, wrote:

To endeavour to attentuate Education; to reduce it to the most meagre outline; to be satisfied with acquirements so indifferent that they will in all likelihood be soon forgotten; to study not how much instruction is requisite to lay a foundation for the future development of manhood both intellectual and moral, but how little can be given and yet pass for Education is both inconsistent and wasteful; for all expenditure of means that is necessarily inadequate to accomplish the ends proposed by it is wasteful.

The Royal Commissioners of 1883 endorsed this view and considered the standard of education in the public schools to be sufficiently high. They asked 32 Masters of Superior Schools for their views on the matter. Twenty-two replied that they thought it was sufficiently high, four thought it was not and six did not reply to the question.

The various committees and commissions of enquiry, Neale's Report of 1904 excepted, all defended the standard of instruction in the public schools and, despite the many criticisms that Directors and Inspectors made of the standard, they were also

320 Ibid., pp. xvii, 85-6.
321 Ibid., p.x.
323 Ibid., p.186.
324 An example of such criticism is that of Stephens in his Director's Report for 1888, p.8. Many others are contained in the chapter on the curriculum and it is unnecessary to repeat them here.
quick to rise in its defence when it came under attack. Stephens and Doran defended the standard and proficiency in the public schools before the 1883 Royal Commission, although Rule was not prepared to do so.\textsuperscript{325} His concern, as it always had been, lay much more with defending the public schools against the charge that 'the average moral standard of men and women educated in State schools' was lower than that of 'their fellow citizens who had been educated in private or denominational schools'.\textsuperscript{326} It is to these men and women educated in State schools that this chapter now turns.

The countless criticisms of parents and their attitudes towards education, from within and outside the public education system, should not necessarily be seen as attacks upon the classes to which the parents were said to belong or upon values attributable to those classes. Contrariwise, they may be regarded as criticisms the purpose of which was the support and encouragement of parents in the framing of their own attitudes towards education. The task of bringing education to all Tasmanian children involved a degree of acceptance, after all, by those critics of the social and educational values of their parents. The very critical opinions of parents expressed by Rule, for example, and the editors and proprietors of The Clipper and Daily Post, perhaps the strongest critics of parents' attitudes, were not made in a spirit of class antagonism. It is hardly likely that they would have been, uttered as they were by the old Chartist, James Rule, and the editors of newspapers which had direct association with the Workers Political League.

\textsuperscript{325} JHA XLV 1883, paper 70. Report of Royal Commission on Public Education, 1883, pp. 56, 63, 61.

\textsuperscript{326} Senior Inspector's Report for 1886, p. 9.
There are difficulties standing in the way of any attempt to interpret educational policy and its administration in Tasmania as a means employed by members of the propertied classes to seek advantage for those classes by training the children of the working classes in habits of work-place discipline, improving their skills as future members of the work force or inducing in them dispositions of deference and acquiescence towards their political, social and economic ambitions. The nature of the relationship between social classes will emerge in the succeeding chapters, but it is worthwhile to comment here on the difficulties of establishing with any clarity the class interests either of parents or of those who were possessed of the wealth and power to influence public education.

In the first place, it is apparent that parents were drawn from all classes in Tasmanian society, from the destitute to the comfortably off. The Royal Commissioners appointed in 1867 published with their Report a return showing the occupations of the parents of public school children. The return showed a very wide range of occupations, 216 in all, from pensioners, widows and washerwomen to landed proprietors, clergymen and parents with independent means. The return gives support to the claim, made seven years earlier by members of the Commission of inquiry into superior and general education, that the public schools were 'schools for the people' and 'were attended by children

of all classes'. Furthermore, the range and diversity of occupations and the consequent differences in wealth, the geographical distribution of the parents across the entire colony, their location in various economic regions, in city and suburb, town, village, settlement and isolated and remote areas, the very high rate of mobility of the population, the seasonal nature of much employment, changes in immigration and emigration patterns and rising literacy rates combine to make any attempt at social classification a very difficult task. Such an attempt to reduce these occupations, social conditions, relationships and attitudes to a single classification would inevitably lead to a simplification that deprives the complexity of parents' attitudes, social and occupational backgrounds, and much else besides, almost entirely of meaning. In any case, an analysis of parents of public school children that attempts to establish forms of relationships or a will to collective action between the many social groups that make up the single, common term, parents', would have to take into account the highly individual responses that parents made to such matters as attendance and non-attendance, a child's progress at school, enrolment and withdrawal, payment of fees, attitudes to knowledge and learning and to the material benefits that derive from education. Parents responded to these considerations wholly within the context of the family, its needs and desires and those of each family member. It was only in the two decades before 1914 that parents began to associate, though very tentatively, with each other for the attainment of

328 JHA V 1860, paper 28, Report of Commissioners into the state of superior and general education, 1860, p.11.
some common and practical benefit for their school329 and they did so as members of small communities rather than as a class. And it was only in the same two decades that trade unions and labour newspapers in the two cities and mining towns of the west coast began to present information and ideas about education with the purpose of persuading parents to send their children to school and encouraging them to consider and act collectively upon the relationship between education and democracy and social justice.330

These considerations, especially the diversity of occupations and social backgrounds of parents, may explain the very few occasions, in official reports and correspondence, when parents were spoken of in class terms. Stephens' statement of 1875 that there were two distinct classes of parents, those who would and those who would not pay fees, arose from his inability or unwillingness to define the parents of Tasmanian public school children in class terms.

There were, indeed, few attempts made in the Inspectors' and Directors' Reports and correspondence to make moral worth a means of distinguishing parents. Their language is devoid of terms such as 'deserving' and 'respectable', so often used by English writers on education. The language of Tasmanian writers does not contain the words 'pauper' or 'pauperism'. Quite different forms of these words were used, 'pauperise' and 'pauperisation', to point out the undesirable social consequences that may follow from an inefficient

329 See, for example, Inspector's Report for 1906, p.12 and Director's Report for 1911, p.2., also chapter on parents' passim.

330 See, for example, The Clipper 12.9.03, p.4; Daily Post 27.5.08, p.6; 27.5.08, p.7, also chapter on parents, passim.
system of fee collection. Neither will descriptions be found in the Tasmanian writings that even distantly resemble the condemnation of the moral condition of the English working classes and the poor which are to be found in opinions expressed, for example, by Mary Carpenter and Mathew Davenport Hill.\textsuperscript{331} The Tasmanian writings are also free of references to race. There are no criticisms of the Irish and Irish parents such as are found in the works of Engels and Kay-Shuttleworth.\textsuperscript{332}

The occasions on which the language of class is used in the Tasmanian writings on education, terms such as 'labouring class' and 'working class' are descriptions of occupations and the nature of parents' livelihoods. They do not constitute an analysis of class in any wider sense. The unwillingness of Stephens, Rule and others to categorise parents into social classes and to characterise behaviour and attitudes accordingly is a distinctive quality of their views and outlook on education.

The origins of Tasmanian ideas on education

Views concerning education, discussed in the first section of this chapter, were, almost without exception, favourable to the propositions of the creation of a public system of education. In this, the

\textsuperscript{331} British Parliamentary Papers. Report of Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Children, 1852 (515) VII. I., evidence of Mary Carpenter, p.90 and Mathew Davenport Hill, p.36.

\textsuperscript{332} J.P. Kay, (later J.P. Kay-Shuttleworth), The moral and physical condition of the working classes employed in the cotton manufacture of Manchester, p.21, and F. Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England, ch.V.
views and policies of government were central to the whole question. At the same time, however, as it has been noted above, many private individuals and many of the clergy were similarly disposed. These views had all been expressed before Franklin made his Regulations in 1839 and views expressed thereafter in the 1840's and 1850's were, by and large, only developments of the view that a public system of education was necessary and desirable. The first statements of this view preceded the publication of the works of David Stow, James Kay-Shuttleworth and John Stuart Mill and the publications of the Committee of Privy Council on Education which were to influence the course of Tasmanian public education at later periods. The authors who published their writings in the 1830's, or earlier, were practical men who, being concerned chiefly with the establishment of a system of education, followed, for the main part, the principles of teaching of either the National Society or the British and Foreign Schools Society. References to educationists other than Andrew Bell or Joseph Lancaster were few. A concern for practice rather than theory, for curriculum and teaching, for classroom management and organization,333 suggests that discussion of education in Tasmania in the 1830's took place within a climate of opinion rather than as a

333 See, for example, these works, all of which were written in Tasmania with Tasmanian education as their subject:
J. Ross, The Note - Book of Useful, Experimental and Entertaining Knowledge.
J. Henderson, Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land.
The Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine No.3, November 1835.
result of attachment to one particular educational theory or theorist.

It is possible that the ideas of Adam Smith had formed the core of opinion in Tasmania by the 1830's. Smith's views on education are found in his major work, The Wealth of Nations, published in 1776, but they occupy only three pages of this very lengthy treatise, at least as far as education in a modern commercial state is concerned. He wrote that 'the common people have little time to spare for education [and] parents can scarce afford to maintain [their children] even in infancy': \(^{334}\)

As soon as they are able to work, they must apply to some trade by which they can earn their subsistence. Their trade too is generally so simple and uniform as to give little exercise to the understanding; while at the same time, their labour is both so constant and severe, that it leaves them little leisure and less inclination to apply to, or even to think of anything else.\(^{335}\) Smith believed that children of parents 'who are to be bred to the lowest occupations' should at least receive an education in reading, writing and accounting at an age before they were put to employment.\(^{336}\) He wrote that 'for a very small expense:

The public can facilitate, can encourage, and can even impose upon almost the whole body of the people, the necessity of acquiring those most essential parts of education.\(^{337}\)

As public education was a benefit to the whole society, the expense of it should either be borne entirely by


\(^{335}\) Ibid.

\(^{336}\) Ibid.

\(^{337}\) Ibid.
the State or, if the payments of parents were to be insufficient, the State should make up the deficiency.\textsuperscript{338} Smith was quite certain of the benefits to the State that would follow:

\begin{quote}
The State...derives no inconsiderable advantage from their instruction. The more they are instructed, the less liable they are to the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition, which, among ignorant nations, frequently occasion the most dreadful disorders. An instructed and intelligent people, besides, are always more decent and orderly than an ignorant and stupid one. They feel themselves, each individually, more respectable, and more likely to obtain the respect of their lawful superiors, and they are therefore more disposed to respect those superiors.\textsuperscript{339}
\end{quote}

He spoke of an educated people's ability to see through 'the interested complaints of faction and sedition'\textsuperscript{340} and of the benefits to the State of a well-informed people:

\begin{quote}
In free countries, where the safety of government depends very much upon the favourable judgment which the people may form of its conduct, it must surely be of the highest importance that they should not be disposed to judge rashly or capriciously concerning it.\textsuperscript{341}
\end{quote}

For 'people of some rank and fortune' education lay in the perfection of 'every branch of useful or ornamental knowledge'; for women, the end of education was 'to render them both likely to become the mistress of a family, and to behave properly when they have become such'\textsuperscript{342} For 'the common people,' however, a simple

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{338} Ibid., p.367.
\item \textsuperscript{339} Ibid., p.353.
\item \textsuperscript{340} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{341} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{342} Ibid., p.350.
\end{itemize}
training in the 3R's was not sufficient, either for the adequate performance of a trade - for which Smith recommended the teaching of geometry and mechanics - or for their well-being:

It should be kept in mind, that however well instructed in other respects, if the poor be not made aware of the circumstances which determine the rate of wages, comparatively little is done in the way of education, to improve their condition.344

Adam Smith's views on education were an important part of, and were wholly consistent with, his principle of 'natural liberty' by which he meant the right of 'every man to pursue his own interest in his own way', so long as he does not violate the laws of justice.345 This 'obvious and simple system',346 a system of enlightened self-interest, was the means of increasing a nation's wealth. In this increase, all would share. The bringing of education by the State to the people would achieve a number of most desirable and necessary ends. In the first place, the teaching of the 3R's and geometry and mechanics would raise the worker's productivity and quicken economic growth. Furthermore, the State, in bringing education to the people, would act as a cultural agent in at least two ways. The teaching of geometry and mechanics served as a necessary introduction to the most sublime as well as the most useful sciences347 and an instructed and intelligent people, being taught the principles of

343 Ibid., p.352.
344 Ibid., p.471.
345 Ibid., p.311.
346 Ibid.
347 Ibid., p.352.
political economy, was an informed and enquiring people. But the kind of education that Smith proposed for the common people was not only a means of enlightening their ideas and improving their condition, it was, at the same time, a means of preserving social order. The education of the common people, like the education of men of rank and fortune, was a system for the strengthening of the social structure and of the parts that each social group was required to play within it. Most important, perhaps, Smith's views on education are a recognition that the division of labour and the carrying out of a few simple operations, the very nature of his daily employment, induces 'a torpor of mind' in the ordinary worker:

which renders him not only incapable of relishing or bearing a part in any rational conversation, but of conceiving any generous, noble, or tender sentiment, and consequently of forming any just judgment concerning many even of the ordinary duties of private life. The difference in natural talents in different men, he believed, 'was not so much the cause as the effect of the division of labour'.

This view of mankind is an open view, the generosity of which is not diminished by its emphasis upon practical outcomes. It may be supposed, for the point cannot be demonstrated or proven, that Smith's views had become a part of a Tasmanian climate of opinion by the 1830's. An unknown contributor to The Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine wrote, in 1835:

The description of learning required in a new Country, must, of course, differ in many

348 Ibid., p.353.
349 Ibid., p.350.
350 Ibid., p.7.
respects, from that which is pursued in Countries long established. The instruction must be such as is best adapted to the peculiar wants of the people, and the peculiar circumstances of the Country they inhabit:—must be suited in short, to the occupation in which the pupil is expected to be engaged in riper years.\textsuperscript{351}

Another contributor wrote, in the same year:

It is the imperative duty of every well regulated Government so to adjust its various members, as that each shall contribute to the happiness of the whole. We contend that solid, judicious, and above all, religious education will be found the most successful auxiliary. It is one of the primary duties of a state to advance the spread of useful learning, to provide for the ignorant and unfriended, the assistance necessary to enable them to fill the station allotted them, with honour.\textsuperscript{352}

Those sentiments may have owed as much to Jeremy Bentham and James Mill as they did to Adam Smith. Yet the need for the leading role in education to be played by the State was a persistent theme in Smith's writings, as James Kay-Shuttleworth, himself a widely regarded educationist in Tasmania, acknowledged. In his \textit{Four Periods of Public Education}, Kay-Shuttleworth mentions Adam Smith and his description of 'the condition of a people whose education is neglected by the Government' and pointed out that 'the calamity thus foreseen by our great economist is realised in the condition of our rural population...[reducing] this class to a state of mental and physical torpor'.\textsuperscript{353}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{351} \textit{The Van Diemen's Land Monthly Magazine}, No. 3., November, 1835, pp. 145-46.
\bibitem{352} \textit{Ibid.}, No. 4. December 1835, p.171.
\bibitem{353} J. Kay-Shuttleworth, \textit{Four Periods of Public Education as reviewed in 1832, 1839, 1846, 1862}, Second period, pp. 200-01.
\end{thebibliography}
The continuing influence of Adam Smith on Tasmanian public education after the 1830's will not be emphasized in this dissertation, but the ideas he raised, briefly and succinctly, will emerge in the chapters that follow.
CHAPTER 2

SPECIAL VISITORS AND LOCAL BOARDS

Special Visitors

In the period before Sir John Franklin created his Board of Education in May 1839, public schooling consisted of a number of schools, scattered throughout the island, funded partly by government, but under the direct supervision of Church of England clergy. The government paid salaries to the teachers and rents on buildings used as schools. In 1838, there were 30 such schools with 960 children enrolled, an average daily attendance of 747 (or 75%) of whom 433 (45% of enrolled number) attended Church service and Sunday School.1 The teachers were either Anglican clergymen or masters appointed by them and responsible to them.

The schools of the island had been inspected from 1823 by an Anglican clergyman in the southern half and a Police Magistrate operating in the northern half.2 Later, the work of inspection was undertaken by Anglican clergy only, the Rural Dean and the Archdeacon.3 The schools suffered from the lack of a system which stemmed largely from the inability of the Archdeacon to place and maintain a rector in each parish in the colony. The consequences for the

1. AOT CSO 8/122/2996-3033. Report of Commission of enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges, 1845, Table A, Tabular View of the Public Day Schools of Van Diemen's Land for the years 1836-37-38 and the first half of 1839.

2. Ibid., p.59.

3. Ibid., p.60.
education system were evident as the Rural Dean had perceived in 1837:

I am deeply sensible... that until all the schools shall be occasionally visited by the same person for investigating their real condition and establishing a uniform and effective system of education throughout they will never attain that degree of efficiency to be desired and reasonably to be expected.4

Franklin's first regulations, gazetted in December, 1838, recognised the existence of 'Ministers of more than one denomination of Christians' and the support they received from revenue5. He proposed that a Board of Education be created, to consist of 'certain Public Officers, including the Judges, members of both Councils and the clergy of every denomination'6. All schools receiving government support were to be under the Board's direction and religious teaching was to be given 'in accordance with the principles of the Church to which the majority of the children attending the [the school] at its commencement may belong'.7 Franklin thought his plan to be the least objectionable of all plans for public education and the Church of England, representing seven out of every ten free persons in the colony and having the largest number of clergy, embraced the proposal eagerly. But other denominations objected to the proposal:

In a community such as ours composed of persons of all religious denominations, scanty in point of numbers, and dispersed

4 Ibid., p.7.
5 VPLC 1837-42. Address by Lieutenant-Governor to the Legislative Council, 30.6.38, p.48.
6 Ibid., p.49.
7 Ibid.
over a wide area of country, it is manifestly impracticable to establish separate schools for the children of the different denominations of Christians, and it would as manifestly be unjust and impolitic to establish them on principles so limited as to exclude from them the children of every denomination but one. Such a measure would be unworthy of the paternal care of the Government.  

Signatories to this and other petitions included the most senior clergy amongst the Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Independent denominations and prominent merchants and landowners. In response, Franklin withdrew his proposal and, in May 1938, issued regulations for a new board to be composed entirely of officials and governor's appointees. All clergy were to have free access to the schools in which daily Bible study was a requirement. The teaching of doctrine would take place in Sunday Schools which the Government offered to assist. Many members of 'warring and jarring sects', adherents of the Churches of Rome and Scotland, Independents, Baptists and Methodists approved Franklin's plan. In total, 886 people petitioned the Governor in support of his new Board. But clergy of the Church of England objected that:

The undoubted effect of Your Excellency's appointment of a Board of School Management will be, not merely the depriving the Church of England Chaplains of any direct control over the Schools, but their complete exclusion as religious instructors of the children.

---

8 JLC 1840. Petitions in favour of Government schools, petition from Landholders, Merchants and other Inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land, pp.13-17 (no dates).

9 Ibid., p.9.

10 Ibid., pp.13-17.

11 Ibid., p.39.
Archdeacon William Hutchins had objected, some months earlier, to the proposal of May 1839 and, in September of that year, he withdrew his clergy from supervision of the government schools. The Colonial Secretary wrote:

> It is painful to observe, that a majority of the Clergy of the Church of England in this Colony feel it to be their duty to withhold from the Schools that countenance and cooperation which His Excellency conceives would so greatly contribute to the advancement of children in religious knowledge.\(^{12}\)

In November 1839, Franklin's Regulations were published with the appeal that:

> In each district the Ordained Ministers, Police Magistrates, and respectable inhabitants, interested in the education of the rising generation are earnestly requested to communicate with the Board whenever they have any suggestions to offer which may tend to the benefit of the Schools.\(^{13}\)

The teacher was required to keep a journal of admission and submit a quarterly return. The journal had to contain the name, age and date of admission of each child, how far advanced the child was in his or her schooling, the religious denomination of the parents and the date and cause of removal. Also required of the teacher was information, gained from each child on Monday morning, concerning which Sunday School he or she had attended the day before. Each

---

12 Ibid., Colonial Secretary's reply to the Petition of the clergy of the Church of England, 20.2.40, p.46.

school was provided with a visitor's book in which the names of visitors and the dates of visits were to be entered. Visitors were allowed to read the journal of admission and details of Sunday School attendance. The regulation concerning religious instruction forbade the teaching of catechism or commentary or exposition on the Scriptures.

From the beginning, the visitor system yielded mixed results. In his Report for 1845, the Secretary, Charles Bradbury, revealed the range of interest shown in the public schools by the visitors. At Back River, a Mr. Lightfoot visited frequently; at Bothwell, Rev. Mr. Robertson and Mr. Barrow made constant and frequent visits; Green Ponds School was visited constantly by Mr. Beazley; Launceston School had had 57 visits made to it in 1844 and at Westbury, Rev. Mr. Bishton gave constant supervision, although he was the only visitor. At the Liverpool Street School, Hobart, Bradbury reported that:

There [had] been two public examinations of the School lately.... the latter was held in the evening in order that parents might attend. On both occasions there was a large attendance of visitors upwards of 60 ladies and gentlemen being present, including several clergymen of the Church of Scotland and the Dissenting Communions.

14 Ibid., p.10.
16 Ibid., p.23.
17 Ibid., p.56.
18 Ibid., p.82.
19 Ibid., p.137.
20 Ibid., p.64.
In 1845, Bothwell School had had 39 visits, presumably made by Robertson and Barrow\textsuperscript{21}; Rev. Mr. Simpson made weekly visits to the Glenorchy School and eight other visits were made\textsuperscript{22}; Longford School had been visited 57 times in 1844 (but only 14 times in 1845)\textsuperscript{23} and at Evandale a public examination took place 'at which the Police Magistrate, the Rev. Mr. Russell and several of the neighbouring gentry and Parents of the Children were present'\textsuperscript{24}

On the other hand, a number of schools were scarcely visited from one year to the next or for several years. New Town School had had four visits in 1844\textsuperscript{25}; Oatlands had had four also in 1844\textsuperscript{26}; Sandy Bay had had a few passing calls\textsuperscript{27}; Kangaroo Point School had had none\textsuperscript{28}. In 1845, Campbell Town School had been visited three times only\textsuperscript{29}; Cressy School had had 'very few' visits\textsuperscript{30}; New Town School, in 1845, was 'but little visited by any one - the Rev. Messrs. Ewing, Freeman and Forster's names appear at long intervals.... no private individuals visited the School and up to the present time of this year only two

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., Secretary's Report for 1846, p.180.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p.216.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p.244.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p.320.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., Secretary's Report for 1845, p.95.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p.110.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p.132.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p.142.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., Secretary's Report for 1846, p.196.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p.203.
persons have called';

31 at Sorell School, Bradbury remarked that Rev. Mr. Dugall, Church of Scotland, 'does not visit..... very frequently';

32 Sandy Bay School had had no visitors in 1845 and 'no one appear[ed] to take the slightest interest in it' and nine visits had been made to Campbell Street School, Hobart, for 1845 and 1846.

Some members of the Church of England, unwilling to accept the Board's Regulations which, in effect, deprived their church of supervisory control of the public schools, visited the schools in 1843 and saw, or thought they saw, 'laxity, sectarianism, and partiality' in the system. The Board replied to the charges published by Rev. H.P. Fry, and J.D. Loch, one of his parishioners, after the newly arrived Bishop, F.R. Nixon, took up their cause and supported them in their attack. The Board's reply was printed in full in its Report for 1843 and a number of charges were found to be false or unwarranted. The very detailed rebuttal notwithstanding, a Commission of Enquiry was ordered in 1845 by the Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, to enquire into Loch's charges. The Commission, made up of three Anglican laymen, found, inter alia:

Efforts appear to have been repeatedly made with a view to procure efficient local Superintendence of the schools by persons residing in the neighbourhood, but up to the

31 Ibid., p.249.
32 Ibid., p.290.
33 Ibid., p.298.
34 Ibid., p.361.
35 J. West, The History of Tasmania, p.167.
present time with very little success. The Magistrates who were \textit{ex-officio} visitors, have with one or two exceptions taken no interest in the schools. The public generally in the Interior have rarely visited them, and almost the only persons who have given the schools the advantages of their occasional presence and encouragement have been the Wesleyan, Independent and sometimes the Scotch Ministers. The Clergy of the Church of England have with rare exceptions held themselves altogether aloof from them; and in those instances in which the Chaplains have devoted their attention in some degree to the schools, it will be found, that nearly all the children belonged to their own Church, frequently the Master was of the same persuasion, and, in point of fact, the school itself might in the general character be designated a Church of England school.\textsuperscript{37}

Conscious neglect of the schools and an indifference to the progress and well-being of the children, even those children of their own denomination, characterised all but three or four of the Church of England clergy. Some, however, were not at all opposed to the use of their clerical authority and social standing to persuade or frighten children and their parents to adopt the Anglican faith. But neither was this missionary endeavour confined to Church of England clergy.

It is not surprising that the most watchful and zealous Pastors of whatever denomination should be able to collect within their fold many that would remain in practical indifference.\textsuperscript{38}

This activity the Commission attributed to the parents as a consequence of the little regard they paid to the religious instruction imparted to their children in the public schools and their indifference 'to the Sunday

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., pp.105-06.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p.130.
Schools which their children attend, or whether they go to any at all. Mr. and Mrs. Connor, both Independents, who were trained at the Borough Road School and who were placed in charge of the Liverpool Street School, Hobart, complained to the Commission that, since one or two day schools had been opened nearby by Church of England clergymen, children had been drawn off from the government day schools 'by the repeated solicitations addressed to Parents of the Children'. The presence of a denominational school close to a public school was sometimes enough to unsettle the minds of parents as to which school they should send their children. This form of mild tyranny was held to be a cause of low attendance in the public schools.

The Commission's findings on local superintendence was similar to those of Bradbury in the same year and the year following. The majority of the schools in the interior had rarely been visited except by the Secretary and Dissenting clergy. The Anglican clergy and Police Magistrates had, with a few exceptions, taken no interest in the schools whatsoever. The clergyman at Richmond showed no interest in the local school and the Commission thought it remarkable that Mr. Aislabie, his predecessor, 'never visited the school, although he sent one of his own children to be instructed there'. The 'Scotch clergyman' was the

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., p.165.
41 Ibid., p.268.
42 Ibid., pp.266-69.
43 Ibid., pp.134-35.
44 Ibid., p.192.
only visitor to Sorell School.\textsuperscript{45} New Norfolk School suffered from 'a great want of local superintendence and encouragement to the Master',\textsuperscript{46} as did the schools at Oatlands\textsuperscript{47} and Longford which had not had a visit by a Church of England clergyman since 1842.\textsuperscript{48} But, as Bradbury had also reported, some schools were well supported. In 1844, the Launceston School had been visited more often than any other school in the island. A number of clergy visited frequently, but no Church of England clergymen visited the school in 1844.\textsuperscript{49}

The reasons for the withdrawal of Anglican clergy from their responsibilities as supervisors of the public schools were succinctly expressed by Archdeacon Hutchins and Dr. William Bedford, senior chaplain, who had been directly connected with education in Van Diemen's Land since 1823. Their grounds were that the 'Catechism of the Church of England was not allowed to be used' in the public schools, and, as Bedford testified to the Commission of Enquiry in 1845:

\begin{quote}
[I could not] compatibly with my office as a Minister of the Church of England put myself under a Dissenting School Master over whom I could have no control; and further considered I should be setting a bad example to the children of my own communion by giving my support to what I considered an injurious mode of Education; and lastly it would have had the effect of placing the Dissenting Minister and the Clergymen of the Church of England on the same footing.\textsuperscript{50}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Ibid.}, p.194.
\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Ibid.}, p.209.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Ibid.}, p.244.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid.}, p.280.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.272-73.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}, p.63.
Bedford would surely have anticipated that the outcome of Anglican withdrawal from the field would have been its occupation by the Dissenters and the loss of attendance by children from church to chapel and he admitted that such was the case\textsuperscript{51}. But there was no going back for the Anglicans and with the arrival of their new Bishop in 1843 they found comfort and support. The Dissenters, however, were hardly numerous enough to discharge all the educational responsibilities abandoned by the Anglicans and supervision of the public schools by ministers of religion remained thereafter a serious weakness in the maintenance of an effective public school system.

It was frequently stated, though the truth of the statement was rarely questioned, that regular superintendence by interested visitors, cleric or lay, was essential to the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the public schools. Franklin's Regulations of the Free Day Schools, 1839, had made the point plain in its earnest request to enlist the support of clergy, magistrates and respectable inhabitants for the new schools. The Regulations asked no more of these visitors than the offering of suggestions for improving the schools, thus leaving the way open for visits, consultation with like-minded visitors, teachers and the Secretary and contact with members of the Board. The absence of specific requirements or functions in the Regulations accords with the invitation to professional men and respectable inhabitants, none of whom necessarily had had experience in the co-operative management of a public school and few of whom would have spent their childhood days in such or similar schools. It was not experience or expert knowledge,
however, that was looked for in a visitor, but rather his standing in the community. The kinds of people that Franklin and Bradbury wished to encourage were similar to those who had signed the petitions of 1839 in support of the schools proposed by Franklin. They included landowners of large and small properties, merchants of considerable and lesser wealth, solicitors, Justices of the Peace, magistrates and medical practitioners. The simplest requirement was that an interest would be taken in the schools and the expectation formed by Franklin was that such civic mindedness and the example of moral rectitude set in their personal and public lives by visitors would induce a more efficient organisation of the schools in order to provide an elementary education and 'to carry out lessons of piety and morality'.

The great difficulty standing in the way of the gaining of these objectives was the poor quality of the teachers. This crucial matter will be examined in detail in the chapter on curriculum, but it is important here to show, not only the lack of qualifications and experience of many teachers, but their moral unsuitability:

We cannot too strongly represent the importance of selecting proper masters. They should, in every case, be men of unblemished moral character.

T.G. Gregson, land owner and Member of the Legislative Council, in 1850, put the resolution to the Council


that no convict or emancipist could become a teacher.\(^5^4\)

In his report on Hobart's parochial schools in 1851, Rev. Arthur Davenport gave 'the defective moral fitness of some of [the] Schoolmasters' as a reason for the more secular character of Tasmanian parochial schools compared with their English counterparts.\(^5^5\)

Governor Denison, in appealing to Legislative Council members to do their duty by themselves and their children by assisting the schools in their work, sounded the much gloomier warning that the larger purpose of education was 'to neutralise the evil effects of the vice and immorality which have been inculcated [in the children], if not by the words, at all events by the example, of the parents.'\(^5^6\)

The agents acting for, or even in the place of, inefficient teachers were the visitors. In the perception of some observers, by their supervision of the work of the schools, the visitors were the crucial element in the moral reformation of society. Denison, in explaining the lack of success of Franklin's scheme, pointed to the opposition to it by the clergy of the Church of England and the fact that 'the attempt to induce a system of local supervision and control, without which no School can be carried on effectively, has altogether failed'.\(^5^7\) His remedy was to throw the whole expense of the schools 'upon the inhabitants for

---


\(^{55}\) AOT NS 373/244. Report upon the Parochial Schools within the Archdeaconry of Hobart town, 1851, p.3.


\(^{57}\) Ibid., p.2.
whose benefit they exist.\textsuperscript{58} He proposed that complete control of the funds be vested in a committee elected annually by the rate-payers who would select the teacher and arrange 'the character of the education to be afforded'\textsuperscript{59} The essence of the system, he argued, lay in its application to particular localities, and its power of adaptation to the peculiar wants of these localities.\textsuperscript{60} Denison's visitors were to become the engines of social change 'in a country where the benefits of education are by no means appreciated as they ought to be by those classes to whom it is most desirable they should be extended'\textsuperscript{61}. In this context, Denison can be seen not only as the initiator of school committees and visitors to whom he assigned managerial tasks, but of committees and visitors drawn from the respectable classes who would act as schoolmasters outside the classroom, as moral guardians and as models of socially accepted behaviour for emulation by the lower classes. Denison's visitors and committee members were intended to be more powerful instruments of change than Franklin's visitors.

Despite the urgency and earnestness of his appeal, however, Denison's Bill was rejected by the Legislative Council which refused to contemplate imposition of the extra taxation upon which the plan depended. Thus the loosely organised scheme of school visits by Special Visitors, as provided for in the 1839 Regulations, continued as the only means of support for teachers and local communities. The Board's circulars that were issued to visitors. deferential since visitors were not

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.}, p.4.

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Ibid.}, p.5.
paid officials of the Board, were guarded in their instructions. Visitors, it was suggested, should avail themselves of:

The means of counteracting, as far as possible, the tendency too frequently met with among parents of the humbler class to keep their children from School on account of the value of their services at home.62

And in a later circular:

It is hoped that punctuality and regularity of attendance will in all cases be insisted on.63

As a support to the Special Visitor system, visits by other interested persons were encouraged by the Board, although they had no official standing and their work was therefore of a more informal kind than that of Special Visitor. From time to time, groups of ladies, understood to be women who were unlikely to have children of their own at public schools, would visit them, although their work was sporadic and infrequent. Public school buildings, public school children and teachers were not congenial environments or companions. The Commission of Enquiry of 1845, in its report of a visit to Campbell Street School, wrote:

We found that no Ladies have visited the School, although a main argument urged sometimes, for separation of the Girls from the Boys, is that Ladies then have no scruples at visiting the Girls School.64

---

62 AOT ED 43/1. Copies of Circulars, 1856-1893, Circular No.1, no date, but 1856, addressed to School Visitors, p.3.

63 Ibid., Regulation for the admission of children of destitute parents, 9.4.61, p.11.

Women played an insignificant part as school visitors and only in a small number of schools did they organise themselves into formal groups or committees. Men showed a greater concern and interest in the schools and, not uncommonly, formed committees to have schools built and maintain supervision. Enthusiasm often waned, however, as Bradbury’s Report for 1846 on Launceston Infant School shows:

There is a large Committee of resident Gentlemen who in the promotion of Education established the School and nominally undertake its supervision and government, yet it has scarcely ever been visited by one of them, the last visit having been made in the early part of 1842 – upwards of four years ago!! Not a single book is supplied, those in use consist of 5 or 6 spelling books and Scripture extracts, all purchased by the Mistress. There is not a Bible belonging to the School and the few slates in the School were furnished six years ago. The Mistress also complained that she could not obtain the payment of her salary from the Committee, £43 of this now being in arrears, and that consequently she was frequently subjected to the greatest inconvenience in providing things absolutely necessary for her support.65

The school at Oatlands, he wrote, was ‘not much visited, our Special Visitors have scarcely even been within the doors’66. Bradbury, in the previous year, complaining that the Governor had failed to confer their offices upon those who had been invited to act as Special Visitors, reported:

---


I look upon this as an important circumstance, doing away as it does with the imputation of indifference which I believe the Board had always thought attached itself to those Gentlemen who after undertaking the duty, had failed to perform it.\(^\text{67}\)

Other public reports show that the Special Visitor system, a sickly offspring of Franklin's Board from birth, never recovered throughout its existence from 1839 to 1868. The indifference shown by members of the respectable class, the very class which Franklin and Denison, amongst others, regarded as a crucial component of the public education system, was chronic, enduring and universal. Indifference emerged often in the form of reluctance or even objection. Philip Smith, a man of great landed wealth who was noted widely for his public spiritedness, was fined £5 in 1851 for failing to attend for jury service at Oatlands Court House. Smith pleaded that the distance between his home and the Court House was greater than 25 miles, beyond which distance attendance was not required. For good measure, in his letter of explanation, he wrote that he was an Attorney and Barrister of the Supreme Court. The Colonial Secretary sought the opinion of the Chief Justice who replied, \textit{inter alia}:

\begin{quote}
I think it of great importance that the attendance of the better educated of the persons liable to serve as jurors should be enforced: and yet it is from this class that the greater number of excuses come; they are so numerous that I feel myself bound to ascertain as well as I can that they are really well founded, not only for the foregoing reason, but in justice to those that do attend.\(^\text{68}\)
\end{quote}

\(^{67}\) AOT CSO11/32/683. Secretary's Report for 1845, p.156.

\(^{68}\) AOT CSO 24/275/5654. Correspondence. Letter from Chief Justice, Sir John Pedder, to Colonial Secretary, 6.2.51. The Colonial Secretary later requested the Director-General of Roads, 13.2.51,
A man of 'a certain acrid and repellant humour which made him more generally feared than loved', Smith may have been - or, at least, Thomas Arnold thought him so69 - but his action, clearly, was almost an expected response as a member of the respectable class. Perhaps it was in anticipation of meeting indifference that Arnold wrote to the Colonial Secretary before setting out on a tour of inspection of schools in the island in 1853:

The Board of Inspection.... should be at liberty, before visiting any school, to invite some magistrate resident in the district to be present and assist in their proceedings. Influential settlers might thus perhaps be led to take an interest in the Education system, which might be productive of much good.70

The tour was undertaken by a Board of Inspection made up of Arnold and three representatives of the churches, the Presbyterian, Dr. John Lillie, 'a preacher of perfervid eloquence and a man of decided ability'; Father William Hall, Vicar-General, who 'had a mortified countenance and [who] spoke little' and Archdeacon Rowland Davies, 'a genial ready-witted, kind-hearted Irishman, one of a class that is becoming much more rare than formerly, since the era of disestablishment'71. This unlikely set of travelling

to have the distance measured. In a letter from A. Thompson of the Tunbridge Road Station, 24.3.51, the Colonial Secretary was informed that the distance was 26 miles, 57 chains. Presumably, Smith's £5 fine was refunded.

69 T. Arnold, Passages in a Wandering Life, p.132.
70 AOT CSO 24/274/5637. Letter from Thomas Arnold to Colonial Secretary, 16.4.53.
companions presented a brief, bluntly-worded report and among their recommendations was the proposal for the establishment of a Visiting Board for the purpose of ascertaining the qualifications of candidates for the situation of master, and also for the periodical examination of the schools, the results of which should be published.\textsuperscript{72} The intention was to displace the Management Committees which had been formed in some schools and which, as Bradbury had written in 1846 in connection with the Launceston Infant School, were almost universally ineffective. The Board's suggestion was not taken up and though the Government, as it stated when it created a Central Board of Education following the report of the itinerant Board of Inspection, '[was] disposed to lay great stress on the necessity of local supervision to the success of a School',\textsuperscript{73} the system of Special Visitors and other visitors remained until 1868 as the only means of providing local supervision.

Arnold wrote in his memoirs that 'nothing is more dull and wearisome than the details of school work and school management'\textsuperscript{74} and he kept his word not to write about them. Nothing, it might also be said, is more dull and wearisome than the citing of a mass of minute, detailed evidence in support of a case, the truth of which can be abundantly attested. And so it is with the case of the inefficiency of Special Visitors and the system which some of them tried to

\textsuperscript{72} VPLC III 1853, paper 46. Report of Board of Inspection on the State of the Public Schools of the Island, 1853, p.5.

\textsuperscript{73} AOT CSO 24/239/9376. Government Notice, appointment of a Central Board of Education, 31.10.53.

\textsuperscript{74} T. Arnold, \textit{op. cit.}, p.127.
make effective. Thus, examples of their continuing ineffectiveness throughout the 1850's will suffice, for the examples of their effectiveness are very few. Year in, year out, annual reports of the Board of Education testify to the weakness of the system of local supervision:

Schools generally do not receive from resident persons of station and influence that supervision and attention which so materially contribute to their efficiency. (1842)\textsuperscript{75}

The Schools, with few exceptions, are seldom visited by Clergymen, or other persons. (1848)\textsuperscript{76}

Both with regard to books and apparatus, I am sorry to say that there are few Schools in the Island where the supply is not most insufficient. This is a matter which School-managers should carefully look into; for they cannot expect the business of the Schoolmaster to prosper unless the necessary tools and materials of his calling are liberally provided. (1853)\textsuperscript{77}

Since under the present system local School management is not encouraged, much less insisted on, it becomes incumbent on the Board to provide for a complete and effective system of inspection. (1854)\textsuperscript{78}

In many schools, not only Ministers of Religion, but other influential neighbours also, whose visits would greatly encourage the Teachers, and promote the attendance of children, are never seen. (1856)\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{75} Annual Report for 1842, p.2.
\textsuperscript{76} Annual Report for 1848, p.2.
\textsuperscript{77} Inspector's Report for 1853, p.4.
\textsuperscript{78} Inspector's Report for 1854, p.7.
\textsuperscript{79} Inspector's Report for 1856, p.5.
My Report... will show that very few of the Public Schools in Town or Country have any local supervision, and, with the exception of a visit from the Inspector twice or thrice in the year, and it may be a Minister of Religion at distant intervals, in many of the Schools not one visit is recorded in the whole year. I know that in some cases the inhabitants have not been aware that the School is open for public inspection, in others it is feared that visits might be considered by the Master to convey distrust, but in the majority of instances no doubt it arises from indifference and a want of sympathy in the cause of Education. (1857)  

From the character of the majority of the Parents, [in the Franklin district] there is a want of combination - perhaps in the leading settlers a want of such consideration for the families of the labouring classes as to ensure their influence in favour of the work of education. (1858)  

[The teacher's] task would be much lightened were there any feeling in Tasmania resembling that in England, where nearly every country gentleman and country lady looks upon the village school as a place to visit, which is their duty and their pleasure. [1860]  

There are few instances, cited in the annual reports of the Board of Education, of individuals, by their participation and interest, improving the effectiveness of schools and their operations. There are some instances, however, from the reports of one Inspector, J.J. Stutzer, whose report, or an extract from it, concerning the example set by English gentlemen and ladies, has been quoted above. Stutzer, who was a graduate and 'a very finished scholar', had  

80 Inspector's Report for 1857, p.15.  
82 Southern Board of Education, Inspector's Report for 1860, p.27.  
83 Mercury 9.11.74, p.4.
had no experience of teaching before the Board appointed him an Inspector in 1859. Apart from his comparison of the Tasmanian respectable class with that of England, he makes no adverse criticism of the Tasmanians. On three occasions, however, he writes of the efficiency of the school at Mona Vale, its high attendance rates and the proficiency of its pupils. Following on from his views on English gentlemen and ladies, he wrote:

Here scarcely anything of the kind exists, except at Mona Vale, where Mrs. Kermode devotes two hours every day to the instruction of the children.84

Otherwise, there is no instance cited in the annual reports of the Board of Education, in the period to 1868, of School Visitors acting in an organised or co-operative way with other visitors or residents, or of a Management Committee carrying out its tasks and thereby gaining the recognition of the Board for improving the efficiency of a school, the donation of land and buildings excepted.

Local Boards

The work of the local boards from shortly after their establishment by the Act of 1868 gave no promise that they would carry out their tasks with any greater efficiency than the Special Visitor system which it displaced. The returns of Hobart and Launceston schools giving details of the number of meetings of Local Boards over a two year period, 1870-71, shows

84 Inspector's Report for 1860, p.27.
great variation. By the legislation, no Local Board was to have a membership of more than seven. Only one Hobart Board had a membership of 7. The returns show that the others had, respectively, 3, 4, 4, 5, 8 and 8 members - the last two containing the names, in addition, of replacements - suggesting that, even with the first flush of interest following the passing of the Act, membership was not keenly sought. The Boards that met most frequently, Central (13 times) and Murray Street (19) had some members who showed only a passing interest in the Board's work. At Central School Board meetings a full attendance was never achieved; three meetings had 6 in attendance, 5 meetings had 5 attending and so on. At Murray Street School, with 19 meetings of the Board, a full attendance of 5 members took place on two occasions only. Four members were present at six meetings, three at nine meetings and two at two meetings; thus a number of meetings took place, and decisions were taken, when a bare quorum was present.

At the three Launceston schools, a total of only two meetings took place. The Board of Margaret

85 HAJ XXII, 1871, paper 120. Board of Education, Return of Local Boards in Launceston and Hobart during two years previous to 31st October last with list of functions and duties of local Boards appended.

86 Ibid., pp.3-4.


88 HAJ XXII 1871, paper 120. Return of Local Boards, p.3.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid., pp.3-4.

91 Ibid., p.4.
Street School did not meet at all in the two year period; the Elizabeth Street School Board did not hold its first meeting until almost two years after the first Hobart Board held its meeting and the Board of Frederick Street School held no meetings in 1869 or 1871 and one only in 1870. Many of the members of these Hobart and Launceston Boards had had long-standing connection with schools, some in the office of Special Visitor. Twenty of the 59 were clergy and almost all of them had had some connection with schools of their own denomination or with public schools but the introduction of Local Boards did nothing to excite their interest.

In a broad sense, the negligence or indifference shown by the Local Boards of Hobart and Launceston and, as will be seen, by rural Boards in the early months of their being, both maintained the attitudes of their predecessors, the Special Visitors, and set the pattern for future Boards, regardless of the legislative or regulatory changes that were later to be made to their powers and functions. The composition of the membership of the Local Boards remained the same as the committees and Special Visitors - 'the gentry of influence in the neighbourhood, the magistrates and clergymen', as The Mercury had characterised them in 1858. There was a belief, as noted above, expressed by Franklin, Denison and Stutzer, amongst others, that, in the country districts especially, a form of leadership in educational matters exercised by people of high social standing was sufficient to persuade

92 Ibid.
93 Ibid., pp. 3-4.
94 Mercury 10.2.58, p.2. See also Mercury 17.5.72, p.2., for complaints that Special Visitors and Boards had not improved.
parents to send their children to school, raise the
level of interest in education and provide school
houses, books and equipment. Attendance at Board
meetings may have been an irksome duty to all except a
few, but, their lack of interest in the day-to-day
affairs of the schools notwithstanding, a considerable
number of propertied men were willing to make donations
or gifts of various kinds.

In 1850, two years after the Legislative Council
had rejected Denison's scheme for the funding of
education by local rates, Arnold reported that a large
number of schools had been built or maintained by
subscription, donation or other forms of assistance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Donation of Land</th>
<th>Donation of Bldg</th>
<th>Rent Free</th>
<th>Nominal Rent of Land</th>
<th>Nominal Rent of Bldg</th>
<th>Subscriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Brush</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bream Creek</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown's River</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deloraine</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Creek</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenton Forest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcett</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Ponds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobart, Trinity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Donation of Land Bldg.</td>
<td>Rent Free</td>
<td>Nominal Rent Land Bldg.</td>
<td>Subscriptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobart, St. George's</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illawarra</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston, St. John's</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston, Ladies School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Corners</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk Plains</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouse Bridge</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterson's Plains</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontville</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorell Rivulet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo Point</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corners, Macquarie Plains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus of the 73 schools controlled by the Board in 1850, 24 were conducted at no cost, or nominal cost. In succeeding years, land owners and property owners were less inclined to donate land or buildings or ask for peppercorn rents. The 1883 Royal Commission heard evidence from the Chairman of 82 of the 183 Local Boards. They were asked whether their school buildings were vested in the Board, rented or were rent free. Only seven were 'placed at the disposal of the Board gratuitously', and of these, five — possibly all seven, because two of the answers were unclear in meaning — were schools conducted in buildings owned by religious groups. 96

In the period from the formation of the Local Boards under the 1868 Act to their reconstruction as Boards of Advice under the 1885 Act, the powers of the Boards remained unchanged. Reports on their first year of operation by Stephens were that, in the country districts, far more local interest was being shown than under the old system. He expected interest to increase wherever schools came under fairly efficient management. 97 In the following year, however, sensing that interest was declining rather than increasing, Stephens and fellow Inspector, Murray Burgess, pointed to the efforts of the more energetic Boards being neutralised by 'the total absence of anything like a local School fund out of which to defray part of the cost of those petty details of expenditure which are


97 Inspector's Report for 1869, p.18.
indispensable to the well-being of the Schools'.

Even though the Central Board continued to pay two-thirds of the costs of repairs and maintenance, many districts were unable to raise the one-third cost. Obviously, interest in the schools and local funding went hand in hand and the level of one affected the level of the other. Stephens' remedy, as he had urged for the previous fourteen years, was to pass over some of the government grant to local Boards.

Burgess put all of his faith in the striking of a local rate, but the experience of the early sixties with the attempt to pass a Public Schools Bill, showed that the municipalities were adamant in their rejection of the scheme. A petition of the Warden and Councillors of the Oatlands Municipality is representative:

Your petitioners... cannot but view the object of the said Bill with much alarm, believing that it would lead to the imposition of a burdensome local taxation for educational purposes alone. Your petitioners consider it unwise, impolitic, unnecessary and inopportune to shift the work of establishing and controlling the public schools in the country from the existing central authority to the jurisdiction of Municipal Councils upon the grant-in-aid principle, and that such a project would but uselessly encumber the machinery of municipal action in the colony, only now in its infancy.

98 Inspector's Report for 1870, pp.18,19.
99 Ibid., p.18.
100 Ibid., p.19.
101 Mercury 22.8.63, p.2.
102 Mercury 11.8.63, p.2.
Considerable ill feeling existed at the same time between the districts, Launceston in particular, and Hobart. The 'good folks of Hobart Town', Stephens wrote to The Mercury:

> Were not required to put their hands in their pockets in order to secure grants towards the erection of schoolhouses and they naturally abstained from an unnecessary display of liberality. The Northern Board, on the other hand, had to pay in the shape of rent for schoolhouses imperfectly adapted to their requirements a sum which would have sufficed for the maintenance of two schools in rural districts.\(^{103}\)

Stephens also pointed out the unequal distribution between the Northern and Southern Boards of government appropriations for maintenance of schools, to the disadvantage of the northern schools. For their part, municipalities, in their strong opposition to a local rate, were confident that political pressure from the districts when applied to Parliament would restore equity between districts. There were also strong feelings expressed that a local rate, by reducing or stopping the amounts of money distributed through the Board of Education to the districts, would do harm to the national character of a system of public education.\(^{104}\)

Perhaps by 1871 Stephens had already acknowledged the failings of the Local Board system. In that year, he gently chided the Boards for the failure of some members to understand the nature of their responsibilities towards the maintenance of school property.\(^{105}\)

\(^{103}\) *Mercury* 18.8.63, p.3.

\(^{104}\) *Mercury* 11.8.63, p.3.

\(^{105}\) Chief Inspector's Report for 1871, p.17.
One year later the tone is sharper. He acknowledged that some members of Local Boards were well suited to their offices:

But there is another side to the picture [which shows] that the local authority sometimes gets into the hands of persons who are in every respect unfitted to exercise it. 106

The problem of Local Boards coming under the control of a chairman who was unsuited to the task was rather more a problem of such a person being left to do all the work of the Local Board because of the neglect or indifference of the other members. Neither the Central Board nor Parliament could enforce attendance at meetings of these unpaid bureaucrats of the bush and neither could they cause them to show greater interest in their work. One means of creating greater interest by Local Board members was the creation or passing over from the Central Board of new powers. But it was this very proposal which Stephens and Butler refused to countenance. On this point they were resolute. The Boards were concerned with duties which lay outside the school walls—matters such as the enforcement of regular attendance at school, the payment of fees, maintenance of school buildings and the protection of teachers from 'petty local tyranny', wrote Stephens in 1873, 107 but:

The duty of ascertaining whether the general management, course of instruction, and standard of proficiency, are in accordance with the regulations of the Public School system can only be performed by special officers responsible to one central

authority, and acting under professional direction. 108

The Central Board would neither yield its powers and neither would it substantially extend the powers of Local Boards. Yet its own capacities to pursue the tasks assigned to it under the Regulations were seriously undermined by the inability of Local Boards to create the most fundamental and necessary conditions for the exercise of Central Board powers and thus the improvement of public education. The Central Board, though possessed by law of greater powers, was, paradoxically, dependent on the Local Boards to provide it with the means of improving public education, that is, the enforcement of regular attendance, the collection of fees and the maintenance of buildings. Far from the Local Boards being small groups of petty bureaucratic functionaries with little to do, as some of them regarded themselves, their usefulness was vital to the functioning of the whole system. Since this was so, there was no question of their being done away with or their responsibilities being taken over by paid officials such as Inspectors, Police or truant officers.

Several schemes of improvement were suggested. Since it was thought undesirable that the functions of the Local Boards should be extended, proposals concerning their structure were aired:

Opinions differ widely as to the desirableness of committing the local supervision of Schools to the District Councils, but all appear to be agreed that the plan of having separate organisations, often with conflicting aims and interests, in connection with each and all of the Public

108 Ibid.
Schools, is open to many and grave objections.\textsuperscript{109}

The merging of Local Boards into Municipal Councils was raised from time to time after the failure of the 1863 Bill, but no action was taken thereafter until the early years of the twentieth century. Stephens' remedy, and that of the Board of Education, lay in the proposition that if there were fewer Local Boards, their powers would be extended and the interest of members and their efficiency improved. The amalgamation of all the Local Boards within an area and their consequent responsibility for a larger number of schools:

Would greatly facilitate the despatch of business, and might make it possible to assign to the local agencies a larger measure of authority than can be entrusted to those which now exist.\textsuperscript{110}

His use of the word 'entrusted' indicates that he held the view that a reduction of the number of Boards would also reduce the number of those considered unfitted to exercise authority. And the word suggests that some Local Board members had abused their position. In fact, Stephens alluded to three cases which had recently been brought to the Board's attention and which hinted at abuse or even corruption of a minor kind. He had written to the Warden of Bothwell Municipality in that vein, a few years earlier, saying that each Special Visitor had his own way of interpreting the Board's Regulations especially as they concerned the granting of free education to some children but not others, and adding:

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
You can fancy how the regulations may be worked by an unscrupulous special visitor who has a purpose to serve.¹¹¹

Such cases were not common, but they were sufficiently numerous to increase the number of complaints by some 'poor but respectable', parents, that they paid their children's fees while others 'who got equal or higher wages' obtained a free education for their children.¹¹²

There is little to be gained from citing evidence of the continuing ineffectiveness of the Local Boards in the seventies and until their reconstruction in the 1885 Public Education Act, if only because the inefficiency of the system was never seriously disputed. Stephens was willing to acknowledge, no matter how guarded he may have been in his choice of words, that, instances of successful Local Boards notwithstanding, the system had not functioned effectively from its earliest days. Yet any prospect of improving their effectiveness, any chance of assigning specific tasks to the Local Boards without, at the same time, impinging on the powers and authority of the Central Board were extremely unlikely. In 1871, Stephens suggested in his annual report that:

Valuable aid might be rendered by the Members of Local Boards if they would undertake to see that the rules and instructions of the Central Board are faithfully carried out in every School.¹¹³

But he went on immediately to say that:

¹¹¹ AOT ED 38. Letter from Thomas Stephens, Inspector of Schools, to A. McDowall, Warden, Bothwell Council, 31.7.66.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Chief Inspector's Report for 1871, p.17.
This would often be a troublesome and unpleasant duty, and its strict performance could hardly be expected from those who hold an honorary and irresponsible office.\(^{114}\)

If it was asking too much of members of Local Boards to carry out the Central Board's instructions, the very essence of their task, one wonders what other tasks and responsibilities, no matter how important, no matter how tedious, could have been asked of them. Stephens' purpose in putting this point to the Local Boards, however, was really to defend the powers of the Central Board, in this particular case the examination of pupils, and to prevent encroachment by the Local Boards. In fact, the powers of the Central Board were so comprehensive that the Local Boards were left with little to do. There is no suggestion by Stephens, Rule or Butler that they wanted that relationship to be changed, even minutely. The presence and co-operation of Members of Local Boards on the occasions when teachers tested their pupils 'might be exceedingly useful', but no more was required of them and no more was to be permitted them:

Among the Members of Local Boards there are many of high education and intelligence who are thoroughly qualified to decide any abstract question connected with the education imparted by a School; but if all were equally competent the objections would not be removed, and the chief of these is that a Teacher cannot be made responsible to more than one authority for the mode of conducting his School without a deliberate abandonment of the system of public instruction.\(^{115}\)

The language is very plain, the word 'abstract' has a precise meaning and the intention was unmistakeable.

\(^{114}\) Ibid.

\(^{115}\) Ibid.
namely, that Local Boards were not permitted to have an educational function – except an abstract function – of any kind. Like the parents under the regulation made against them in 1865, Local Board members were to be spectators. Parents, it is true, had no right to ask questions whereas Local Board members were encouraged to give teachers advice and assistance, but, in educational matters, the difference was not marked.

The functions of the Local Boards, defined by regulation, fell into two categories. First, members were asked to carry out the tasks of petty functionaries such as the repair and maintenance of school buildings which often amounted to nothing more than the replacement of broken window panes and door hinges or minor brick work and carpentry. More extensive maintenance or improvements such as the adding of a verandah to a school house, fencing of the school boundary or clearing of land had to be given the approval of the Central Board. The work was tedious if minor, frustrating if Board approval was required and mostly unrewarding. The second function was often both tedious and distasteful, for it was the function of a policeman. Responsibilities included the enforcement of attendance by pupils, the granting of free certificates to children whose parents were deemed to be unable to pay fees and the supervision of teachers. No doubt, some teachers, perhaps many of them, were on good terms with the members of their Local Boards, but supervision, by regulation, meant keeping teachers up to the mark, requiring their punctual and regular attendance at school, the filling in of record books and registers in the prescribed manner and their submission at the prescribed times, taking notice and action if parents complained of a teacher’s conduct or work and, in all these matters, reporting such offences or breaches of the regulations to the Central Board.
Their co-operation, furthermore, with Truant Officers and Inspectors, required of them by the Central Board, put them in the role of policemen, at least in the eyes of the teachers and parents.

Stephens, as a matter of course, made attempts to raise the level of efficiency of Local Boards. In his Annual Reports he never failed to praise the work of individual members - though their names were never mentioned - or of Local School Boards, which were sometimes identified by name. But the praise was usually a preamble to, a softening of, the criticism that was to follow. The criticism most frequently made was that which exposed the inability of Local Boards to raise attendance levels. Attendance levels, as noted in the two chapters on attendance and enforcement, responded to a number of factors, complex and subtle in the ways in which they interacted with each other. As Stephens, and others before him, well knew, the attendance rates varied according to the quality of the teacher, his skills as a teacher, his educational background and his personality, among other qualities. The Board, in recognising that this was so, acknowledged that this primary agent in raising attendance levels was an element in a chain of authority about which little could be done in the short term. Poor or inadequate teachers could not be got rid of overnight and no immediate improvement could be expected from ill-composed and inefficient Local Boards either - hence the constant exhortations and gentle and sometimes direct reminders of their obligations and the avoidance of captious and querulous tones in public documents or private correspondence:

Many individual members of the Local Schools Boards have rendered valuable service in promoting the attendance of neglected
children, with or without enforcement of the compulsory clauses of the Act.\textsuperscript{116}

Increases in enrolments did take place in some schools and throughout the colony, but the improvements were not necessarily reflected in the increase in average daily attendance, the meaning of which, as Stephens pointed out, was that the attendance of children was even more irregular than it used to be.\textsuperscript{117}

Few of the Local Boards made full use of the powers given to them under their appointment by the Governor-in-Council or as provided for by the compulsory attendance legislation. Stephens thought that the 1873 Amendment Act, which had raised the age of compulsory attendance from 7 to 12 to 7 to 14 years and the distance from home to school from one mile to two miles within which radius children were required to attend, made sufficiently ample and explicit provision.\textsuperscript{118} Three years later, he was forced to admit that the Local Boards had not shown any willingness to enforce the law and even if they were so disposed, their efforts came to little because attendance was so irregular. He conceded that, in the matter of attendance, the Local Boards were powerless.\textsuperscript{119} Parents, he claimed, exploited the weakness in the legislation which failed to specify minimum attendance and magistrates refused to convict for the same reason and they 'naturally [shirked] the responsibility of settling it by precedent'.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{116} Chief Inspector's Report for 1874, p27.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{119} Chief Inspector's Report for 1877, p.13.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
thought that some members of School Boards had a personal interest and therefore connived at breaches of the law.121 Such cases did not often come to the attention of the Central Board. Mr. E.H. London, Head Teacher at the Lachlan State School, reported that two of his charges were absent from school and were said to be working for a member of the Local Board as were others. He complained that it became 'absolutely useless for [him] to try to secure regularity, as other parents [claimed] equal rights and [were] only too ready to quote precedent'.122 But this particular problem was of sufficient importance and its incidence was common enough for Stephens to state the problem in a public document. It was a matter requiring very tactful handling and Stephens, having mentioned it publicly, may well have decided to let sleeping dogs lie. Certainly, the matter was not raised again in public documents.

In 1882, fourteen years after the passing of the compulsory attendance clauses and nine years after their amendment, it was Stephens' opinion that 'the working of the system of Local Boards [did] not differ materially in its results from that of the old system of Special Visitors.123 The Select Committee of that year reached the same conclusion, though their explanation was that the system had not been given a fair chance. Members found that while Local Boards had the power in law to exempt children from attendance the Central Board's Rules and Regulations gave them 'only such powers as range from those of a monitor to those

121 Ibid.
123 Chief Inspector's Report for 1882, p.10.
of a detective'.\textsuperscript{124} Their functions were described as harassing and undignified and their powers practically nil.\textsuperscript{125} Amongst other recommendations, the Select Committee asked Parliament to amalgamate Local Boards within a district in such a manner as to ensure the election of efficient members and to give Local Boards the power of deciding:

Whether the minimum or maximum ages of compulsory attendance require alteration to meet the particular circumstances of their district; also of extending or reducing the maximum radius prescribed for compulsory attendance where local conditions make such alteration desirable.\textsuperscript{126}

Such recommendations were considered by the Royal Commission of 1883 which made a much more thorough review of the Local Board system. The Commissioners concluded that proof of its failure could be found in abundance:\textsuperscript{127}

The position of members of Local Boards has been so completely false, so fertile of vexatious duties and irksome responsibilities; so barren of dignity and real usefulness, that eligible persons have either stood aloof altogether or, having accepted the position, have found it impossible to take continuous interest in their unprofitable labour.\textsuperscript{128}

The Commissioners thought it would do no good to make enquiry into whether the Central Board or the Local


\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{127} JHA XLV 1883, paper 70. Report of Royal Commission on Public Education, 1883, p.xxxvi.

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
Boards were chiefly to blame or whether the apathy and inefficiency of the Local Boards or the ignoring by the Central Board of their existence were mostly at fault. Nevertheless, in their view, the Central Board had failed to show any appreciation of the Local Boards or make any strenuous efforts to raise their standards of efficiency - in a word, the Central Board regarded the Local Board as a useless excrescence.\textsuperscript{129}

Membership of Local Boards was said to be inferior. The Commissioners reported:

There are members of such Boards who would find it impracticable to pass a fair Fourth class examination of a public school; and there are many members who, be their qualifications what they may, do not, nor ever will, take an intelligent and lasting interest in education.\textsuperscript{130}

The Commissioners' strong feelings amounted to a conviction that the local system was chronically inefficient. Though they did not actually say so, their words comprised the strongest condemnation of the apathy of local communities, in effect the Tasmanian people, towards education. They had no remedies for curing the apathy and they seemed to accept it for what it was for want of any means to do otherwise. Their proposal was really a series of reinforcements of measures already in existence. Local Boards, to be coalesced within districts, were to meet at least once a month, inspect each school twice a year and 'to take active steps for enforcement of the compulsory clause'\textsuperscript{131}, though no increase in the powers

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., p.xxxvii.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid. Perhaps 'impracticable' should read 'impossible'.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., p.xxxiv.
of the Boards were recommended or had even been contemplated. The recommendation that the Boards should keep a register of all children of school age in each school area had every prospect of being unworkable. The Commissioners could not have had any realistic expectation that the new Boards were capable of keeping such a register when the old Boards, whose powers were only marginally less than those proposed for the new Boards, had shown themselves to be ineffective even in the keeping of a school register. It may charitably be thought that this recommendation arose from the Commissioners' acceptance of the need for a local bureaucracy to enforce attendance, no matter how ill-equipped, in fact or in law, they had proved themselves to be.

The changes made to the system of local agency in the 1885 Act resulted in the discontinuance of the work of Truant Officers and the new Boards of Advice took on the sole responsibility for enforcing compulsory attendance. This action made the Education Department, which came into existence in 1886, totally dependent on the Boards for maintaining attendance levels and in its newness, the Department had no means of knowing exactly how efficiently they operated.\textsuperscript{132} Optimism for the first few years after the passing of the Act was understandable, but ill-founded.\textsuperscript{133} Parents in many districts evaded the law, it was claimed by Stephens, the new Director, and evasion was even more evident in the two large towns, although the exact extent was not ascertainable.\textsuperscript{134} Stephens thought that in some rural areas the 'cordial co-operation' of the police worked

\textsuperscript{132} Director's Report for 1888, p.3.
\textsuperscript{133} Director's Report for 1889, p.8.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
more effectively than the old system whereby a Truant Officer travelled the whole island, unable to visit some districts more than once a year.  \(^{135}\) Stephens wrote:

The business of compulsion is essentially a local work, and the cases which have to be dealt with must be followed up from week to week if any good is to be done.  \(^{136}\)

It was the responsibility of the Board Chairman to check through the lists of non-attenders supplied by the teachers and send notices to parents seeking explanation of the child's non-attendance. The effectiveness of the system at this stage depended on the accuracy of the teacher's book keeping, the sense of duty of the Chairman and his discretion in selecting which parents should be sent notices. All three conditions made the outcomes in one district vary considerably from that in another and between the towns, the more settled areas and the less settled areas. The next step involved the Chairman in making a decision on whether the parent's explanation was satisfactory, itself a matter of judgment. If he believed it to be unsatisfactory, his next action was to notify the police whose duty it was to enforce the law by information or summons. Police officers were not permitted by law to visit schools or the homes of the children - a practice which Stephens deprecated strongly\(^{137}\) unless by the authority of the Chairman. But where the Truant Officer, as visitor, had had some influence on parental co-operation, the new regulations, in denying police the right to visit, further weakened the system of enforcement.

\(^{135}\) Ibid.

\(^{136}\) Ibid.

\(^{137}\) Ibid.
James Rule, Stephens' successor as Senior Inspector, doubted if the new District Boards had shown themselves to be more effective in obtaining information and passing on well-considered recommendations than the Local Boards had been. The belief, prior to the passing of the Act, that the local agencies needed men of 'higher social position and more liberal education' was 'somewhat magnified', he thought, and had resulted in quite unnecessary reorganisation of the Boards:

The truth is, that the functions devolving on the Boards of Advice do not require in the members more than an ordinary education, with a knowledge of business, common sense, and an honest desire to help forward the work of popular education.

The Royal Commissioners of 1883 had looked for a kind of educational leadership in the localities, coming from men who, from their own strong educational backgrounds, would enthuse, guide and inspire their communities. Rule was looking to quite different Board members and asking of them to do no more than perform the duties of efficient functionaries, the duties of carrying out a series of small, self-contained tasks. He wished to restore the kind of master-servant relationship that had existed between the Local Boards and the Central Board.

Two matters which had a direct bearing on attendance were the powers granted to Boards of Advice under the 1885 Act to apply to the Education Department for the erection of school buildings in their districts and to modify, whenever circumstances made it

138 Ibid., p.11.
139 Ibid.
desirable, the radius within which children were required to attend school. Stephens, in his report for 1890, drew attention to the increase in the number of small schools, that is to say, those schools with an average daily attendance of less than twenty pupils, saying that 'a multiplicity of small schools [was] almost a convertible term for an inefficient system'\textsuperscript{140}. In 1886, out of a total of 209 schools, 65 were small schools; in 1890 out of 240 schools, 103 had fewer than 20 pupils. Shifts in population and the unpopularity or lack of energy of the teacher partly accounted for the growth in number, but the 'planting of schools in too close proximity to each other' accounted for the rest.\textsuperscript{141} Stephens was careful not to accuse the Boards directly of a lack of zeal or incompetence in this regard - charges which could equally have been made against the Department itself for permitting the erection of school buildings and alteration of the radius.

James Rule was not so reluctant to comment publicly on the Boards. For each of his six years as Director he supplied figures showing the number of school visits by members of Boards of Advice:

\textsuperscript{140} Director's Report for 1890, p.7.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., p.8
In some years the total of visits by the Director and his two Inspectors exceeded that of Board members and at other times the number was not far short. In 1895, the three men made 561 visits; in 1898, their visits totalled 523.

The work of the Boards continued into the new century in much the same way as they had since their establishment in 1885. Attendance levels in the first years showed some improvement, but criticisms did not cease. W.L. Neale in his Report on Primary Education in Tasmania in 1904 stated that the Boards left much of their work to the Truant Officers, although he excused their slackness by saying that Board members could not be expected to sacrifice their business and social interests. Neale's recommendation was that the Truant Officers, supplied with a school census revised every seven years, were adequate to the task of raising

---

142 Compiled from Director's Reports for 1895, p.7; 1896, p.5; 1897, p.8; 1898, p.8; 1899, p.8; 1900, p.7.

the rates of attendance. In his 1906 Report as Director, he recommended that the Boards' functions be transferred to the municipal authorities\textsuperscript{144}, although privately he stated his view that the Boards should be kept separate.\textsuperscript{145} The amalgamation may have brought change in the composition of membership, although in a number of cases, Boards of Advice had been for some years Municipal Councils in another form or virtually sub-committees of Council. In a number of cases, the old demand, made in the 1860's, for elected Boards may have re-emerged in the form of elected Councils, though it is doubtful if they were in any sense more democratic or more responsive to parents' needs and concerns in education. Campbell Town, a pastoral centre, had a hard-working chairman who, for a number of years, had concerned himself with education and health matters in the district, but it is unlikely that he or many of his fellows were, or had been, parents of public school children.

\textsuperscript{144} Director's Report for 1906, pp.3-4.

\textsuperscript{145} AOT LA 72/4. Letter from Director of Education to Council Clerk, Ulverstone, 10.7.08. Neale also indicated that Parliament's reasons for abolishing the Boards 'was to avoid the expense attendant upon so many authorities'. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Whether Justice of the Peace</th>
<th>Owner Occupier of house or acres</th>
<th>Annual Rateable Value (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>House</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>17212</td>
<td>1235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1539</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5080 6828</td>
<td>732 + 212 jointly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4839</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3170</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>16987 also house</td>
<td>1633 + 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>House</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>House</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fingal, also a pastoral centre, though not as prosperous, had a council membership similar in its property holding.

146 AOT ED 71/1. Register of Members of Boards of Advice, 1897-1903, compiled in conjunction with Walch's Tasmanian Almanac for 1897.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Whether Justice of the Peace</th>
<th>Owner Occupier of house or acres</th>
<th>Annual Rateable Value (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>45 Also shop</td>
<td>35 + 20 (shop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>40 also shop</td>
<td>25 + 35 (shop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4230</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>11774</td>
<td>780 + 40 (lease)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>also 4000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>leased</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many other Boards were similarly dominated by property owners. Membership of Boards of Advice and Municipal Councils by parents of public school children who owned little or no property was not common. Neither was it the kind of democratic responsibility urged upon parents by the newspaper, The Clipper, or its successor, The Daily Post, both of which concerned themselves with the means of attaining participatory democracy by the active involvement by parents in the management and organisation of schools and the opening up of educational opportunities.¹⁴⁸

Attendance rates improved in the decade before the outbreak of war in 1914, but, by themselves, the Boards appear to have had little influence. The reasons for

¹⁴⁷ AOT ED 71/1. Register of Members of Boards of Advice, 1897-1903, compiled in conjunction with Hobart Gazette, January 20, 1897.

¹⁴⁸ See, for example, Clipper, 12.9.03, p.4.
the rise in attendance were due to a number of influences working together in a complex way. In so far as these influences could be separated, however—and it was the judgment of Directors and Inspectors that they could be separated—it was thought that the Boards of Advice had had little to do with the improvement. Inspector Alfred Garrett, in 1910, described some of the Boards in his district as 'laissez-faire and indolent'. In his Report for 1911, in his second year as Director, William McCoy published details of the number of prosecutions initiated by each Board, remarking that they performed their duties with varying degrees of zeal. McCoy, believing prosecution to be a quick and effective way of raising attendance levels, was nonetheless forced to concede that exploiting to the full the legislative and regulatory powers with which Boards were invested was not as productive a device as he had led himself to believe. He included in one of his Reports this extract of a letter from the Chairman of one of the more efficient Boards to show 'the kind of difficulty that in some districts may, more or less, neutralise the best efforts to secure regular attendance':

From time to time you have urged my board to endeavour to improve the attendance at certain of our State schools, and I can assure you we have left no stone unturned to accomplish that end. We are continually sending our truant officers with cautions to parents, but in course of time they get used to that, and simply ignore them. We then resort to prosecution, but in many cases we find the bench entirely in sympathy with the parents. Here are the results of our efforts at --------: A parent who absolutely defied the board was prosecuted. He pleaded not guilty on the grounds that he had an

149 Inspector's Report for 1910, p.16.
150 Director's Report for 1911, p.5.
exemption certificate from the medical officer. Without asking for production of the said certificate or taking any evidence, the bench dismissed the case, while the facts were that the certificate referred to was for three months, which had expired nine months before. While this is the temper of local justices, you will see that it is little use our making much effort to improve matters.\textsuperscript{151}

If the improvement of attendance levels was the first responsibility of local boards, the administration of the free education system was the second.

From the time of Franklin's Board, parents had been required to pay fees, but provision was made for parents who could not afford to pay the fees to have their children admitted to the schools free or at reduced scales. In 1861, a memorandum was issued to teachers which included the scale of fees, 9d. each week for each child, 7d. each for two children of the same family, 6d. for three or more children and reduced amounts in each case if the fees were paid monthly or quarterly.\textsuperscript{152} The fees became the property of the teacher, but it was also his or her responsibility to collect them. Free schooling was granted to children whose parents were unable to pay fees 'upon adequate proof [being given] to the Board of such inability'.\textsuperscript{153} The teacher's loss of earnings was compensated by a scale of payment ranging from 4d. each child each week

\textsuperscript{151} Director's Report for 1914, p.8.

\textsuperscript{152} Southern Board of Education, Report for 1861, Appendix G, p.19.

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
for the first 20 free pupils, 3d. for the second 20 and 2d. for 40 or more. Parliament provided for up to 60 free scholars, thus guaranteeing, so the Secretary to the Southern Board wrote, a totally free education to the absolutely poor.\textsuperscript{154} The Northern Board set down its regulations for the free admission of children of destitute parents which included the production of a certificate 'specifying the cause of [a parent's inability to pay] and signed by a Minister of Religion and a Justice of the Peace'.\textsuperscript{155} The certificate was to be in force for one quarter only and could be renewed 'when circumstances required'.\textsuperscript{156} The limitation of 60 free scholars was removed within months of it being applied.\textsuperscript{157} Special Visitors were enjoined to play their part in deciding which parents were to be judged unable to pay:

The Board wish it to be distinctly understood that the Free Certificates are designed only for the children of persons who are absolutely in a state of destitution, i.e. incapable of earning a livelihood.

The particulars are to be stated by the Special Visitors... with special regard to the instructions issued by the Board.\textsuperscript{158}

The 1860's were years of economic depression and financial stringency — in 1860, expenditure on education exceeded the appropriation and, consequently, 

\textsuperscript{154} AOT ED 43/1. Copies of Circulars issued to Teachers 1856-1893, Secretary, Southern Board, 19.2.61, p.10.

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., Secretary, Northern Board, 9.4.61, p.11.

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., Secretary, Southern Board, 8.7.61, p.12.

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., Inspector T. Stephens to Special Visitors, 15.4.63, p.16.
in 1861, teachers' salaries were reduced\textsuperscript{159} and the tightest control was kept by the Board on the issuing of Free Certificates. Thomas Stephens, Secretary to the Northern Board, informed William Cantwell, teacher at a Launceston school:

In future no Certificates will be passed by the Board which do not give a clear and satisfactory account of the \textit{cause} of the parent's inability to pay. Mere expressions such as "poverty", "insufficient means", etc., will not be considered sufficient.\textsuperscript{160}

In 1866, in a letter to A. McDowall, the Warden of Bothwell Council, Stephens explained the problem of administering the Free Certificate system:

\textit{In theory} it is of course quite right and proper that the State should pay for the education of children whose parents are too poor to pay for it themselves, but \textit{in practice} it is found that the difficulty of drawing a line between real and fictitious charity is insurmountable, and that the direct result is to pauperise the community, and to introduce a host of evils which are the more dangerous because they are only evident to those who enquire below the surface of things.\textsuperscript{161}

The difficulty arose from the fact that every Special Visitor had his own way of interpreting the Board's Regulations:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{159} Southern Board of Education, Report for 1861, Appendix G, p.19.
\item \textsuperscript{160} AOT, ED 38. Northern Board of Education, Secretary's Letterbook, 1861-63. Letter from Secretary to William Cantwell, 22.7.61.
\item \textsuperscript{161} AOT ED 38. Northern Board of Education, Chief Inspector's Letterbook, 1864-72. Letter from Inspector to A. McDowall, Esq., Warden, Bothwell Council, 31.7.66. (Stephens became Chief Inspector in 1869).
\end{itemize}
Some certify to the destitution of the children of drunken parents, reading "cannot pay" as if it were intended to mean "will not pay", and no restrictions imposed by the Board are found to be effectual.\textsuperscript{162}

In 1869, following the passing of the 1868 Public Schools Act, responsibility for authorising the admission of free scholars into the schools was transferred to the newly established Local School Boards.\textsuperscript{163} No great improvement was discerned by Stephens who stated, in 1874, that it was his belief that 'one fruitful cause of inefficiency' in the schools was the irregularity of attendance for which 'the operation of the Free Scholar System [was] frequently responsible'\textsuperscript{164}. In his letter to McDowall in 1866 he had written of the difficulty of drawing a line between real and fictitious charity. In 1874, he placed parents into two categories:

\begin{quote}
Those who will, and will not [and] those who can, and cannot pay School fees.\textsuperscript{165}
\end{quote}

This very neat view of parents' willingness and parents' capacity and his apparent ability to distinguish between the two qualities where previously he could not, convinced him that the more pressure that was put on parents, the more likely they would be to pay. He quoted the words of the Chairman of the London School Board:

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{163} AOT ED 43/1. Copies of Circulars issued to teachers, 1856-1893, Chairman, Board of Education to Teachers, 13.4.69, p.46.


\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., p.27.
We expect [parents] to pay, and they do so because we expect them; if we did not expect the fee no doubt we should find it difficult to get it.166

And there was a machine at hand to extract the fee, painlessly if possible, but, in any event, inexorably. The Local Boards, if they followed the regulations, would be totally efficient, he believed, in collecting fees from all parents except those whose state of utter destitution was acknowledged by the Central Board to be deserving of an exemption certificate.

Stephens, as the principal executive officer to the Board, had no option but to demand fee payment from parents. And beyond that duty was a deep conviction that a bureaucracy, if adequately funded, staffed and regulated, could raise and maintain an education system to the highest levels of efficiency. But the machine had another function. Its very efficiency would destroy a canker that beset colonial society, the canker of pauperisation caused by the division of parents into the categories of fee paying and non-fee paying.167 He wrote, in 1877, in connection with the small amounts of money received by teachers by way of fees:

Where the school is working efficiently, the parents, unless they have been previously demoralised by the indiscriminate issue of free certificates, rarely decline to pay the regular fees.168

166 Ibid.


168 Chief Inspector's Report for 1877, p.11.
To overcome the problem of parents who did not pay school fees and to bring 'under control and instruction the numbers of neglected children whom the existing means of education... [has] failed to reach', a Free School was established in Hobart in 1872 and, later, another in Launceston. Stephens was asked by the Chairman of the Board to report on the advantages that would arise from the establishment of Free Schools. He stated that, amongst other benefits, the Free Schools would cause parents who did not pay fees 'to begin again to pay school fees'. He pointed out that in one quarter of 1870 there were no fewer than 1180 children in the Hobart public schools whose parents paid nothing towards their education. Rather grandly, he asserted that the Free School regulations 'embody one of the most important and really valuable principles that have ever been enunciated by the Board of Education'. Keeping his most important point to the last, he wrote:

The establishment of the proposed school will remove one of the chief of the obstacles which have hitherto impeded the operation of the compulsory clauses of the Education Act.

But the Free Schools in Hobart and Launceston did nothing to raise attendance levels. Neither did they

169 AOT 43/1. Copies of Circulars issued to Teachers 1856-1893. Free Schools under the Board of Education.

170 Ibid., p.1.

171 Ibid., p.2

172 Ibid., p.3.
cause parents to pay fees when they had not paid them before.¹⁷³

The Free Certificate system continued to operate outside the two larger towns and in those parts of Hobart and Launceston too distant from the Free Schools for children to travel. James Rule thought the Free Certificate system 'radically bad' and 'contagiously pauperising among people far above destitute circumstances'. It failed also 'to secure a satisfactory attendance':¹⁷⁴

Attempts of Local School Boards to enforce the law result commonly in a large increase in the number of Free Certificates.¹⁷⁵

Some clerical members of Local Boards he accused of favouring their flock, considering such patronage as the 'most important, if not the only, function of membership.'¹⁷⁶ These forms of priestcraft, though perhaps not corrupting, made the Local Boards' task of assessing a parent's degree of poverty or destitution more complex, more difficult and probably unfair in its outcome.

James Rule believed that the 'evils consequent on the issue of free certificates' and the continuing problem of low attendance rates would not be eliminated until education was made free to all.¹⁷⁷ With this view the Select Committee of 1882 agreed and with the

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.
¹⁷⁵ Ibid.
¹⁷⁶ Ibid.
¹⁷⁷ Inspector's Report for 1879, p.12.
reasoning that lay behind it.\textsuperscript{178} Their advice was ignored and the matter of free certificates was taken up by the Royal Commission of the following year. The Commissioners, though they did not examine the enforcement of fee payment in any detailed way, recommended that education be made free.\textsuperscript{179} Their advice was also ignored by Parliament and the responsibility of enforcing fee payment remained with the Local Boards, as it had since the 1868 Act. The enforcement of payment, however, became rather less a burden to the Boards after the passing of the 1885 Act. The regulation required a statement of the parent's circumstances before a free certificate could be issued and the number of certificates issued declined appreciably from the numbers issued in the sixties, seventies and the first half of the eighties.\textsuperscript{180} The numbers continued to decline until the depression of the nineties forced them up again. In pleading once more for the abandonment of fees, Rule, in 1894, was keen to show up, not only the usual difficulties facing Board members, but the dilemmas of conscience and the blunting of finer feelings which they experienced as they attempted to force the payment of fees from parents:

If they rigidly enforced the law in periods of general distress, the free scholar list would be very largely increased. Unwillingness to produce this result, or to inflict hardship on the struggling poor, constrains the Boards to temporise in many cases, and the consequence is an


\textsuperscript{179} JHA XLV 1883, paper 70. Report of Royal Commission on Public Education 1883, pp. xiii and xliii.

\textsuperscript{180} Report for 1885, p.7.
unsatisfactory record of attendance at the majority of the schools.\textsuperscript{181}

The government also was in a difficult position during the depression and it frequently sent out circular letters to Boards of Advice over the signature of either the Minister or Director. Pressure was put on both of them by the Premier. In 1893, a very lengthy memorandum was sent by the Premier, Henry Dobson, to the Minister, seeking to reduce the 1892 education appropriation of £40,609 to £38,000 for 1893. He really wondered whether the Boards of Advice had any idea of how to set about enforcing the attendance of children\textsuperscript{182}. He wanted the Minister's opinion on whether children over the age of 12 years should be made to leave school or otherwise pay a higher fee and on the advisability of raising the fees payable by parents in the cities who could afford them.

This last point deserves attention for the State in Tasmania cannot afford to educate the children of well to do Parents at far less than half price.\textsuperscript{183}

He calculated that £800 could be saved by extracting fees with greater efficiency and a sum of £2500 by saving allowances mainly in annual payments to Secretaries to Boards of Advice. Stephens was asked by the Minister to answer the Premier's fourteen questions. His reply is not in the files of the Archives Office, but a further memorandum from the Premier contained the following:

\textsuperscript{181} Inspector's Report for 1894, p.7.

\textsuperscript{182} AOT PD 1/58/82. Memorandum from Premier to Minister of Education, 23.3.93.

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid.
Mr. Stephens' thirty-six years experience has enabled him to pick holes in the report.\textsuperscript{184}

The proposals were not acted upon, but the pressure did not slacken. In 1894, the Minister wrote a circular letter to Board Chairmen, urging them 'to see that steps are taken to curtail the operation of the free scholar system as far as possible', by stricter conformity to the regulations.\textsuperscript{185} The Minister wrote that the government was disposed to abolish the free scholar system forthwith, 'but for the impoverished state of some of the people of this Colony'.\textsuperscript{186} As was so often the case with such pleas to Chairmen, unless supported by improved regulations, the number of free scholars was not reduced. The total of 1731 free scholars in 1894 was much the same, 1747, in 1895. And as far as prospects were concerned of cutting back the size of the government's contribution to teachers, by reducing the number of free scholars, the most relentless, even inhuman, attack on the problem would have probably yielded little financial result and much ill-will and opposition from parents. As Rule pointedly remarked in 1894, Boards would have preferred to temporise in many cases rather than inflict hardship. And even had the number of free scholars in 1893 been kept, by prodigious effort, at the same level for 1894 instead of increasing by 285, or 19.7\%, the benefit, in reduced contributions by the government, would have amounted to £145 only.\textsuperscript{187}

\textsuperscript{184} AOT PD 1/58/82. Memorandum from Premier to Minister of Education, 17.6.93.

\textsuperscript{185} AOT ED 43/2. Copies of Circulars issued to Teachers, 1894-1900, Circular from Minister to Chairmen, Boards of Advice, 7.8.94, p.20.

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{187} Compiled from Annual Reports for 1893, p.4 and 1894, p.4.
Very little change took place in the soulless business of enforcement in the period remaining to the abolition of fees in 1908. The Sorell Board of Advice spent a part of almost every one of its meetings from 1887 to 1907 in discussion of the free list and many other Boards spent their time in similar fashion. Occasionally, a teacher would complain to his Board Chairman that he had too many free scholars or too many on reduced fees, but action by the Board was probably short-lived, at best. The very considerable loss of income suffered by teachers seems to have been regarded with little concern by Board members. The Chairman of the Beaconsfield Board of Advice reported, in 1905, that 94 families at the Beaconsfield State School owed arrears amounting to £146. Some amounts were being collected by the police, he wrote, but the Secretary could not assist in collecting fees 'on his present remuneration' and he suggested employing the Truant Inspector or a Collector.

Special Visitors, from Governor Arthur's time to 1867, Local School Boards from 1868 to 1885, Boards of Advice from 1886 to 1908 and Municipal Councils, acting as Boards of Advice, from 1908 were charged, in a broad sense, with much the same responsibilities, chiefly the care and maintenance of school buildings, the raising

188 AOT LA 85/1. Sorell Board of Advice, minutes of meetings, 1887-1907, meeting of 31.10.99.

189 See for example AOT LA 18/1. Glazier's Bay Local School Board, minutes of meetings, 1869-75, 16.5.72.

190 AOT LA 1/5. Secretary's Letterbook, Beaconsfield Board of Advice, 1899-1910, 19.5.05, p.55.
of attendance levels and the issuing of Free Certificates. If their rewards were few and their satisfaction fleeting, their ineffectiveness was by no means total and neither was their inefficiency entirely of their own making. Some Boards had quite remarkable, if singular, records of success in gaining the interest of parents in the education of their children and developing local interest in the schools. Quite a number of them had raised attendances to high levels; in 1913, 27 schools reached 90% or better and 141 obtained between 80% and 90% out of a total of 448 schools.\textsuperscript{191} Yet W.L. Neale's words, for all their harshness, were not too wide of the mark:

In this State, as in every other State, the experiment of entirely entrusting to local authorities the enforcement of school attendance has hopelessly failed... And that it has failed is obvious, for there are on the average 5000 absentees every day, although the roll is only 19,000.\textsuperscript{192}

Long after the other States had brought in free education, Tasmania struggled on in the belief that fees, or a high proportion of them, could be collected by the teacher, if needs be with the support and intervention of the local board, the abundant contrary evidence gathered over decades notwithstanding. Stephens believed the fees could be collected, Rule did not. Stephens believed in the efficiency of the engine of collection that is, the teachers and the local boards. It could work, but if, at times, it did not, then it could be made to work. An adjustment here, a replacement of a part there, even a thorough overhaul from time to time, would keep the engine working efficiently. Rather like his ideal pupil, Stephens' 

\textsuperscript{191} Director's Report for 1913, pp.8, 10.

\textsuperscript{192} Director's Report for 1906, p.3.
engine was ideally regular, punctual and thrifty in its operations. But rather like an engine, the local boards were not susceptible to appeal, threat or encouragement and they operated at much the same level of efficiency throughout. Rule, for egalitarian reasons, rejected the principle of fee payments, but he was also convinced that, no matter what adjustments or improvements were made, the engine would always operate at an intolerably low level of efficiency.
Buildings and their Design

In 1839, when Franklin's new Board of Education came into being, it took over from the Church of England responsibility for most of the school buildings and grounds in use in the colony.

The Board, for a number of years after 1839, was obliged to rent premises from various religious denominations and private persons and few of them were suitable for the purpose. Charles Bradbury, Secretary to the Board, visited every school each year and his reports yield the most detailed information on their condition. In his 1845 Report, he wrote that the schoolroom at Back River was much too small and that the overcrowding was productive of frequent disorder and confusion;¹ that the schoolroom at Longford was a most undesirable and ill adapted one - 'the weather easily penetrates it, the wind often occasioning so much noise through its many crevices as to render it nearly impossible to hear what the children are saying'² and that the schoolhouse at Pattersons' Plains was 'a solitary hut built of rough slabs of timber... divided into two apartments, one a little nook in which the Master sleeps and the other the School Room'.³

² Ibid., p.89.
³ Ibid., Secretary's Report for 1846, p.323.
Thomas Arnold's first Report in 1850 pointed to one of the major reasons for the dilapidated and unhealthy state of many schools and the consequent inability of government to repair and renovate them:

Out of seventy-three School-houses...seven were public property, thirteen stood on Church or Chapel land, six were places of worship used as School-rooms on week-days, five were School-rooms erected by subscription, and the remainder, forty-two in number, were private or rented buildings.4

The point was worth making, but Arnold had no confidence in the ability of government to remedy the defect. In the year before, Thomas Gregson, Member of the Legislative Council, made a plea for the extension of public education and argued that it 'ought everywhere to be a matter of state policy...and be accessible to all orders of the people without money and without price.'5 Governor Denison agreed, but replied, with emphasis, that the government had no funds to carry out a more beneficial system than the one then in operation.6 The coming of self government in 1856, and the consequent assumption by government of responsibility for revenue gathering and expenditure in the colony had little immediate effect on the provision and maintenance of school buildings. Supervision of buildings and control of school property by the single Board based in Hobart or by the two Boards, one in Hobart and the other in Launceston, during the late fifties and early sixties, was diminished even further by inefficiency, shortage of funds, or lack of concern

4 PLC 1850. Inspector's Report for 1850, p.3.
6 Ibid., p.13.
by teachers, clergy and School Visitors in the localities. For a period extending from the late fifties to the early eighties, governments exercised stringent control over finances as the colony languished under commercial, agricultural and pastoral depression.

The Education Act of 1868, in creating Local School Boards, placed upon them the responsibility of raising one-third of the cost of repairs and extensions to school buildings. The regulation followed from a previous regulation by which one third of the grants for the erection of school buildings were to be met from local resources. Thomas Stephens expected that some schoolrooms, ranging from excellent to very bad, many of which were ill-planned and badly-proportioned, would gradually be replaced. 7 But the new system did not yield results, at least for some years. Local school funds were either non-existent or miserably low and quite insufficient for even the smallest items of expenditure. 8 A large part of the continuing problem of making adequate provision for buildings was the constant drain on Board of Education funds by the need to build and maintain school rooms in districts in which school populations declined, often quite suddenly, from the level which had allowed the Board to approve of their construction in the first place. 9

Throughout the seventies, many children continued to be taught in buildings belonging to church and chapel and, even in schoolrooms built for the purpose,

---

7 Inspector's Report for 1868, p.13.
8 Chief Inspector's Report for 1870, p.18.
overcrowding was common. The Sassafras School in East Devon was designed to accommodate 43 pupils, but bad planning made it fit for 30 only. On his inspection in 1874, Stephens recorded 66 children as being present and noted that, during the previous month, 81 children had been more or less regularly in attendance. He pointed out that this was not an isolated case. In 1877, James Rule raised, for the first time in annual reports, the question of the area of floor space for each child. He wrote that the minimum of eight square feet, as stipulated by the Committee of Council on Education, was not an adequate provision and he recommended that the adoption by the London School Board and many German, Dutch and American school authorities of a minimum of 10 square feet be regarded as the minimum for Tasmanian schools.

In the Board's Report for 1881 the Chairman pointed to the legislation of the previous year which enabled school buildings to be erected at the sole expense of government and a more recent act which permitted the Board to order the building of school rooms, not exceeding £500 in cost, without the sanction of Parliament. Plans were drawn for standard school buildings, with or without teachers' residences, to accommodate 30, 60 or 84 children:

Due and proper arrangements of the rooms for efficient working of the school, the ventilation, heating and air space, and suitability of out-places has been the first consideration, but an effort has been made to give a less plain and unsightly appearance than these buildings have generally presented hitherto. The ornamentation is not by any

10 Chief Inspector's Report for 1874, p.27.
11 Inspector's Report for 1877, p.15.
means of a costly character, and is only such as can be readily executed by ordinary, good country tradesmen.\textsuperscript{13}

Floor area for each child conformed to Rule's requirement of between 10 and 11 square feet and the plans also showed that the three kinds of buildings were to have air volumes of 120, 148 and 172 cubic feet.\textsuperscript{14} The plans were the first attempt to standardise schoolbuilding construction and to keep costs down without risking the health of children or teachers. Stephens thought that the very grave defects and inconvenience which he had been reporting annually for many years before were 'in a fair way of being remedied,'\textsuperscript{15} but he discovered that the plans did not lend themselves, as the architects had claimed they would do, to ready adaptation to school requirements\textsuperscript{16} and he sought, only one year later, the drawing up of even simpler designs which would permit modifications as local circumstances determined.\textsuperscript{17} But the problem was not only one of design and adaptability. There had accumulated such a backlog of requests for building, extension and renovation that the administrative machinery established between the Board of Education and the Public Works Department and the difficulty of establishing a priority for the demands that flowed in from the schools for work to be undertaken made long delays inevitable.\textsuperscript{18} The problems, especially those

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} AOT PWD 250/1, sheet 1. Copies of some of these plans have been included in the Appendix.
\item \textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, sheets 2, 4, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Chief Inspector's Report for 1881, p. 8.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Chief Inspector's Report for 1882, p. 10.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Chief Inspector's Report for 1883, p. 8.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Chief Inspector's Report for 1885, p. 8.
\end{itemize}
which existed between the two departments, were to remain for over twenty-five years.

Growing pressure on the Premier, W.B. Propsting, from the Chief Health Officer, whose concern for the health of school children had been made public, and the Premier's own readiness to hold an investigation into the Education Department, resulted in no fewer than four parliamentary enquiries in 1904. The first enquiry arose from reports of friction and confusion that existed between the Director and the Secretary of the Education Department. The Committee reported that the Secretary had acted as if he were the Director, that the Director had complained frequently to the Minister and that the Minister appeared to be unaware of the friction between the two men. Subsequently, the responsibility of the Secretary to the Director was re-affirmed.

The Chief Health Officer for Tasmania, Dr. J.S.C. Elkington, inspected hygienic conditions of the state schools and reported that 'the Tasmanian educational system was daily and hourly subjecting some thousands of children to a series of outrages upon their health.' Construction of buildings and its influence on health, he wrote, was not sufficiently recognised by the designers of Tasmanian schools. At the same time, the Minister of Education appointed a board to enquire into state school buildings. The members found that 'plans seem to have been the outcome of suggestions made by various Directors in charge of the

21 Ibid., p.1.
Education Departments rather than the observance of accepted rules of school design. 22

W.L. Neale's report on the work of the Education Department included criticisms of design:

Many plans [were] regarded as meritorious until more accommodation [was] required, when it [was] found that an addition in any form [would] ruin the old building. 23

He wrote, as Elkington had written two months before:

In towers, cut stone, decorated window openings, open ceilings, gables etc., much money has been unwisely spent...the designs appear to have been drawn from the point of view of an architect rather than of a teacher and often the ecclesiastical idea is prominent. 24

Neale recommended that buildings be so designed as to have a fixed and shorter life span. In 1906, Elkington presented his report on the medical condition of state school children in which he returned to his attack on the design and construction of school buildings. Two of the largest schools in the state he declared to be unfit for use and a third was little better. 25

Annual reports of the Education Department after the investigation and reports of the period 1904 to 1906 indicate some improvement in the design of new buildings and the modification of existing buildings, all of which was undertaken by the Education


24 Ibid., p.25

Department. New designs were made on the basis of 10 square feet of floor space for each pupil. In evidence to the Royal Commissioners in 1909, however, J.G. Shield, Inspector of Public Buildings, complained that delays had been caused by Neale, arising from his failure to ensure that the Minister authorised repairs, and that some buildings erected twenty years before had not had a coat of paint in that time. He estimated that between £5000 and £6000 each year for several years was needed to bring buildings up to a desirable standard, whereas £2000 only had been set aside. Some Boards of Advice, he stated, took no interest whatever in their schools. On the other hand, Inspector George Heritage, as a witness to the 1909 Royal Commission, gave quite contrary opinions on the condition of school buildings Annual reports from 1906 to 1913 bear out Heritage's view that the building of new schools and the renewing and extension of old buildings was beginning to overcome problems of accommodation and to provide more congenial working environments.

School Interiors

Charles Bradbury's reports of 1845 and 1846 yield not only detailed information on school buildings, but on the rooms, furniture and fittings and space. A

26 Director's Report for 1907, p.3.
27 Director's Report for 1910, p.4.
29 Ibid., p.487.
number of school-houses had been condemned some years before his first visit to them. The school-room at Back River was:

Much too small, not only for the business of the school, but for the health of the children and Teachers. The room is so filled with the necessary desks and forms, that there is scarcely space to pass through it.\(^{31}\)

The school at Oatlands was no better:

When a class is standing up, the only means of crossing the room is by getting over the desks and forms, children, both Boys and Girls, are frequently thus obliged to pass from one part of the room to another, at the risk of breaking their limbs by a fall and to the total destruction of a proper observance of order.\(^{32}\)

The Commission of Enquiry of 1845 found the school at Clarence Plains to be:

Neither wind nor watertight, and...crumbling to pieces. The room used for the school is low and badly ventilated. The Master has been forced to build a house for himself out of his own private means.\(^{33}\)

At Green Ponds the Commission reported:

The schoolroom [was] a low, inconvenient, and ill-ventilated room.\(^{34}\)

Mr Rainy, teacher at Longford School:

Complain[ed] much of the inconvenient state of the school-room and the want of desks and forms.\(^{35}\)

---


34 Ibid., p.230.

Thomas Arnold's notes of visits to schools in the early fifties contain similar complaints. Harrington Street School, Hobart, had an unwholesome smell in the room and Campbell Street School, also in Hobart, had a cow-house under the school-room.36

Thomas Stephens, in 1858, complained that school buildings were too often planned without any regard to the purpose for which they were required and he took upon himself the task of drawing up plans and specifications.37 Plans for school buildings had been in existence for twenty years by that time and copies of them were in the possession of the Board of Education. All the minutes and reports of the English Committee of Council on Education, with plans and specifications included, were sent as a matter of course to the Colonial Secretary in Hobart and thence to the Board. The Committee's plans of 1839-40, 1844 and 1845 were available for inspection and they were often reproduced in various books on education. Some of these publications were available in the Library of Parliament.38 The Committee of Council's plans for 1839 - the first plans to be issued by the Committee - provided details of room size and window size, space available for each child, ventilation and heating. Windows were to be considerable in number, the floor, made of flagstones, was to be inclined at the rate of one foot in twenty so that all children could be seen by the teacher. Rooms were to have a teacher's platform. Details of forms and desks were given and the

36 AOT CB 3/1. Notes of school visits by Thomas Arnold and members of the Board of Inspection, 26 July 1852 to 8 July 1853, visits of 17 December 1852 and 18 May 1853.

37 Inspector's Report for 1858, p.5.

38 For example H. Barnard, School Architecture., published in 1854.
spaces around them. Each child was to be given a minimum of seven square feet of floor space. The plans of 1840, which were part of the Minutes of that year, contained four series of plans, each providing for different numbers of pupils, some for infant, others for primary school children. Some plans made provision for several classes, divided by age or sex and separated by draw-curtains. In the infant room, a gallery of raised steps, each step with a form and desk, with the children to be seated shoulder to shoulder, was strongly recommended.39 Plans for infant school-rooms and play-grounds by Samuel Wilderspin and David Stow were also available to the Board.40 Most of these plans were drawn up with medium to large urban schools in mind. Some of the principles were adapted in Tasmania - the infant school-room of Hobart's Central School had a gallery and attempts were made in other large schools to arrange forms and desks in formal patterns - but the small pupil numbers at the great majority of schools made such arrangements impossible or unnecessary. Colonial budgets, especially in the sixties and seventies, also imposed severe limitations on school design. Yet classroom organization, as it came to be known in later years, was not given a position of importance in official policy. J.J. Stutzer, Inspector of Schools in the late fifties and early sixties, wrote a detailed seven page report for 1859, and a six page report for 1860 without mentioning buildings or classroom organization once.41


40 Ibid., pp.55, 78.

41 Inspectors' Reports for 1859, pp.14-20; for 1860, pp. 25-30, also Appendix pp. 31-37. Buildings are mentioned here and there, but in only the barest descriptive terms e.g. 'large', 'small', 'old', 'tolerable'. 
Here and there in annual reports, references were made to the inadequate size or overcrowding of some schoolrooms and their consequent reduced efficiency. In Launceston, in 1864, for example, no school room existed, whether it was the property of the Board or not, which could provide separate instruction for younger and older children.\(^42\) In the regulations which were published in the following year, only the briefest mentions are made of schoolrooms. If an interested group of parents sought grants from the Board for the building of a school-house, the regulations would have simply informed them that eight superficial feet had to be allowed for each child and that the height of the wall should be ten feet giving an air space for each child of 80 cubic feet. Little was said about school furniture except that it had to be sufficient, in the opinion of the Inspector, for the wants of the scholars.\(^43\) Some recognition was made of the accommodation difficulties and also the implications for discipline and instruction, however, by the introduction of a regulation denying admission to children under four years of age in any school where the attendance exceeded thirty pupils, unless a separate room or separate instruction was provided.\(^44\) These regulations, amounting to the barest of limitations and requirements, reflected the depressed nature of the economy and tight government finance. They were also an implicit recognition that, even in the few schools in which pupil numbers may have justified a division of the floor area into classes defined by age or sex, formal arrangement of furniture

\(^{42}\) Inspector's Report for 1864, p.22.


\(^{44}\) Ibid., p.22.
would have so modified teaching methods as to overstretch the abilities and resources of many teachers. Inspectors refrained from insisting on the application of the regulation specifying the arrangement of forms and desks where poor design of the building made such arrangement difficult. In such cases, and in all of the many small schools, Inspectors felt they could impose only three requirements on the teachers: that there was good light on the desks, that there was enough room for the teacher behind each row and that there was enough space for classes to sit on the classroom floor.

No regulations existed, other than the one or two sentences contained in the 1865 Regulations, for the organisation of space and the securing of the health of the children until the drawing up of the plans of standard public schools in 1881. Stephens, in 1876, had written:

In this category [of regulation] come the proper arrangement of the schoolroom; the orderly disposition of the furniture and apparatus; the ventilation of the rooms; the preservation of the school property, inside and out; the provision for hats, books, slates, etc., when not in actual use...when the furniture is arranged in a disorderly manner, and the schoolroom encumbered with collections of miscellaneous articles anywhere but in their right place, when desks are so placed as to shake with the slightest movement, maps and other school apparatus

45 In his Inspector's Report for 1866, p17, Stephens regretted that 'as regards the internal economy of Schools, or the qualifications of Teachers' progress could not be regarded as satisfactory. He deplored the fact that teachers did so little after their appointment to remedy defects in their education or make their schools more efficient.


47 Ibid.
more or less dilapidated, plaster picked off the walls...it is quite clear that the training of the school is bad. 48  

School buildings, poorly designed and constructed at minimum costs, deteriorated quickly. Shingling and guttering were allowed to fall into disrepair and plaster showed signs of roof leakage and fell to the floor in patches - all for the want of the timely expenditure of a few shillings. 49  Yet the Board had almost no funds to spend on maintenance and, when it did release funds, it could not provide for supervision or control over the repairs. Only occasionally was deterioration arrested by the generosity of an individual donor. There was little point in putting money into new furniture and apparatus when demands were greater in other areas of expenditure, especially the construction of school buildings, and when the lack of care for them by teachers and local boards persuaded the members of the central Board that expenditure in those circumstances amounted to wasteful extravagance.

The health of school children which was made a matter of considerable importance in the Minutes of 1839 and succeeding Minutes by the Committee of Council on Education only became a cause for concern with the Tasmanian Board of Education in the late seventies, at least so far as its public statements indicate. In very many of the Board's own schools:

The means of ventilation and warming are insufficient; where hat and cloak pegs are provided, they are in most cases put so close together that the want of cleanliness in one child injuriously affects others whose parents are most praiseworthy in sending them to school clean and tidy. The kind of furniture at present in use has much to do


with the contamination of clean children, and also the spread of cutaneous disorders. The desks and seats allow, and some teachers often require, children to sit in close contact with each other. There can be little doubt but that such crowding increases danger when infectious disease is prevalent.\textsuperscript{50}

From the late seventies, many annual reports contained requests for the building of cloakrooms, the installing of coat and hat pegs, the re-arranging of desks and the manufacture of desks of a new, improved design. Many of the desks were designed for six and even nine pupils and, most commonly, they were built without backs. Even desks of new design were 'so constructed that it \textit{was} impossible for any children to sit at them without twisting their bodies and limbs into grotesque and sometimes painful contortions'.\textsuperscript{51} Very little money was spent on furniture and equipment during the depression of the nineties. In 1893, the Premier informed the Minister that the education budget would be reduced by 5 per cent and that 'the outlay on new schools generally must keep behind and not keep pace or go in front of the growth of population and revenue.'\textsuperscript{52}

School furniture replacement and repairs also suffered. The new and great concern shown in Tasmanian children's health and physique following the disclosure of the poor physical qualities of recruits to the British army during the Boer War induced a critical examination of school buildings and furniture and, once more, criticisms of forms without backs were common. Brockett complained:

\begin{quote}
[They are] calculated to encourage the development of round shoulders and \textit{do} much to neutralise the value of the work done in
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{50} Inspector's Report for 1879, p.12.

\textsuperscript{51} Chief Inspector's Report for 1884, p.8.

\textsuperscript{52} AOT PD 1/58/82. Memorandum from Premier to Minister for Education, 23.3.93.
the playground. In the report of the New South Wales Commissioner on Primary Education, I find the following:— "Seats without backs ought to be absolutely prohibited, and the testimony of hygienists is uniform on this point."53

The supply of desks was kept to a minimum to reduce costs, even in the early years of the twentieth century when there was an easing of the State's financial difficulties. Children were so crowded that every movement jostled and irritated others, causing disorder and inattention.54 In 1906, a trial order of 40 desks was placed for a new design of desk, the manufacturers of which claimed their use would lead to improved posture.55

The walls of school rooms, often unlined and unpainted, were usually unadorned.56 Individual teachers made attempts to decorate their rooms, but Inspectors, for many years, gave little encouragement. W.L. Neale, in writing to the President of the Decoration Society of South Australia, asking him to lend pictures to the Education Department, began his letter with:

At present there are no decorations in the Schools of Tasmania. I am anxious to evoke an interest in the subject...I propose to hang [the pictures] for a while at a School in Launceston and also at a School in Hobart and to invite teachers and the public to inspect them. I hope also to get the illustrated

weekly paper to publish views of the decorated interiors.57 Apparatus was of poor quality and some of it was 'worse than useless.'58 Schools were equipped with the bare necessaries, but equipment such as slates, blackboards, copy-books, pens and pencils were hardly mentioned in official reports until the very early years of the twentieth century, unless it were to draw to the attention of teachers the effects of the use of stumps of pencils on the handwriting of children. School libraries which had been introduced in the 1840's with varied support and interest from teachers, parents and children 59 were not given sustained support by Inspectors and fell into neglect until the early years of the century.60

The annual reports for the period 1902 to 1913 raise matters which had not appeared before. Their content is markedly different and the spirit and tone, especially in reference to the interest taken in education and school affairs by local boards, parents, teachers and children are quite unlike earlier reports. There is a great deal of evidence from Directors' and Inspectors' Reports, apart from sources already cited, of activity by these groups, and individuals at local school level. The fund raising efforts of teachers and parents, the number of schools which introduced visitors' days and the enthusiasm of some teachers brought about a great increase in the number of school

57 AOT ED 9/2/602 (05). Letter from Director of Education to L.W. Stanton, President of the Decoration Society, Adelaide, 20.4.05.
60 Inspector's Report for 1902, p.8.
libraries and the number of books and borrowings. A growing number of schools purchased musical instruments especially pianos. With the introduction of Physical Culture courses and their gradual displacement of Drill, parents raised money for the purchase of flags, wands and dumb-bells. School rooms began to take on a new appearance as teachers become enthusiastic in decorating walls with pictures, cuttings from illustrated journals pasted on cardboard, floral decorations and examples of the children's work - little offerings to the Graces, as one Inspector called them - and it became rare to find a schoolroom with bare walls. Some teachers become adept at making their own teaching aids and simple pieces of equipment such as yard sticks, foot rules, scales and weights and at persuading parents to pay for compasses, thermometers and wall charts. By 1913, the appearance of school buildings and their interiors had undergone great change and much of it had been achieved without recourse to government funds.

61 Inspectors' Reports for 1902, p.8; 1910 pp. 8,9; 1911, pp. 7,8; 1912, pp. 14,15; 1913, p.14.
63 Inspectors' Reports for 1902, p.10; 1903, p.8; 1911, pp. 3,4.
66 Ibid.
School Grounds and Gardens

For very many years, almost no investment either by labour or funding, was put into school grounds. Work of this kind was an extra cost and the Board and Department were reluctant to spend money on school grounds if there was a prospect of the pupil numbers declining to the point where the school had to be abandoned or converted to a half-time school. For decades the condition of school grounds, the lack of fencing, paths and open space were subjects that received no mention at all by Inspectors, Directors or Boards of Advice. They remained, therefore, as one acre blocks in the country, and smaller blocks in the towns and cities, which had simply been cleared of trees for the building of the school house. Some, perhaps, had another small area tree-felled for a rough playing space. Otherwise no further labour or funding was expended on school grounds, except for the digging of cess-pits for out-offices. Buildings were regularly appraised in reports, but school grounds were not and the first discussion in any detailed sense does not arise until James Rule's Report of 1880.

It is exceptional to find yards or playgrounds for boys and girls separated by proper fencing. Many playgrounds have never been levelled or cleared of stumps and boulders. In some, that are naturally flat, children have to wade through mud in rainy weather to reach the school or the out-offices. A few of the Board's new schools have a verandah. This, or a covered playground should be attached to every school.67

Out-offices are amongst the most frequently discussed of all matters in official reports. Cess-pits, the first means employed, were a danger to health. After the passing of the 1868 Act, responsibility for keeping out-offices clean rested with Boards of Advice which

were given grants by the central Board to employ cleaners. Cess-pits were not only sources of diseases, they were also inefficient:

Many of the cess-pits still in use are such as to make the sanitation of closets almost impracticable. They are really wells, receiving a constant supply of water by percolation from the adjacent earth; thereby the contents are always more or less fluid, and foul gases escape whenever the surface is disturbed. Dry earth or ashes applied only sink to the bottom.68

The introduction of pans in the 1880's was not necessarily an improvement if they were emptied infrequently or use was not made of dry earth and disinfectant. The danger to health therefore remained.69 Urinals were invariably of poor design and in areas in which water was not available in quantity, they became and remained offensive. Attempts to overcome the inefficiency of Boards of Advice and ensure that out-offices were regularly cleaned may have become a fruitless mission to the Inspectors for no progress seems to have been made. A new system to replace the pan system was never contemplated for schools in small towns and country districts where sewerage systems did not exist and thus it remained as the most common means of disposal. Not until Elkington conducted his enquiry into the hygienic conditions of state schools in 1904 was the matter of cleanliness of out-offices given thorough and expert attention:-

In practically all schools which I have visited [closet and urinal accommodation] appears to be on a par with the other matters above considered, revealing an utter

68 Inspectors' Reports for 1887, p.10; 1889, p.11.

disregard for or ignorance of modern principles of construction or maintenance.\textsuperscript{70}

His remedies included the reconstruction of closets and urinals, the prescribed system of construction of new out-offices and regular disposal and cleaning. Such remedies as were applied after Elkington's 1904 Report received no acknowledgement in annual reports, suggesting that his advice had been heeded.

During the eighties, one of the quieter social movements of the time was the pressure applied to colonial and municipal governments for the provision of public recreation grounds. The movement succeeded with the passing of legislation in 1888 and 1889\textsuperscript{71} and with the increase in the number of shelter sheds erected on school grounds. Further clearing of school sites, other than the clearing originally done to make way for the school house, was not immediately undertaken. The building of shelter sheds was a responsibility quickly assumed by some Boards of Advice and it appears that a number of schools had erected shelter sheds by the first years of the new century. However, the Secretary to the Board of Advice for the Port Cygnet district, a concerned and energetic Board, wrote in 1898:

There is only one school under our jurisdiction...provided with a shelter shed for the children. These sheds are not very expensive, say £5 each, and should be erected at all country schools where children come from a distance and bring their dinners with them. It is only right that some protection

\textsuperscript{70} JPP LI 1904, paper 46. Report on the Hygienic Condition of Tasmanian State Schools, 1904, p.5.

should be provided against the rain and cold in winter and the heat in summer.\(^{72}\)

After repeated requests to the Education Department for funds, the Board at Port Cygnet was able to report a year later that only two schools were without shelter sheds.\(^{73}\) Other Boards moved more slowly, or were unwilling to set about the task themselves. The Secretary to the Beaconsfield Board wrote to the Director in 1905:

\[\text{It is very injurious to the health of the children to get wet and remain in wet clothes till 4 o'clock and I would most strongly urge you to take steps to remedy this.}\(^{74}\]

The winter passed and a year later the shed had still not been built.

Arbor Day had become a regular event in the schools by 1901 and the Inspectors used it as a means of encouraging teachers, pupils, parents and Boards of Advice to plant trees, flowers and shrubs in school grounds, clear and level land and fence boundaries. The educational benefits were frequently brought to the teachers' attention:

\[\text{At several State Schools gardens have been laid out and planted. In these the scholars take great pride and interest, and although at present the motives which actuate the establishment of these gardens are scarcely educational, the movement is a step in the right direction.}\(^{75}\)

\(^{72}\) AOT LA 54/11. Port Cygnet Board of Advice, letterbook of Secretary and Chairman, letter to Director of Education, 2.9.98.

\(^{73}\) Ibid., letter to Director of Education, 15.11.99.

\(^{74}\) AOT LA 1/5. Beaconsfield Board of Advice, Secretary's Letterbook, letter from Chairman to Director of Education, 6.6.05.

\(^{75}\) Inspector's Report for 1903, p.9.
Another Inspector wrote:

In some schools the responsibility for each tree's welfare is laid on a particular child, and there, as a rule, the trees thrive. But, in others, everybody's business soon becomes nobody's business; and no attention is given to the poor trees, unless by stray cows and goats. Here teachers miss an occasion of moral discipline.\textsuperscript{76}

The results of the Inspectors' enthusiasm were mixed:

Gardening of some kind or other is attempted in about 44 per cent of the schools in my districts; but it is only in a very few that more than flower beds have resulted.\textsuperscript{77}

School gardens are growing in favour, and as with plots, the work inter-locked with Nature Study brings the boy into closer touch with his teacher, thought is aroused by the observation notes around him, [sic] and one practical outcome at least is that he and probably his parents also will take an increased interest in school life.\textsuperscript{78}

In most schools, however, the planting of flower beds and experimental plots, though the rule rather than the exception, owed their existence and maintenance to teachers rather than to parents, children, or Boards. Even so, most teachers failed to make use of them for teaching purposes,\textsuperscript{79} although J.A. Leach's papers on the teaching of Nature Study which were printed in \textit{The Educational Record} each month from March 1912 to February 1913 brought some new enthusiasm.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p.11.

\textsuperscript{77} Inspector's Report for 1910, p.16.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{79} Inspectors' Reports for 1912; p.24.

\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Educational Record}, 7,10, March 1912; 7,11, April 1912; 7, 12, May 1912; 8,1, June 1912; 8,2, July 1912; 8,3, August 1912; 8,4, September 1912; 8,5, October 1912; 8,6, November 1912; 8,7, December 1912; 8,8, January 1913; 8,9, February 1913.
School grounds, here and there, were cleared and levelled, but most remained unusable and desolate. An Inspector wrote in 1900:

It is very disappointing to note in how few instances do teachers take a pleasure in improving their surroundings. A few trees carefully planted and securely fenced would do much to take away the bare and squalid appearance that many school premises now present; and such work in addition to being a source of interest and pleasure to the teacher has an educational influence of considerable value in a country where the timber is so rapidly disappearing, and where ideas of arboriculture seldom rise beyond the planting of *Pinus insignis* or a blue gum.\(^{81}\)

And a decade later, much the same attitude, according to another Inspector, was still evident:

Unfortunately, in selecting a site for a school building, the suitability of the soil for the purpose of school gardens has been one of the things that have not entered into the hearts of the selectors to conceive. Too often the suitability of the site for purposes of the children's recreation and physical culture has been another of those unconsidered trifles.\(^{82}\)

By 1913, and after the passing of three quarters of a century, school architecture had changed greatly, though many unsuitable schools remained. Interiors, especially the interiors of kindergartens, in which Wilderspin's and Stow's galleries were giving way to open areas with suitable furniture, were greatly modified; the school rooms, with the new enthusiasm

---

81 Inspector's Report for 1900, p.12.

for decoration, were more attractive and new double desks, especially in the larger schools were replacing six and nine seat forms. Lighting and heating were much improved and school rooms were cleaner. They were probably healthier places than formerly, with improved ventilation systems, coat and hat pegs and, in a few schools, cloakrooms or verandahs. In some parts of the island, school grounds and yards began to take on a softer appearance. For the first forty-five to fifty years, the changes were few and were introduced into the state school system very slowly and with minimum cost to government. The most fundamental changes were introduced in the last twenty or twenty-five years, changes which became more extensive after the first world war.