CHAPTER 4

ATTENDANCE AT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

From Franklin's Board, 1839, to the Establishing of the Board of Education, 1854.

Franklin's Regulations for the Free Day Schools, 1839, made comprehensive provision for boys and girls to attend the schools. No distinction was made between the various religious denominations and no limits, either upper or lower, were set on the ages of the children. A Board of Education was established and the Regulations were promulgated in its name, for 'the general information of the community [and] the special guidance of the Conductors'.


The initiative for the establishment of individual schools lay, not only with the Board, but with 'the Ordained Ministers, Police Magistrates or respectable inhabitants of the townships and districts,' acting through the Board. Public assistance would be given if the pupil members in Hobart and Launceston amounted to forty, in the townships to twenty and in other places fifteen pupils. The teachers were entitled to claim fees from the parents and a salary from the Board. The duties of the teacher, apart from teaching the brief course of study that accompanied the Regulations and paying 'the

2. Ibid., p.8.
greatest attention to the general behaviour of the children,' included the keeping of certain books. The Master was required to keep a journal of admission, a journal of daily attendance and to make a quarterly return to the Board:

The journal of admission must contain the name, age, and date of admission of each child, how far advanced he or she may be at the time of admission, the religious denomination of the parents, the date of removal and the cause. '3

A Visitor's Book had to be kept and the name of a visitor, with the date of the visit, had to be entered by the teacher. Every Monday morning, the teacher was required to ascertain from each child which Sunday School he or she had attended on the previous Sunday. The quarterly return had to contain the age, sex, progress, general moral conduct, daily attendance and date of admission of each child and it was required of the teacher that it be inspected by the visitors before it was sent on to the Board.

The admission journal and quarterly return thus provided the teacher, visitor and Board with basic information concerning the child's attendance, progress and moral conduct. No clear instructions, however, were given on the recording of attendance. Most teachers, it seems, recorded attendance if a child attended school at any time during the course of the day. The hours of attendance were laid down by the Regulations as being from 9 to 12 in the morning and from 2 to 4 in the afternoon. If a child appeared at

3 Ibid., p.10.
all, and regardless of the length of stay, he or she was marked by some teachers as being in attendance for that day. Mr. Nicholson, teacher at the Campbell Street School in Hobart, on the other hand, took 'the largest number actually present together, at any one time of the day'. The difference between the two methods could be considerable. Teachers seemed at a loss to know how to fill in the journals and returns correctly. Charles Bradbury, Secretary to the Board, stated to the 1845 Commission of Enquiry that it was his practice to visit schools which were within a reasonable distance of Hobart about once a quarter, schools within the town itself and the immediate neighbourhood much more frequently and those at remote distances about twice a year. He said that he had every reason to believe that the quarterly returns were filled in correctly, but in his reports for 1845 and 1846, although he unfailingly noted the attendance figures, he paid little attention to the method followed and the accuracy of the compilation.

Attempts had been made shortly after the promulgation of the Regulations to induce teachers to increase the numbers in attendance. The Board offered ten shillings as an additional annual allowance for each child enrolled beyond the figures of forty, twenty and fifteen pupils, according to location. There was a suggestion that the scheme, later abandoned, tempted teachers to enrol very young children, although Broadbury thought there had not been any abuse of the

5 Ibid., p.108.
6 Ibid., p.110.
system. But the schools were not working effectively, inducements notwithstanding. The Reverend John Philip Gell, Principal of Queen's College, Hobart, told the Commission of Enquiry of 1845 that James Bonwick, teacher at Liverpool Street School, Hobart, 'a zealous and intelligent man', complained to him of want of supervision and support from the Board. Most of the school masters expressed dissatisfaction generally with the system, he reported, although he confessed that it was difficult to get at the truth. Bonwick had increased the attendance at the Liverpool Street School within five months of taking charge. He had had 43 boys and 12 girls enrolled at the start and, by immediately introducing the British and Foreign system, had raised the numbers to 150 boys and 100 girls. But his success was tempered by the constant frustrations he felt at the Board's ignoring of his repeated complaints about the very bad condition of the school buildings and the lack of furniture and equipment. Gell's opinion was that, in 1840, the public schools were very inefficient, 'the Masters seemed to be discouraged, and were in perplexity as to their own responsibility, and as to the courses they were expected to pursue.'

The teachers, so poorly educated and, for the most part, quite untrained, looked to the Board and Bradbury for direction and, in the matter of keeping attendance records, a simple set of instructions. Occasional visits were not enough, although Bradbury's inspection reports were helpful, constructively critical and

7 Ibid., pp.104-05.
8 Ibid., p.91.
9 Ibid., p.92.
10 Ibid., p.88.
touched by warmth and understanding. Gell thought that teachers were always glad to see him on his visits, but he said that:

They complained of the want of Visitors to encourage them and particularly of the absence of sufficient official superintendence.\textsuperscript{11}

The school system which had been in operation before 1839 had been displaced by the schools created by Franklin's Board because it had provided only a partial system of education. In 1836, only 1061 children's names were 'on the books;' in 1837 there were 1206, in 1838 there were 960 names and in the first two quarters of 1839 there were 814. The confident expectation had been put to the Legislative Council in 1838 that the new Board would double the number of pupils and schools.\textsuperscript{12} But growth was very slow for a number of years. In 1840, the number of pupils 'on the books' was 1148, in 1845 it had risen to 1413 only.\textsuperscript{13}

The organisation of public education was radically altered after 1846. W.E. Gladstone, the new Colonial Secretary, was not persuaded by the Report of the Commission of Enquiry that the system of public education in Tasmania would 'endure the strictest scrutiny in regard to the securities it affords for an

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p.136.

\textsuperscript{13} LCP 1840. Report of Board of Education for 1840 (to August), p.5; Annual Report for 1845, p.7.
entire liberty of conscience'. Gladstone was very much in sympathy with the view, constantly urged by the Anglican clergy in Tasmania, that children of the Anglican faith were being taught the scriptures in schools by Dissenting clergy. Dr. William Bedford stated to the 1845 Commission of Enquiry that, with three or four exceptions, the Anglican clergy had withdrawn their services as visitors in protest against Franklin's proposal that the teaching of the Scriptures be done without commentary or exposition. He was asked by one of the Commissioners:

Then the effect of the withdrawal of the Clergy of the Church of England, from all participation in the schools has been to throw [the children] gradually into the hands of the Dissenters, do we understand that to be your opinion? Bedford replied, 'I think so certainly.' It was to these objections that Gladstone listened. He himself supplied the remedy and ordered the Governor to apply it. The nub of the scheme was the payment of a penny a day for each child in attendance at schools conducted by the Church of England and Catholic Church. The effect of Gladstone's scheme was to increase the number of Church of England schools and decrease the number of Board of Education Schools. In 1848, there were 29 Anglican schools and 22 Board of Education schools, with average daily attendances of 715 and 919, respectively.

14 PLC 1847-8. Despatch from W.E. Gladstone to Governor on the Government Schools of Van Diemen's Land, 3.3.46, pp. 2-3.
15 AOT CSO 8/122/2996-3000. Report of Commission of enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges, 1845, p.64.
16 PLC 1847-8. Minute by Lieut-Governor on Education, 9.3.48, pp. 6,8.
A consequence of Gladstone's 1846 Despatch was that the teachers in the Board schools had their salaries and standards of accommodation regulated by the same conditions as those governing teachers employed in the schools administered by the Churches. Thus, they lost their fixed salaries and were obliged to subsist on a lower scale determined by payments of 'a penny-a-day'. In addition, they had to give up the occupation of school premises, rented from government. Arnold wrote in 1850:

This change led to some effects that were to be regretted, to others that were beneficial. On the one hand, some of the best among the existing teachers...abandoned the public service, and either left the Colony or engaged in private tuition...on the other hand, the new system soon showed itself an elasticity and power of expansion, for which the former one had not been remarkable.17 During one year alone, 1849, fifteen new schools were established, most of them Church of England schools and Arnold commented:

Nothing could be more in harmony with the views and feelings of the Clergy than to establish Schools, which, in accordance with the denominational principle, would be subject to their exclusive direction, and where the distinguishing tenets of their Church could be freely taught: while the Government, owing to the great reduction in the payment to the teachers and the cessation of rents could afford to grant aid to a much larger number of Schools than was possible in former times.18 Yet by 1850, of the 71 schools receiving public funding, four belonged to the Catholic Church, eight only were Board Schools, such was the rapidity of their decline, and no fewer than 59 schools were conducted by

17 Report for 1850, p.2.
18 Ibid.
the Church of England. The teachers' dependence on school attendance figures for their salaries, making them 'fluctuating and uncertain', led to falsification of attendance returns, and a lowering of their social standing. The discovery of gold in New South Wales and Victoria in 1851 brought on the resignation of many teachers and a further decline in morale.

The gold rushes also brought about a reduction in the number of schools and in daily attendance rates. Arnold's comparison of Tasmanian attendance figures with other countries was based on the number of children in attendance as a proportion of total population, excluding from the calculation what he called 'a portion of our excessive adult population', an unstated and mysterious figure. His calculations may not bear too close an examination, therefore, but they, at least, gave a basis for comparison in their magnitudes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1:10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>1:8</td>
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<td>Holland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>1:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prussia</td>
<td>1:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canton of Thurgau</td>
<td>1:4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canton of Berne</td>
<td>1:4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., p. 5.
21 Inspector's Report for 1852, p. 3.
22 Ibid.
In part, Arnold blamed Tasmania's poor attendance on 'a lower class of Private Schools, conducted mostly by persons who [had] been transported' but:

On the whole it seems evident that public and private means of instruction fall far short of what is required in order to make the next generation an educated people.  

Denison's School Bill of 1852 foundered amidst opposition from Catholic Clergy and laity who feared that a clause, 'empowering a wealthy majority to determine upon the kind of religious instruction to be given in the schools,' would have the effect of excluding Catholic children from the public schools. A Select Committee, unable to reconcile differences within its membership, asked the Legislative Council to re-appoint the Committee. That Committee, in its wider examination of public education as a whole, reported in 1853, in favour of a general system, that is to say, a non-denominational system. Without giving the grounds for thinking so, it recommended that funding be drawn from public revenue, rather than by means of a local rate. At much the same time, a Board of Inspection, composed of representatives of the three major churches and Arnold, reported, like the Select Committee, that a general system be adopted. It condemned the 'penny-a-day system':

[It] is the subject of universal complaint among the teachers. It has proved itself practically inefficient as a means of

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23 Ibid. p.5.

24 VPLC II 1852, paper 50. Petition of Roman Catholic Clergy and Laity against the School Bill, 1852, p.3.


26 Ibid.
providing salaries for the masters while it is open to grave objections of another kind. Rival schools have been established, and a pernicious system of bidding against one another for pupils in order to secure the Government allowance per head has been encouraged.27

The crux of the Board's recommendations was that recommendation which dealt with teachers' conditions of employment:

The chief cause of the low state of education in the Schools was the want of adequate remuneration to the masters, as well as of funds for providing and keeping up a sufficient stock of School requisites.28

That being so, the Board of Inspection directed its other recommendations to the creation of a system whereby teachers would be guaranteed a fixed income from public funds, with the additional rights to collect fees and receive 'a small sum for each child in attendance.'29

The upshot of the recommendations of both the Board and Committee was the creation of a central Board. The Board was to be allocated funds from public, not local, revenues, and it was to establish a salary scale identical to the scheme proposed by the Board of Inspection. From this time onwards, the State system of public education became the dominant system and the denominational schools, stripped of their public funds, came to occupy a minor position in primary education.


28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.
Compulsory Attendance Legislation

In the period, 1839 to 1913, five Acts were passed by Parliament concerning attendance at school. The foundation Acts were those of 1868 and 1885 and three others which were, in effect, if not in name, amendment Acts.

The Public Schools Act, 1868, was an outcome of the Royal Commission of 1867 which had been established primarily to report on public education in the colony and the best ways of reducing expenditure. The Mercury was not well disposed to commissions, whatever their kind or purpose:

There is no probability of [the] enquiry either being so thorough as that which it would be in the power of the government to institute or of the decisions at which [it] arrive[s] being shaped with such a regard to economy as the government have pledged themselves to see carried out in every department of the public service. 30

Whether the newspaper had a presentiment or not, the Commissioners declared themselves unwilling to reduce expenditure:

To endeavour to attenuate 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. 31

30 Mercury 16.4.67, p.2.
The Commissioners, taking some satisfaction from figures which showed that Tasmania's attendance rates were much of a kind with those of England, Victoria and New South Wales, asked two questions: what classes, if any in particular, were not being reached and why were they not? To the first, they concluded that, as in other countries, there existed in the colony a class 'composed mainly of the lowest elements of the population, to whom abject ignorance is more congenial than discipline and instruction.' They were 'prepared to admit the probability' that, because of the convict element, that class was more numerous in Tasmania than elsewhere. 

The Commissioners rephrased the second question—'whether the Educational system...either in principle, or in the mode in which it is administered...discourages school attendance among the children of the poorer classes?' Dissatisfied with the testimony of some witnesses - one had not inspected the public schools of the colony and another gave his evidence from hearsay - the Commissioners inspected several public schools in Hobart and failed 'to detect any principle of distinction in operation' between fee-paying and 'free' pupils. Neither were they willing to allow that the burden of the 'free' scholars to the taxpayer was of any great moment. On the contrary, they agreed with the conclusions of two of their number that, with very few exceptions, parents who had applied

32 Ibid., pp. xi-xiii
33 Ibid., p.xii.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid., p.xiii
36 Ibid.
for free education for the children were in no position to make even the smallest contribution.\textsuperscript{37} To the question of whether the coming together of different classes in the public schools was to the prejudice of one class rather than another, the Commissioners made use of the testimony of witnesses to various English and Scottish enquiries to reach their conclusion that the fact that parents of the superior class 'continue to send their children to the Public Schools prove[s] that any incidental inconveniences in their case are not of a serious character'.\textsuperscript{38}

Unanimity had prevailed amongst them in these matters, but the Commissioners could not agree on the question of legal compulsion:

Is the advantage attained by compulsory means sufficiently great to outweigh the incidental moral disadvantages of a resort to legal coercion in any sphere of action in which the alternative of voluntary inducements affords reasonable ground to expect that the end proposed will be accomplished?\textsuperscript{39}

Consequently, the Commissioners, in their recommendations, went no further than to propose the compulsory education of neglected children.\textsuperscript{40}

When the Public Schools Bill was debated in the legislature in 1868, members were similarly divided over the question of compulsory attendance and drew upon the same views, those of Matthew Arnold, Mark

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid., p.xiv.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p.xv.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p.xxi.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p.xxix.
\end{itemize}
Pattison and James Fraser,\(^4\) which had tipped the balance of the Commissioners' recommendations against compulsory attendance. The *Mercury* had no taste for compulsion either:

We are...convinced that [the principle] is one which will be most difficult to give practical application to in this country, or indeed in any community like ours accustomed to regard all coercion when used to enforce compliance with moral or natural duties with almost an inherent aversion.\(^4\)\(^2\)

The *Examiner* which was much more disposed to put a cash value on education - or any activity, for that matter, on which public money was spent - thought there was a strong case for compulsory education:

The thousands of children growing up in gross ignorance, the indifference and neglect of many parents, require something stronger than persuasion to make them do their duty to their offspring.\(^4\)\(^3\)

Henry Butler, sensing the opposition, proposed a moderate resolution of the difficulty - a proposal 'hesitatingly recommended...with a view of testing its efficiency in securing a larger attendance of children of the school age', as The *Mercury* put it.\(^4\)\(^4\) Butler had written a memorandum for the benefit of the Commission in which he offered three grounds only for exemption from attendance - that the child was being privately educated, that the child's health was such as to render it unable to attend and that the parents

\(^4\)\(^1\) House of Assembly debate on the Public Schools Bill, 20.8.68, reported in *The Mercury* 21.8.68, p.3.

\(^4\)\(^2\) *Mercury* 22.8.68, p.2.

\(^4\)\(^3\) *Examiner* 15.8.68, p.4.

\(^4\)\(^4\) *Mercury* 19.9.68. p.2.
could not do without the child's labour. His proposals
during the debate on the Bill emerged in the Act as a
clause which was so riddled with exemptions as to prove
almost unworkable in practice. Any child between the
ages of seven and twelve years and who lived within one
mile of a public school was required to attend, but the
parent could claim exemption on any one of six grounds:

(1) If [the] Child is being privately educated in
reading and writing, or

(2) if it is being educated at a Public or
Private School, or

(3) if its health is such that it cannot attend
school, or

(4) if [the parent] cannot do in whole or in part
without its labour at home, or

(5) if it can read or write, or

(6) if such Child cannot safely attend School\(^4\)\(^5\)

Thomas Stephens may well have had a hand in framing
Butler's memorandum and, possibly, some influence on
the Bill. As an administrator, although he was, in
principle, in favour of compulsion, he was quite sure
that there were difficulties in the way of carrying it
out.\(^4\)\(^6\) Murray Burgess, Deputy Inspector and Secretary
to the Board of Education, also gave evidence to the
Board and said that he did not know of any system of
compulsory education that would be practicable.\(^4\)\(^7\) James
Rule, on the other hand, favoured a strict application
of the law and he believed that it would be effective

\(^{45}\) Acts of Parliament of Tasmania, Public Schools Act
32 Vict., No.14, 1868, Schedule A.

\(^{46}\) HAJ XV 1867, paper 44. Report of the Royal

\(^{47}\) Ibid., p.2.
in forcing parents to send their children to school. Stephens and Burgess were unwilling to support legislation on compulsory attendance such as prevailed in Prussia, but they also believed that a less severe form of legislation would be ineffective in Tasmania.

The ineffectiveness of the 1868 legislation in practice gave rise to the amendment of 1873. Debate in both Houses was brief and yielded little that was new. The main provision of the Act was the extension of the ages of compulsory attendance from 7 to 12 years to 7 to 14 years and the extension of the radius from a school, within which attendance was compulsory, from one mile to two miles, applicable throughout the colony. The Select Committee of 1882 pointed out that neither of the two Acts had laid down standards of regular attendance. Ages and distances had been fixed, but the minimum number of days in a week, quarter or year upon which a child must, by law, attend school, were not provided. George Stuart, the Board's Visiting Officer for Hobart, confirmed, with anecdotal evidence, what Stephens and George Richardson, Secretary to the Board, had already stated at the Select Committee hearings, namely, that the absence of a definition of regular attendance in the legislation put the onus of prosecution on the Magistrates who found themselves powerless to act. Consequently, said Stuart, many parents took advantage of the weakness and did not send

48 Ibid., p.39.
their children to school. Stephens stated to the Committee that the compulsory clause:

Rarely extend[ed] beyond producing an attendance which [was] so irregular as to be of little or no value.

The appointment in 1874, following the Amendment Act, of a Visiting Officer for the Hobart area and another for Launceston had, in Stephens' words, done nothing to improve attendance.

The 1883 Royal Commission gave close attention to the problem, emphasising in their deliberations not only the absence of a standard of attendance, but also the absence of adequate and effective penalties for evasion of the law. The Commissioners included in their report a table showing the standards of attendance and penalties in force in other colonies. The five Australian colonies and New Zealand all made provision for standards, the least being of 30 days a quarter in Victoria and Queensland. All colonies, Western Australia excepted, imposed fines or scales of fines for non-attendance and prison sentences ranging from seven days in New South Wales and Victoria, 14 days in South Australia to 30 days in Queensland. The Commissioners stated that the school ages of 7 to 14 years had been 'wisely fixed' and that the school distance of two miles, by radius not by road, was suitable, although they thought the local boards should be given power to extend the radius to three miles.

51 Ibid., p.8.
52 JHA XLV 1883, paper 70, Report of the Royal Commission on Public Education, 1883, p. xxI
53 Ibid., pp. xxi-xxii.
They recommended that the grounds for exemption be clearly defined, 'instead of throwing upon local bodies the entire responsibility of deciding what constitute[d] sufficient ground of exemption.' They were especially interested in emulating all the other colonies, except for Western Australia, in the instituting of an exemption clause which would release from further attendance a child who had passed a Fourth Class examination. The Commissioners regretted that the 1882 Select Committee's recommendation that children under 12 years of age should not be employed in factories had not been passed into law and, consequently, they made a similar recommendation.

The Commissioners, having earlier put the case for making education free, argued that 'the State may justly assume all the powers necessary to the rigorous enforcement of the compulsory clause'. The Education Act of 1885, which embodied many of the Commission's recommendations, failed to provide free education, shied clear of imposing imprisonment on the defaulting parent and made no provision for exemption on the grounds of a child having passed a specified examination. The Act did define the ages of compulsory attendance and, in doing so, reduced the leaving age from 14 to 13 years; it defined attendance as three school-days in every week in which the school was open; deemed a school day to be of four hours duration or two hours before noon on any two days or two hours after noon on any two days and the Act also provided five grounds for exemption. Apart from quite specific

54 Ibid., p. xxii
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., p.xxi.
exemptions, such as exemptions granted by the local Board of Advice or the non-existence of a public school within two miles of a child's home, the three other exemptions were vague and, in the event, proved to be practically unenforceable. Sickness was one of the just causes of exemption, though no evidence was required of the child's illness. 'Regular and efficient instruction in some other manner' proved, according to Visiting Officers, to be a fruitful source of evasion of the compulsory clause. Being 'educated up to the compulsory standard of education', provided the child had reached, eleven years of age, was a vaguely-worded exemption, although later regulations made the exemption conditional on the child satisfying the Inspector that a certain standard had been reached.58

The framers of the Education Act of 1898, acknowledging that the 1885 Act had done little to raise attendance levels, made attendance compulsory for all children between 7 and 13 years of age for each day that the school was open, unless it could be shown by the parent that the child's labour was required to help support the family, in which case the provision of the 1885 Act applied and the child was required to attend for three days only.59 The Education Act of 1912 incorporated the provisions of the 1898 Act and raised the school-leaving age from 13 to 14 years.60

Attendance Rates

For the period preceding the formation of the new Board in 1854, and, indeed, for many years after, the reliability of the attendance figures is very doubtful. The filling out of admissions registers, daily attendance registers and returns, was the responsibility of the teachers and, as has been noted, these records were often indifferently kept. The proper keeping of the books was not an object of the Board's constant attention in the early years and neither was it a matter of the first importance as far as the Inspectors were concerned. Bradbury, for instance, was fairly thorough in recording the rise and fall in enrolments and average attendance at each school he visited, but he took the figures on trust. He and his predecessor as Secretary to the Board, W.E. Nairn, continued the system of data collection that had been followed by Rev. P. Palmer, Rural Dean, and Archdeacon William Hutchins which was simply based on the 'number of children on the Books' and the 'Average Daily Attendance'. Nevertheless, the figures for the Board years and previous years, though inaccurate, and with large gaps in the information, do show trends and they were reliable enough for the Board to make calculations and for Government to frame financial estimates. These figures, for the period to 1862, are taken, in most cases, from annual reports:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children on the Books</th>
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<th>Rate</th>
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<td>825</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>1206</td>
<td>879</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>747</td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>672</td>
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<tr>
<td>40(2)</td>
<td>1148</td>
<td>not given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>1460</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2825</td>
<td>1748</td>
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<tr>
<td>60(10)(13)</td>
<td>4149</td>
<td>1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>62(15)</td>
<td>7814</td>
<td>3674</td>
</tr>
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Explanations of the data, though lengthy, are necessary.

61 Annual Reports for:

1840, p.5. 1852, p.3.
1841, 1853, half year to 30.6.54, p.3.
1842, 1842, p.5. 1854, half year to 31.12.54, p.8.
1843, p.5. 1855, p.9.
1844, p.5. 1856, (Southern Board), p.7.
1846, 1858, (Southern Board), p.6.
1848, 1859, (Southern Board), p.10.
1849, Half-year 1854, p.3. 1860, (Southern Board), p.16.
1850, p.21. 1851, (Southern Board), p.16.
1851, 1854, p.3; 1852, p.3. 1862 (Southern Board), p.16.
1862 (Northern Board), p.9.
(1) The figures for 1836, 1837, 1838 and 1839 (first two quarters only) are taken from AOT CSO 8/122/2996-3033. Commission of enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges, 1845, Table A.

(2) The average daily attendance figures for the period 1840 to 1848 were not included in the annual reports of the Board. Figures for 1845 and 1846 are available from Bradbury's Reports, but, as they are a mixture of 'average daily attendance' ranges rather than averages and failures to record numbers, the computation has not been made.

(3) No report was issued in 1849, due to Bradbury's sudden death. The figure of 3256 has been taken from Arnold's Report for the half year to 30th June 1854, p.3. The figure for 1853 is taken from the same report.

(4) The figure of 2024 for 1854 is an 'average attendance', presumably meaning an 'average daily attendance.'

(5) The figure of 2444 for 1855 is an 'ordinary attendance', presumably meaning an 'average daily attendance.'

(6) The return for 1856 published figures for each of the half years. The two figures above are averages of the two half years.

(7) The figures for 1857 are taken from the Annual Report of the Southern Board only.
(8) The figures above are compiled from the Annual Reports of the Southern and Northern Boards which show variations. The Southern Board adopted the definition 'Highest Number of Scholars on the Rolls' and the Northern Board kept to previous definitions.

(9) The figures for 1859 are taken from the Annual Report of the Southern Board only. The definition 'Highest Number of Scholars on the Rolls' is used.

(10) and (11) The figures for 1860 and 1861 are taken from the Annual Reports of the Southern Board only. The column heading changed yet again - this time to 'Number of Scholars whose Names appear on the Rolls during the Year'.

(12)(13) and (14) The figures for the three years, 1859-61, are taken from the Annual Reports of the Southern Board only. The very large increase from 2825 to 4194, or 48%, in one year, cannot be accounted for by the change from 'Highest Number of Scholars on the Rolls' to 'Number of Scholars, whose Names appear on the Rolls during the Year'. The Inspector, J.J. Stutzer, made no attempt at explanation and contented himself with this remark in his Report for 1860, p.25:

The year having been one of considerable depression among the working classes, it is gratifying to find a large augmentation instead of a diminution among the Scholars.

The other puzzle is that the Average Daily Attendance figures of 1748, 1899 and 2154 show a steady and not unexpected growth. The percentages derived from the two sets of figures show up the error, since only a different method of compilation can account for the drop in percentage
attendance from 61% to 45%. It is not likely that arithmetical error is at fault, since that would call into question the data for all years prior to 1859 and that is difficult to believe.

(15) The figures for 1862 are taken from the Annual Reports of the Northern and Southern Boards. The puzzle of a continuing low percentage attendance, 47%, remains.

In 1862, the Southern Board began to use a quite different method of compilation. It established the Average Number on the Rolls during the Year, by which they meant:

The mean or average of the several numbers appearing on the Rolls throughout the year, and which, in point of fact, vary from week to week and from month to month.\textsuperscript{62}

Board members also used the 'Numbers in Daily Attendance', meaning:

The mean or average of the numbers found in actual attendance, not on the Rolls merely, but present in their classes from day to day during the year.\textsuperscript{63}

Had these two computations been used since the formation of the Board in 1839 or even earlier, and if the attendance registers had been properly kept, a reasonably accurate set of attendance figures would have been available from the early years. It is only from 1862 onwards, therefore, that attendance figures can be accepted with greater confidence — again,

\textsuperscript{62} Southern Board of Education. Annual Report for 1862, p.5.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
provided good records had been kept by the teachers and
statistics accurately compiled by the Board. With this
method, in use from 1862, the attendance rates for the
Southern Board area, for the six years before 1862,
would have been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average Number of Scholars on Rolls</th>
<th>Average Daily Attendance</th>
<th>% Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>2471</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>2257</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>2371</td>
<td>1694</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>2643</td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>3165</td>
<td>2154</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>3334</td>
<td>2337</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (1) The differences in the figures for Average Daily Attendance for 1858 and 1862 with figures given previously are accounted for by the fact that those figures were for the whole island.

(2) The slight variations between the two sets of figures for Average Daily Attendance for 1857, 1859, 1860, and 1861 are explained by the fact that the figures were obtained by the Southern Board and published in its 1862 Report as at December 31st for each year and not at some other time of the year.

But the figures for these years are not reliable. The Board took the figure 2471 as an average for 1857 when, in the Report for that year it appears as the 'Number of Children on the Rolls'. The figures of 2257, 2371 and 2643 do not appear at all in the Annual Reports for

64 Ibid.

1858, 1859 and 1860. The average daily attendance figures for those years were 2410, 2452 and 2711 respectively, yielding the lower rates of 69%, 67% and 68%. The figures 3165 and 3334 are correct.

So much for the accuracy of the compilers of statistics at the Central Board. From 1863 onwards, however, there are no grounds for considering their work to be inaccurate - at least because no errors of the kinds discussed above can be discovered. In any event, the system established in 1862 was the system maintained throughout the period under discussion, that is, until 1913, with minor modifications such as the assessing of the average number on the rolls at the end of each month and other variations which will be mentioned in context:

66 Southern Board of Education. Annual Reports for 1858, p.6; 1859, p.10; 1860, p.16.
67 Ibid.
68 Southern Board of Education. Annual Reports for 1861, p.16; 1862, pp.3,16.
Attendance at Tasmanian public schools, 1861 - 1913.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Distinct Scholars on Rolls</th>
<th>Av.No. of Scholars on Rolls (A)</th>
<th>Av.Daily Attend- %</th>
<th>B+A as (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>4751</td>
<td>3165</td>
<td>2154</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
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<td>63</td>
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<td>5357</td>
<td>4074</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>66</td>
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<td>3930</td>
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<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
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<td>5649</td>
<td>4272</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>9316</td>
<td>5992</td>
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<td>9997</td>
<td>6678</td>
<td>5041</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>10194</td>
<td>6786</td>
<td>5187</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>10491</td>
<td>6921</td>
<td>5209</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>74</td>
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<td>7970</td>
<td>5867</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>12271</td>
<td>8145</td>
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<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>12453</td>
<td>8297</td>
<td>6032</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>12652</td>
<td>8520</td>
<td>6203</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attendance at Tasmanian public schools, 1861 - 1913.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Distinct Scholars on Rolls</th>
<th>Av.No. of Scholars on Rolls (A)</th>
<th>Av.Daily B+A as Attendance (B)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>12286</td>
<td>8352</td>
<td>6002</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>13644</td>
<td>9258</td>
<td>6701</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
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<td>9302</td>
<td>6711</td>
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<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>15418</td>
<td>10531</td>
<td>7465</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>16014</td>
<td>11199</td>
<td>7856</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>16527</td>
<td>11383</td>
<td>8182</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
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<td>88</td>
<td>17125</td>
<td>12002</td>
<td>8730</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>17949</td>
<td>12460</td>
<td>8973</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>18156</td>
<td>12640</td>
<td>8898</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>19207</td>
<td>13491</td>
<td>9680</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>20659</td>
<td>14549</td>
<td>10654</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
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<td>93</td>
<td>20475</td>
<td>14875</td>
<td>10307</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
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<td>14476</td>
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<td>73</td>
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<td>14594</td>
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<td>96</td>
<td>20826</td>
<td>15772</td>
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<td>21763</td>
<td>16634</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>22517</td>
<td>17136</td>
<td>12015</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
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<td>99</td>
<td>23272</td>
<td>17682</td>
<td>13105</td>
<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>24157</td>
<td>18693</td>
<td>14007</td>
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<td>24542</td>
<td>19236</td>
<td>14259</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>24764</td>
<td>19553</td>
<td>14541</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>24595</td>
<td>18596</td>
<td>13863</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attendance at Tasmanian public schools, 1861 - 1913.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Distinct Scholars on Rolls</th>
<th>Av. No. of Scholars on Rolls</th>
<th>Av. Daily B+ A as Attendance</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>24082</td>
<td>18225</td>
<td>14321</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>24043</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14112</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>24221</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13729</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>25157</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14464</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>27760</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15952</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>29406</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17391</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>30805</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17974</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>32244</td>
<td>25759</td>
<td>18130</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>32817</td>
<td>25368</td>
<td>19561</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>33953</td>
<td>26919</td>
<td>21174</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (1) The figures for 1861 and 1862 are for the Southern Board area only. (2) The Education Department did not publish information on the 'Average Number of Scholars on the Rolls' for the period 1905 to 1913.

Southern Board of Education. Annual Reports for 1861, p.16; 1862, p.16.

66, p.10. 74, p.14. 82, p.28.
69, p.12. 77, p.28.
70, p.12. 78, p.22.

Education Department. Annual Report for:

1885, p.24. 1894, p.5. 1905, p.3.
86, 1887 95, p.5.
Report p.3. 96, p.4. 06, p.2.
87, p.3. 97, p.4. 07, p.2.
88, p3. 98, p.5. 08, p.2.
89, p.3. 99, p.5. 09, p.2.
90, p.3. 1900, p.5. 10, pp.4,5.
91, p.3. 01, p.2. 11, p.5.
92, p.3. 02, p.2. 12, p.10.
93, p.4. 03, p.2. 13, p.9.
04, p.4.
1910. Under the Directorship of W.L. Neale for that period, the data published in its place was the 'number present at any time during the month' and 'Average attendance for the Month'.

Neale did not state his reasons for breaking with practice. The 'Number of Distinct Scholars on the Roll' during this period showed strong growth and so, probably, did daily attendance and the percentage. It is a mystery why Neale should wish to conceal figures which would have been to his credit. McCoy, who followed him, resumed the old practice of dividing the average daily attendance by the average number on the rolls to obtain the crucial figure, the percentage.

(3) For the years, 1905 to 1910 it is not possible to compile figures on the basis of the percentage ratio for previous years between the Number of Distinct Scholars and Average Number of Scholars because the ratios for, say, the previous ten years are too erratic to permit averaging for the missing years of Average Number of Scholars. The figures for 1895 to 1904 are 73%, 75%, 76%, 76%, 76%, 75%, 77%, 78%, 75% and 75%.

(4) 1893, 1898 and 1911 were years of high incidences of infectious diseases and epidemics. See Education Department. Director's Report for 1893, p.7; Annual Report for 1898, p.3; Director's Report for 1911, p.5.

The figures are even more striking, though they could have been of little comfort to Tasmanian Directors and Inspectors, if they are arranged into percentages, roughly by decade:
Attendance at Tasmanian public schools.
1861 - 1913.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>% attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861-69</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-79</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-89</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-99</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-04</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-13</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendances at individual schools varied greatly. Concerning the 419 schools open during the year, the Director wrote in 1912:

The variation is great and not infrequently indicates the difference in the efficiency of the schools. Twenty three schools reached 90 per cent or more and 132 obtained between 80 and 90 per cent.70

Only thirteen school registers, covering the period to 1913, have survived, and most are for fairly brief periods and many are poorly kept.71 Inspectors' Reports have not survived in great number and records of local Boards, if they contain details of attendance and non-attendance at all, are very patchy. Even if they were not, they could not be used as accurate records, for such was not their purpose.

The Sandy Bay School admission register, 1853–92, the oldest surviving school record, was so poorly kept that the information concerning attendance is almost useless as the following extracted entries show:

70 Director's Report for 1912, p.10.

71 Many of the thirteen are for years late in the period e.g. Don registers start at 1906, Merton at 1905, Ulverstone at 1904 and South Queenstown at 1909. Consequently, their usefulness is rather limited.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Number admitted</th>
<th>No. of Years. at the School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 6 5 4 3 2 1 less No entry than 1 made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>7 1 1 1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>6 6 2 2 2 2 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>26 26 26 26 26 26 26 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>19 19 19 19 19 19 19 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>30 30 30 30 30 30 30 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>41 41 41 41 41 41 41 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>18 18 18 18 18 18 18 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863 to 1892</td>
<td>No entries made after 1862</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, it is possible for some years, at least, to work out from the register, the class, or standard, from 1 to 6, which each child had attained at the time of leaving the school:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number Admitted</th>
<th>Highest class reached</th>
<th>No entry made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>57</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
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<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is difficult to interpret this table with assurance. The adding up of the figures in each column...
shows that few children stayed at school long enough to have gained much benefit:

Sandy Bay School.
Admissions, 1853 - 92
Highest Class Reached

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By themselves, the figures are deceptive because a number of the children would have gone on to other schools and many of them were too young to have learned even the most elementary reading skills. An analysis of the admission register shows this quite clearly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>No. admitted</th>
<th>No.between 4 &amp; 7 yrs</th>
<th>Under 4 yrs</th>
<th>No entry made of age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1853-92</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>157%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 808 children whose ages were recorded, 31% were between 4 and 7 years of age and 6% were under the age of four. Seven children were under the age of three and two were under the age of two. Such large numbers of children under the age of seven who were in attendance at Tasmanian public schools were not uncommon.

Smithton Public School, in the timber and dairy country of the north west coast, had a very different

74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
regional economy, but a similar youthful age structure and attainment pattern:

Smithton Public School
Admission Register 1881 - 1906
Highest Class Reached

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Smithton Public School
Admission Register, 1881 - 1906
Age Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. admitted</th>
<th>No. below 7 years of age</th>
<th>Proportion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>430</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mathinna, a gold mining district inland from Tasmania's east coast, was for many years a single industry region. It was thus quite different from Sandy Bay and Smithton, but, like them, it shows a similar age pattern, with even more extreme youthfulness, accountable, no doubt, by the youthfulness of the parents in such a community - 53% of all fathers of children at the public school were miners. The

76 AOT ED 150/1. Smithton Public School admission register, 1881-1906. Both the attainment and age tables have been compiled from the admission register.
admission register is available and records admission from its second year of operation, 1882, to 1895 (the register includes fragments of the 1896 admission details, but the pages for 1896 are damaged and have been left out of account)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mathinna Public School, 1882 - 95</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Structure of Pupils.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of children admitted</th>
<th>No. with age recorded</th>
<th>No. between 6 &amp; 7 yrs of age</th>
<th>No. between 4 &amp; 6 yrs of age</th>
<th>No. below 4 yrs of age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>712</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An analysis of the Mathinna School register shows that a very large proportion of the children who left school returned to it at a later date. Of the 712 who were enrolled during the period 1882 to 1895, the register gives the names of 665 children who left the school during that time. Of these, 137, or 20%, returned to the school. This may be considered a comparatively high proportion, but mobility was characteristic of many Tasmanian families. The Don Public School, set in an agricultural region and with a more stable population, it might be concluded, than Mathinna, is an example:

77  AOT ED 273/1/1 Mathinna State School admission register, 1872 - 96.
Don State School
Admission Register, 1900-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children admitted</th>
<th>Number leaving the district</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>214</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>54.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The admission registers of these three schools, each from quite different economic regions, show three characteristics of Tasmanian Education - the low level of individual attainment, the youthfulness of the pupils and the mobility of Tasmanian families. The broken schooling of so many children and the irregularity of their attendance were frequently mentioned in official reports of the Board and Department, dating from the earliest period in which, it was thought, records were sufficiently reliable for inferences to be drawn. The Annual Report for 1867 of the Deputy Inspector, Murray Burgess, for example, shows the official concern for poor attendance and broken schooling and the widespread nature of the problems:

The want of correspondence between the number of children who were presented for examination under each standard, and the number of children of the age for which each standard is intended, will be seen by comparing the lines bracketed in the following table.

78 AOT ED 130/1/1. Don State School admission register, 1900-36.
1 = Percentage of Number of Scholars under each Standard upon Average Number of Scholars attending same Schools
2 = Percentage of Scholars...
3 = Aged between...

Thomas Stephens, in 1873, similarly classified the children present at his examination, according to their class:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Div.1</td>
<td>Div.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>662</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Years later, in 1888, the proportions had changed little and, by that date, official figures also revealed, not only the spread of ages in each class, but also the large number of children in the higher age groups who were in the lower classes:

79 Deputy Inspector's Report for 1867, p.14. (The figures have been rounded)

80 Chief Inspector's Report for 1873, p.24. (The percentages have been rounded)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under four years</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four years</td>
<td></td>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>210</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five years</td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>509</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six years</td>
<td></td>
<td>797</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>880</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven years</td>
<td></td>
<td>1088</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1427</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight years</td>
<td></td>
<td>878</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1584</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine years</td>
<td></td>
<td>499</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>1607</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten years</td>
<td></td>
<td>289</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven years</td>
<td></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1374</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve years</td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1211</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirteen years</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourteen years &amp; over</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL             |       | 4550|2622|2173|1484|772|287|11888 |     |
| % of Scholars     |       | 38.2|22.0|18.2|12.5|6.5|2.4|100.0 | 81  |

The figures show, for example, that of the 4550 children in Class I 1006, or 22%, were aged nine years or over. Twenty years on, in 1908, some improvement had taken place in the distribution of ages across the classes:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Prep.</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five years and under</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>704</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six years</td>
<td>1426</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1685</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven years</td>
<td>1355</td>
<td>1006</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2441</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight years</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>1006</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2686</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine years</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2809</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten years</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>1018</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2934</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven years</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>2864</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve years</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>2821</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirteen yrs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourteen yrs and over</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>818</td>
<td></td>
<td>1452</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4808</td>
<td>3579</td>
<td>3548</td>
<td>3474</td>
<td>2818</td>
<td>2143</td>
<td>1858</td>
<td>22228</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A greater number of pupils were staying on to Classes IV, V and VI, 30.5% as against 21.4% in 1888. Furthermore, there were fewer children under the age of seven, 10.6% as against 13.8%.

Important as the three problems of low attainment, youthfulness of school populations and geographic mobility were, they were overshadowed by the chronic low rates of attendance. The almost painfully slow improvement in the attendance rates have been discussed above, but these rates appear even worse than described when they are placed in a wider educational context.

Attempts by the Inspectors, Arnold and Cotton, in the 1850's to assess the number of children who should have been at school were based on a rule-of-thumb criterion which Arnold reckoned at 1 in 10 of the

82 Director's Report for 1908, p.3.
population, and which Cotton thought should be 1 in 8. In 1860, J.J. Stutzer made an attempt to show that the number requiring education, according to the census, was 22,000 and estimated that 6000 children were 'receiving education for a whole or part of the year' in the public schools with an additional 4000 receiving education in private schools. 'The mean proportion to the population, is, therefore, about one in nine', he wrote. He thought that this figure compared well with Victoria and New South Wales, but admitted that his figure of 22000 was based:

On the assumption that a child receives twelve years of continuous instruction, which is at least one-third over the average in the upper classes in any country, and certainly three times as much as any child can be expected to receive in the labouring population.

Stutzer's other serious oversight was to fail to take into account those children who were being educated at home.

Stephens was the first official to attempt to reach conclusions based on calculations which were not grounded on the belief that some desirable proportion, such as 1 in 8 or 10 of the population, should be at school. In 1869, using the figures derived from both public and private schools and figures derived from the census, he reached these conclusions:

83 Board of Education. Annual Report for 1855, p.12.
84 Inspector's Report for 1860, p.29.
85 Southern Board of Education. Inspector's Report for 1860, p.29.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
He pointed out the ambiguity of the term 'Number on the Books' which in Tasmanian public schools meant the exclusion of those children who had been absent for four weeks, but which in England meant the number of children attending at any time during the quarter. Errors had thereby resulted from attempts to establish a ratio between the number on the books and the average daily attendance. These attempts had led to fallacies in concluding that 'there [was] a greater regularity of attendance in Tasmania than in England or Ireland. I regret to say from personal knowledge that the reverse is the case'.

Stephens acknowledged weak points in his own calculations, but thought his conclusions of 52%, 57%, 58% or 65% were 'sufficiently near the truth for all practical purposes'.

89 Ibid. p.20.
90 Ibid., p.19.
91 Ibid., p.20.
In 1895, James Rule used the same basis of census returns and public and private school figures. Calculating that the number of children of school age, 7 to 13 years, was 23400 and the total at all public and private schools was 18600, he concluded that 4800 children, or 20%, received no education at all. Making the point that not all of the 4800 had necessarily been totally absent from schools during the year, he concluded that 'educational progress [had] been at a quicker rate than that of the increase of population.' Two years later, he wrote that the rate had accelerated and, consequently,

All things considered, it does not seem probable that those who have not been under instruction at any time during their childhood exceed 2000.

In 1898, he concluded that of the 25,531 children aged from 7 to 13 years, 22,515 'attended school some portion of the year', leaving more than 3000, or 13%, who did not attend. But the figure of 22515 had been reached after deducting 10% from the gross enrolment figure, 10% being 'the usual deduction for possible cases of multiple enrolment.'

In 1906, W.L. Neale, making use of information that no previous Director had been given, was able to arrive at the number of individual children taught in the schools. He was thus able to dispense with the much less exact categories of gross enrolment and number of distinct scholars on the roll. He was also

92 Director's Report for 1895, p.5.
93 Director's Report for 1898, p.9.
94 Director's Report for 1898, p.8.
95 Director's Report for 1905, p.3.
96 Director's Report for 1906, p.3.
able, for the first time, to use 'detailed and valuable returns from [the] private schools'. He calculated the numbers not attending any school, public or private in three categories, the age groups of 7 to 13, 7 to 14 and 6 to 14 years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>No. of Children in the State</th>
<th>No. on rolls of Public &amp; Private Schools</th>
<th>% not attending any school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 - 13 yrs</td>
<td>27689</td>
<td>19149</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 14 yrs</td>
<td>31838</td>
<td>21933</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 14 yrs</td>
<td>36315</td>
<td>23387</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1907, he stated that 'further investigations and discussions with local school authorities who thought [these figures] could not be the fact[s] have fully confirmed my view'.

The following figures are the calculations, as shown above, of the percentages of Tasmanian children not receiving an education in a period of almost forty years, 1869 to 1907, regardless of age ranges and methods of calculations:

97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 Director's Report for 1907, p.3.
Such was the extraordinary range of calculations. Part of the explanation lies in the base that the three men used for their calculations, that is, the meaning of terms such as 'Number of Distinct Scholars on Rolls', 'Gross or Aggregate Enrolments,' (presumably, the same term as Stephens used, 'Number being Educated') and 'Number of Individual Children'. Only the third category can be regarded as being accurate. The other part of the explanation is that which Rule alluded to, namely, that none of the categories, 'Gross Enrolments', 'Average Number on the Rolls' and 'Average Daily Attendance', were sufficiently adequate to explain the non-statistical phenomenon of children moving in and out of schools, both public and private.

Writing in 1895 of the 4800 children who 'attended no school at any time in the year', he added:

Still it does not follow as a necessary inference that all of these, or even a large proportion, had not been attending more or less regularly in former years; and it is even possible that some of them may have reached a passable standard of instruction. 100

100 Director's Report for 1895, p. 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author of Calculations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Stephens</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Neale</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rule's category of those who had not attended school at any time during the year would have included children who were being educated at home and children in remote areas who were not reached by any teacher or school, public or private.

The 1885 Act listed, amongst others, as a just cause of exemption, 'that the child is being regularly and efficiently instructed in some other manner.' The Act also placed the onus of proving the grounds of exemption on the defendant once proceedings had been undertaken for non-attendance. But the means provided for the bringing of proceedings, the Boards of Advice, police and Truant Officers, were inadequate to the task and, at no time, could it be said that all Tasmanian children were receiving some kind of education, no matter how intermittent. The Commonwealth Census of 1911, its figures based on householders' responses, showed that the number of children receiving education at home when added to the category of 'Number recorded as "Scholar", but class of School not stated', amounted to 2556 out of a total of 33392 'receiving education,' or 7%.

To this figure must be added an unknown number of children who lived in remote areas. The isolation of some children can be surmised from the 1869 report of Murray Burgess in which he described areas in his district which were served by the public school system:

The majority of [the schools]...are purely rural, many of them very small, situated in wild and secluded glens, away from civilization, not easy of access, and only reached on horseback.


102 Inspector's Report for 1869, p.20.
The Minister, Edward Braddon, wrote of some areas in the colony where the Department could not maintain even a half-time or third-time school. On one occasion he wrote that an attempt would be made by teachers to visit periodically children in the Lake country, though in summer months only.\textsuperscript{103} Some indication, perhaps, of the number of children receiving no education at all may be gained from an examination of the Department's policy in 1912 of establishing subsidised schools in remote areas where previously no school had been provided. Parents were required to provide a suitable room, but qualifications and experience were not sought of the private teacher, engaged at the rate of £5 for each pupil, providing the sum of £50 yearly was not exceeded.\textsuperscript{104} Such a basic educational provision attracted 138 children in its first year, the number rising to 483 in 1913.\textsuperscript{105} To these figures may be added the number of children who were conveyed to the nearest school by boat, vehicle or train at the Department's expense and for whom no such scheme had previously been in existence. In 1912, 363 children were so conveyed,\textsuperscript{106} in 1913, 236\textsuperscript{107}

The growth in state school attendance discussed above, does not, of course, represent the total number of Tasmanian children in attendance at school. The chapter on the private schools shows that a large

\textsuperscript{103} Minister's Report for 1888, p.4.
\textsuperscript{104} Director's Report for 1912, p.8.
\textsuperscript{105} Director's Report for 1913, p.8.
\textsuperscript{106} Director's Report for 1912, p.4.
\textsuperscript{107} Director's Report for 1913, p.8.
proportion of children at school were in attendance at private schools. From 1894 onwards, the Department began to gather information from the registers of those private schools which Inspectors knew to be in existence. The number enrolled at all private schools formed a large proportion of the total, until the 1906 Registration Act began to take effect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gross enrolment at private schools</th>
<th>No. of distinct scholars on state school rolls</th>
<th>Ratio %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>6049</td>
<td>19967</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>7073</td>
<td>19907</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>8364</td>
<td>20826</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>8691</td>
<td>21763</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>9973</td>
<td>22517</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>8781</td>
<td>23272</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>10199</td>
<td>24157</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>10373</td>
<td>24542</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>9963</td>
<td>24764</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>8843</td>
<td>24595</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>7289</td>
<td>24082</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>8323</td>
<td>24043</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>7979</td>
<td>24221</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>9329</td>
<td>25157</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>8448</td>
<td>27760</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>7653</td>
<td>29406</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>7462</td>
<td>30805</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6947</td>
<td>32244</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>7515</td>
<td>32817</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7285</td>
<td>33953</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of attendance is incomplete without discussion of irregularity of attendance. Irregularity was one of the greatest barriers standing in the way of

108 Annual Reports for:
- 1894, p.3.
- 1901, pp.2, 3.
- 1908, p.2.
- 95, pp.3, 5.
- 02, pp.2, 3.
- 09, p.2.
- 96, pp.3, 4.
- 03, pp.2, 3.
- 1910, pp. 4, 5.
- 97, pp.4, 7.
- 04, pp.2, 3.
- 11, pp. 4, 27.
- 98, pp.5, 8.
- 05, pp.2, 3.
- 12, pp.10, 32.
- 99, p.5.
- 06, p.2.
- 13, pp. 9, 29.
- 1900, pp. 5, 6.
- 07, p.2.
the extension of education, improved standards and individual attainment. It was also the most intractable problem. Irregularity has already been touched on in this chapter when the geographic mobility of Tasmanians and the large number of children in higher age groups who were in lower classes were subjects of discussion. It is not proposed to discuss in this chapter the reasons why attendance was irregular, but rather the figures concerning irregularity. The basic information is contained in the daily average attendance figures, but they do not tell the whole story. Reference had frequently been made in official reports to the harmful effects of irregularity, but Major H.C. Cotton, Inspector for the Southern Board, in his 1857 Report, was the first to draw attention to the number of days in the school year on which children attended:

It will be observed that the average number of children on the Rolls during the year was 2525, while the average daily attendance is 1818 showing that about 74 per cent [sic] of those at schools are actually attending daily: and here I may remark, that a child who has been absent for a full month is struck off the Rolls, which has not been uniformly the case previous to the past year. Comparing the number 4317, who in the course of the year were for a longer or shorter period on the Rolls, with the total of average attendance, it appears that the average number of days attended by each Scholar is 101 out of 240, the number of school-days omitting Saturdays and holidays. I omit Saturdays from these computations because the attendance is usually exceedingly small, and in many Schools there is none.109

The findings of John Stutzer three years later were similar. He calculated that, on average, each child attended school on 90 of the 240 days the schools were open or, as he put it, 'in other words, he receives but

one year's schooling in three years.\textsuperscript{110} He also supplied other figures which showed how brief was the time spent by many children at the public schools:

- 48.7% of children have attended less than 1 year
- 19.4% " " " for 1 "
- 15.3% " " " for 2 years
- 7.1% " " " for 3 "
- 4.2% " " " for 4 "
- 5.3% " " " for 5 "

'The average length of time, therefore', he concluded, 'that a child remains in the same School may be taken as 1 year and 7 months'.\textsuperscript{111}

Thomas Stephens, in 1883, gave the attendance record of nine children attending 'a town School, a fair representative of its class,' which was open for 256 days in the year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholar</th>
<th>1st Quarter</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>39½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>18½</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14½</td>
<td>8½</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9½</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>3½</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>37½</td>
<td>10½</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23½</td>
<td>17½</td>
<td>10½</td>
<td>62½</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{110} Southern Board of Education. Inspector's Report for 1860, p.4.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{113} Chief Inspector's Report for 1882, p.8.
Stephens was also concerned by the range of days attended from quarter to quarter and he gave examples from a small suburban school:

### Range of Days Attended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School days</th>
<th>1st Quarter</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both sets of figures, and many more like them, became part of the annual statistics on education. They convey information, but they do not explain. The first set explains more than the second because they are the records of individual pupils and therefore Stephens would have been entitled to conclude that, since none had attended for much more than a quarter of the year, their education had suffered. The second set does not convey any such information and thus no conclusion can be drawn that an individual's education had suffered. The mere statistic that a particular child over the period of one year for which data was gathered attended for only part of that year needs closer examination. Figures have been compiled from the annual returns of the Central School, Hobart, for 1894, showing details of the 125 boys and 141 girls who were recorded as attending fewer than 100 days out of the 230½ days that the school was open. Of these, 66 boys and 87 girls left school, but were recorded as having poor attendance records. Of the 66 boys, 21 were older than 13 years of age, the compulsory attendance limit and, of the 87 girls, 23 were 13 years of age or older.  

114 Ibid., pp 8-9

115 AOT ED 85/1/1. Central School, Annual Return, 1894.
Taking the case of the other 59 boys and the other 54 girls, the following details can be compiled:

Central School, Hobart
Annual Return, 1894
Pupils attending fewer than 100 days
and who did not leave school during the year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who did not leave during the year</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 'on the books' for less than whole year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For 1 month</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 months</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 months</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 months</td>
<td>0(41)</td>
<td>2(46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 'on the books' for whole year</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of these children were young and they formed a proportion of the 124 boys and 122 girls who were new scholars that year. They were enrolled at various times of the year as their parents saw fit and others joined the Central School, also at various times, having come from other schools, yet all of them were recorded as having been poor attenders. Some of them, for instance, those who had been at the school for, say, 8 to 11 months, could be so regarded, and all those who had been at the school over the whole year certainly were poor attenders. Thus 18 boys and a proportion of the remaining 41 and 8 girls and a

116 Ibid.
proportion of the remaining 54 could be justifiably regarded as poor attenders. Following is a summary of the analysis of the annual return:

Central School, Hobart
Annual Return, 1894.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = Number of children 'who have attended at all during the year' (A).
2 = Number attending fewer than 100 days (B)
3 = Number of (B) leaving during the year.
4 = Number of (B) enrolling during the year.
5 = Number of (B) 'on the books' for whole year (C).
6 = C/A as %
7 = C/B as %
8 = C/B as %
B = Boys, G = Girls.

Fewer than 10% (9.7%) of these pupils, who were recorded as poor attenders, could be reasonably described as such, although to the 9.7% must be added a proportion of the children enumerated in the fourth column. If, by this exercise of judgment, the percentage doubled to 20%, the upshot of this analysis of one school's annual return would be that 80% of the children attending fewer than 100 days could not be regarded as poor attenders, although in fact they were officially recorded as poor attenders.

Central School in 1894 had an average daily attendance of 78%118 which was 5% above the colony-wide

117 Ibid.
The school, the second largest in the colony, was well organised and administered. There were no arrears of fees carried over from 1893 and at December 31, 1894, almost £500 in fees had been collected, with arrears of only £30. This well-regarded school, although its attendance record was above the average, could be said to have had 22% of its pupils absent over the period of a year. Certainly, an attendance rate of three pupils in every four, approximately, does not impress statistically, but when the calculations above are considered in relationship to the following table, different conclusions may be reached:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>716</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>200 to 230%</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>150 to 199</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 to 149</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 to 99</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 to 49</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>378</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>716</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = Number of pupils 'who have attended at all during the year'.
2 = Number of days attended.

Of the 716 pupils, 250, or 35\%, attended fewer than 100 days, but, according to the calculations, 80\%, or 200 pupils, of this number could not be regarded as poor attenders. One way of re-calculating the figures would be to exclude the 200 altogether, on the ground that the reasons for their partial attendance are not

119 Annual Report for 1894, p.3.

120 AOT ED 85/1/1. Central School, Annual Return, 1894, Appendix G.

121 Ibid. The categories are those of the author.
necessarily related in any way with inadequate education. The re-calculation, as follows, presents a quite different picture of attendance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of pupils 'who have attended at all during the year'</th>
<th>No. of days attended</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>716</td>
<td>200 to 230½</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>150 to 199</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 to 149</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 to 99</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculations such as these, as they apply to individual schools convey a quite different meaning to the term 'average daily attendance'. When applied to the whole of the colony or state, however, the number of children leaving schools, or enrolling at schools for the first time or moving from one school to another does not affect the average daily attendance expressed as a percentage, because the two crucial elements in the calculation, average monthly enrolment and average daily attendance, are both inflated equally by a number representing those pupils who were enrolled at more than one school in the course of a year.

Comparisons between levels of attendance in Tasmania and elsewhere were inevitable. They were not frequently made, however. Tasmania's attendance rates were thought to lag consistently behind those of other colonies and this may account, in part, for the reluctance of Board of Education and Education Department officials to raise the matter. The other reason was the very great difficulty encountered in the ways in which the data was collected, its reliability and the method of making a comparative evaluation.
Thomas Stephens, in 1864, in commenting on the problems that population shifts posed for the provision of education, wrote:

Calculations based upon Statistical Returns in a small community like this must always be received with extreme caution, especially when a comparison is instituted between our School Returns and those of populous countries like England or America.\textsuperscript{122} Stephens, in 1870, was willing to make comparisons notwithstanding - or, at least, the Board was willing to do so:

\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 \\
\hline
Tasmania & 128 & 99328 & 5041 & 5.07 \\
New South Wales & 846 & 485356 & 37160 & 7.65 \\
Queensland & 111 & 109897 & 7723 & 7.03 \\
South Australia & 300 & 180965 & 11967 & 6.61 \\
Victoria & 908 & 727494 & 61401 & 8.44 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{122} Inspector's Report for 1864, p.21. \\
\textsuperscript{123} Inspector's Report for 1870, p.4.
\end{flushright}

1 = Number of Schools  
2 = Estimated Population  
3 = Number of Children in average Daily Attendance  
4 = Percentage of Children in Average Daily Attendance to Population

The figures were taken from various annual reports, but details of their collection and method were not given. Stephens, the year before, had pointed to the ambiguity of the term "Number on the Books". In English schools it usually meant the number of children who were at school at any time during the quarter and in other countries it meant those who had been in attendance at any time during a school half year. In Tasmania, a child's name was struck off the rolls if he or she had
not attended for the previous four weeks. In 1870, Stephens was more specific:

If the number on the Rolls at any time during the year had been taken as a basis in making the calculation, according to the practice of some of the Australian Colonies, the estimate of the number not being educated would have been very considerably reduced. The Minister, Edward Braddon, was less concerned with the niceties of statistical compilation:

It is true that the ratio of children attending school to the total population of Tasmania compares unfavourably with that of other Australasian Colonies; but, putting aside the fact that a considerable portion of our people are so scattered in newly settled districts as to be beyond the reach of any State School, there is the explanation that in other colonies State Education necessarily competes at greater advantage with private teaching, in that it is free, and very often of a higher character than the elementary teaching which we aim at.

How Braddon reached his conclusions about Tasmania's scattered population, the peculiar disadvantage Tasmanian public education suffered at the hands of the private schools and the quality of elementary teaching throughout the colonies, he did not disclose, but, nevertheless, his words echoed the popular conviction that Tasmanian attendance rates were inferior to those of other colonies.

The Mercury, however, was keen to defend Tasmania's record, protesting that it was superior to that of New South Wales and that the percentage rate

125 Report for 1870, p. 17.
126 Minister's Report for 1887, pp. 3-4.
127 Mercury 29.7.96, p. 2.
of 73% in New South Wales 'was terribly low in the eyes of some of our reformers'. Yet in the same year, 1898, Tasmania's rate was only 70%. It was W.L. Neale, in his 1904 Report on Primary Education in Tasmania, who dispelled any doubts Tasmanians may have had about the State's poor attendance. Writing that 'it was impossible to compare the states on a common basis', he made these comparisons of daily average attendances:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>89.4% of weekly roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>74.4% of monthly roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>80.7% of monthly roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>73.2% of quarterly roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>80.8% of quarterly roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>68.9% of net yearly roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>67.2% of net yearly roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>63.9% of net yearly roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>82.0% of roll at end of year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>67.1% of gross annual roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>63.1% of gross annual roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>58.7% of gross annual roll</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With six different methods of data collection, perhaps there was no point in making a comparison of any kind at all, but Neale's listing was at least sufficient to show Tasmania's poor ranking.

In 1906, Neale reported that 35% of Tasmanian children between the ages of 6 and 14 years were not on any school roll and that, comparatively, their number was many times that of other States:

128 Mercury 24.8.98, p.2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>257,213</td>
<td>4,843</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>211,696</td>
<td>12,215</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>36,315</td>
<td>12,928</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = State  
2 = Number of Children in State between age 6 and age 14.  
3 = Number of Children who are not on any School Roll  
4 = Percentage of such Children who are not on any School Roll

The extraordinary difference was an effect deliberately sought by Neale for purposes of gaining support for his task of reforming the Education Department. There were really no safe grounds for comparison and he admitted as much:

In New South Wales and Victoria many of the children who are not on the school rolls are exempted from attendance because they hold certificates of being educated up to the compulsory standard: in this state very few are away for such reason.¹³²

Discounting the often stated explanation for Tasmania's poor figures as lack of provision for children in the bush - Tasmania made better provision in the country and back blocks than other States, he claimed - Neale blamed inadequate schools in the cities and weak enforcement of the compulsory clauses of the Act.¹³³

The radical newspaper, The Clipper, and its successor, The Daily Post, directed its readers towards

¹³¹ Director's Report for 1906, p.3.  
¹³² Ibid.  
¹³³ Ibid.
a true understanding of their social responsibilities and urged parents to send their children regularly to school, neglect of which would delay the coming of an enlightened and democratic society.\textsuperscript{134} It was common for both newspapers to show up the low attendance rates in Tasmania, compare them unfavourably with other States and counter the arguments of those who defended Tasmania's record:

\begin{center}
\textbf{Average attendance, percentage of population, 1898}
\end{center}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>11.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>11.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>11.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>7.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But, says somebody, there are a proportionately larger number of private schools in Tasmania.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[but] the percentage attending private schools is less than one per cent higher in Tasmania than it is in New South Wales.\textsuperscript{135}

William McCoy, in 1911, wrote:

The practice of obtaining a percentage by comparing the attendance at school with a period enrolment, obtains in most States. But the result is useless for the purposes of comparison, since it varies according as the figures are taken from a yearly, quarterly, monthly, weekly or daily roll.\textsuperscript{136}

In the same year, the Commonwealth Census, using a basis of calculation common to all States, confirmed Tasmania's poor ranking, the magnitude of which was

\textsuperscript{134} Daily Post 27.5.08, p.7; 11.8.08, p.4;

\textsuperscript{135} Clipper 1.9.00, p.2

\textsuperscript{136} Director's Report for 1911, p.10
such that McCoy's rejection of comparisons could reasonably be set aside:

Children aged 6 to 13 years not receiving an education, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>156,942</td>
<td>19,101</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>135,311</td>
<td>8,562</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>67,353</td>
<td>5,998</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>40,887</td>
<td>5,434</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>26,602</td>
<td>2,815</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>19,340</td>
<td>4,101</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = State
2 = Number in Population
3 = Number aged 6-13 yrs
4 = Ratio %

Teachers and the Keeping of Registers

Brief comment has already been made on the keeping of school records in the period to the establishing of the Board of Education in 1854.

Official views of the teacher's ability and willingness to keep attendance registers ranged widely; so much so, that it is difficult to arrive at a conclusion concerning the influence of record keeping on colony-wide attendance statistics. Under the 1865 Regulations, teachers were required to send into the Central Board monthly and annual returns on the prescribed forms. Attendance on four days, 'instead

137 Compiled from Commonwealth Census 1911, pp. 626, 629.

of Five days as previously directed, was held to be one week's attendance and half a day's attendance was reckoned as one day'.\textsuperscript{139} There was more than a suggestion by Stephens in 1869 that teachers, especially those in schools in which the pupil numbers barely reached the minimum standard, were prone to overlook the rule which stipulated that the attendance of a child may not be recorded if he or she arrived more than one hour after school had opened for the day.\textsuperscript{140} In 1872, he wrote:

I have had to report an unusual number of cases of deviation from important rules, and of flagrant incorrectness of 'School Registers'. It is probable that some of these irregularities have had their origin in a habit of negligence, but it is difficult to admit even this excuse in all cases; and it is evident wherever there is a disposition to deceive, or to evade the observance of the Board's regulations, this tendency is likely to be encouraged by the prospect of greater freedom from official supervision.\textsuperscript{141}

He softened his blows with the convention that the great majority of teachers had no need to fear comparison with teachers in any other country\textsuperscript{142} and no doubt there was some sympathy in the statement. Rule was certainly aware of the difficulties facing teachers of small schools whose uncertain pupil numbers exposed them to the constant threat that their salaries would be stopped and replaced with a capitation grant:

It is obvious that a very cruel temptation to dishonesty in recording attendance is placed in the way of poor teachers whose

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{139} Annual Report for 1861, Circular, p.19.
  \item \textsuperscript{140} Chief Inspector's Report for 1869, p.17.
  \item \textsuperscript{141} Chief Inspector's Report for 1872, p.28.
  \item \textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
numbers are fluctuating near the fatal twenty. 143

Another Inspector, A. Doran, reported that poor record
keeping was not rife in his district:

In comparatively few instances have I had
occasion to note serious omissions in keeping
School records. Minor details of the
Registers, but in themselves necessary to
ensure accuracy in the compilation of School
Statistics, - e.g. punctually recording the
ages of scholars at entrance and bringing
them up to date - are sometimes over­
looked. 144

Only a few years later, Stephens, the Director, in
summarising the reports of the Inspectors, wrote that
there was 'no excuse for the negligent and unmethodical
manner in which school records [were] kept.' 145 While
allowing for the fact that the difficulty of 'getting
at' the correct age of some children was common to all
countries 'except, perhaps, in some of the German
States,' Stephens noted how Truant Officers had
'constantly to refer to the Registrar's Office for the
exact age of children.' 146 He thought that the
submission of non-attendance returns did not ask more
of teachers than could be 'reasonably required from
officers in their position. 147

Gerard Bourdillon, Inspector for the Northern
district, felt the need to impart the most basic
instruction to teachers, that of counting children's
heads to make sure that the total agreed with the

143 Inspector's Report for 1882, p.15.
144 Inspector's Report for 1882, p.15.
145 Annual Report for 1882, Memorandum from Director
to Minister, p.6.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
number of dots the teacher entered on the register. William McCoy held that good record-keeping was part of a more general efficiency:

In almost every instance where the average attendance exceeds 80 the efficiency of the teacher and the popularity of the school have been very favourably reported upon by the inspector.

William Neale, in his 1904 Report on Tasmanian primary education, refrained from blaming the teachers and, instead, held the existing system of record keeping to be at fault:

The Daily Report Book of attendance can be dispensed with. The monthly and annual returns must involve great labour, most of which is quite unnecessary under a different system of keeping the books.

Officials applied constant pressure to teachers to keep accurate attendance records. James Rule, in 1895, in a circular letter to teachers, cited the case of a teacher who had falsified the records and 'the painful but inevitable consequence [that] followed: he was dismissed from the Service'. 'Such neglect', he notified the teachers '[would] not in future be treated lightly'. Some teachers, it seems, were incapable of filling in the registers correctly. Mr. M.F. Darcey, teacher at Deloraine State School, must have been one of many teachers to have received this letter, or something like it, from the Director:

149 Director's Report for 1911, p.5.
151 AOT ED 43/2. Copies of Circulars issued to Teachers, 1894 - 1900, p.28., 15.10.95.
The results for the third week in Column IV of the September summary are incorrect. An explanation is required.152

A Miss Leslie was advised 'to call upon some State School teacher of her acquaintance':

With a view to ascertaining the proper way in which the monthly Summaries of attendance are to be prepared, as the accompanying Summary shows quite clearly that she does not understand how they should be kept.153

She was nowhere near as benighted, however, as Miss M.G. Brown of Uxbridge State School who was sent no fewer than nine such letters between November 1897 and February 1899, four of which had been written to her in the five weeks from the beginning of the school year to February 20th, 1899.154

The daily round of record keeping by the teacher was maintained by a mixture of coercion, threat and encouragement from above with very little support from within the locality. None of the officials of the Board or Department was willing to push the Local Boards or visitors into the dreary task of inspection of school attendance registers and it was a rare occurrence when such a responsibility was

152 AOT ED 41. Director's letterbook relating to monthly summaries of school attendance, 1897 to 1899, letter to M.F. Darcey, Deloraine State School, 8.10.97.
153 Ibid., letter to Miss Leslie, 12.8.98.
undertaken.\textsuperscript{155} Stephens, certainly, had never asked it of them:

From enquiries I have made, I can confidently state that the local authorities do not, as a rule, hold themselves responsible for the accuracy of the School records, or the faithful observance of the Board's regulations, and it would be unreasonable to expect that any such responsibility could be undertaken by gentlemen holding an honorary office with very limited powers.\textsuperscript{156}

The teacher or teachers at Back River School in the years from 1906 to 1914 wrote in the School's record book, on a number of occasions, that attempts to improve attendance and keep proper books were thwarted by the inaction of the Board of Advice and its willingness to grant long vacation periods in order for the children to help with fruit picking, hop tying and hop picking. On January 30, 1911, the teacher wrote:

The majority of the children are away picking fruit, the Board of Advice will take no steps to ensure their attendance.\textsuperscript{157}

And on January 30, 1913:

\textsuperscript{155} Neale was possibly alluding to supervision of record-keeping by the Board of Advice when he reported: 'The experiment of entirely entrusting to local authorities the enforcement of school attendance has hopelessly failed. A few districts – notably Kentishbury – are splendid exceptions, but they only emphasize the general failure of the system.' Director's Report for 1906, p.3.

\textsuperscript{156} Chief Inspector's Report for 1872. p.28.

\textsuperscript{157} AOT ED 96/2/1. Back River State School record book, entry on 30.1.11.
School re-opened - no one present\textsuperscript{158}

A few days later the teacher wrote:

Remainder of children are absent picking fruit without any permission, but a tacit understanding exists that no prosecutions will be made.\textsuperscript{159}

The teacher recorded on February 2, 1914:

The attendance is very poor, so many children are still absent fruit picking the Board having given permission practically to all.\textsuperscript{160}

For the keen and conscientious teacher, the frustration of keeping the books, having them disregarded by the Local Board and critically and punctiliously examined by Inspectors and Head Office clerks was a constant reminder that the Local Boards, for reasons of self interest or neglect, failed to exercise the powers entrusted to them, while the teachers, without any power in law to enforce attendance, may have wondered, as the teachers at Back River School wondered, if careful and unremitting attention to the keeping of books served his school and its pupils any useful purpose at all. The Head Teacher at Lachlan, E.H. London, wrote supplementary notes to his truant list for April, 1896:

This boy reports that he was (part of the time) working for a member of the Board of Advice. I am aware that other children are detained for work for a member of the "Board." With this example it becomes absolutely useless for me to try to secure regularity, as other parents claim equal

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., entry on 30.1.13.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., entry on 3.2.13.

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., entry on 2.2.14.
rights and are only too ready to quote precedent.\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{161} AOT ED 1. Education Department, General Correspondence, 1875 to 1904, Non-attendance returns, Lachlan State School, April 1896.
CHAPTER 5

THE ENFORCEMENT OF COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

Duties of Teachers

Under Franklin's Regulations of 1839, teachers were required to keep books of admission and attendance and to send quarterly returns and reports on the progress and moral conduct of each child to the Board. They were enjoined to promote habits of obedience, order, neatness and cleanliness in the children, note down instances of bad conduct and account for the ways in which children were employed during school hours. Implicit in these instructions was the encouragement of regular attendance, but teachers were given neither the power nor the authority to oblige children to attend or to enforce regularity of attendance.

Charles Bradbury, Secretary to the Board and Inspector, made note in his reports of 1845 and 1846 of those teachers who took upon themselves the task of improving attendance in their districts and at their schools. The three Commissioners in their enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges in 1845 also noted, often with perception, the relationships between teachers, parents and community and their effects on school attendance. Mr. and Mrs. Patterson of New Town School, near Hobart, invited the parents of the children 'to attend the School, before the Christmas holidays and some generally [did] so'.¹ At Westbury, 'Mrs. and Miss Cole [were] in the habit of visiting the Parents to induce them to send their children regularly to school'.²

¹ AOT CSO 8/121/3000. Commission of enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges, 1845, p.174.
² Ibid., p.301.
Franklin had expressed the hope in his Regulations that clergy, magistrates and respectable inhabitants in each district would work together to assist in the education of the rising generation. Local magnates, the clergy and the magistracy were asked to unite in informal ways to press parents of the labouring classes into sending their children to the public schools. In this, the attendance of children at Sunday School was important and public school teachers were instructed to find out, on Monday mornings, which Sunday School each child had attended the day before. With the Board in Hobart assuming responsibility for the appointment and payment of teachers, the building and renting of schoolrooms and the course of study, the responsibility for ensuring attendance lay almost entirely with the localities. Apart from visits to schools by the Inspector, the task of encouraging attendance, the supervision of the teacher, his teaching skills, moral worth and intellectual fitness and the moral guardianship of the children was undertaken in the districts at the invitation of the Board.

The refusal of all but three or four of the Anglican clergy, however, to take part deprived Franklin's informal arrangement of much of its effectiveness. The burden of improving attendance levels in many districts thus fell on the shoulders of the teachers, many of whom, unaided, were incapable of achieving satisfactory or stable attendance levels. At the Campbell Town School, in 1845, Mr. Chambers, the teacher, was said to be a man of 'an impatient

4 AOT CSO 8/121/3000. Commission of enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges, 1845, evidence of Rev. Dr. W. Bedford, pp. 61-3.
irritable disposition' and Bradbury considered 'there [were] many results of this in the School which nothing but active local supervision can possibly counteract'. The daily average attendance was 30, but in the following year, Mr. and Mrs. Chambers having departed, the new teachers had increased the admissions by 32 and the attendance to 50. One of them, Mr. Standage, was 'a very plain uneducated man' with 'an unmannered, careless deportment, far from desirable as an example to the children'. But Bradbury reported that Standage gave 'all the best instruction' he could 'without in any case making extra charge' and that:

His self-denial had obtained him great favour among the people of the town.

A common assumption, at times all too easily made, was that teachers of 'ability and character', with or without local support and supervision, attracted pupils and made 'a good school'. John Stutzer, in his Inspector's Report for 1859, wrote:

In some districts, as at Bothwell, Hamilton, Swansea, Mona Vale, to mention only four where there are really good teachers, the School is found to comprise nearly every child in the neighbourhood that can reach it. Such schools, being always full, are the cheapest under the Board; for the number taught is so great that the average expense of each pupil is more than 30 per cent less than under an inferior Master; - and the

6 Ibid. Secretary's Report for 1846, p.190.
7 Ibid., p.193.
8 Ibid., p.192.
people fully appreciate, in general, the difference.¹⁰

No doubt, attendance was a ready means of distinguishing the good from the inferior teacher, but Stutzer surely exaggerated when he wrote of 'nearly every child in the neighbourhood' attending the schools.

The teacher was the first and basic element in the system of enforcement and encouragement. Though he had no power to compel, as had the Special Visitors, school committees, police and truant officers and, rather more distantly, Inspectors, Directors and Ministers, the teacher had considerable choice in the matter of which individual child he would encourage to attend and which he would discourage or reject. It was a very simple decision for some teachers to make. From Bradbury's reports onwards, mention is frequently made of parents who, for whatever complexity of reasons, did not pay school fees and did not sent their children to school. One reason given was that the more insistent the teacher became in demanding his fees the less was the likelihood, in many cases, of the child attending school. Similarly, a teacher's failure to insist on payment may have reduced attendance. Bradbury's Report for 1845 illustrates the dilemma of the teachers, who, until the end of the century, depended for part of their income on the collection of fees. Bradbury wrote in the most glowing phrases of the work of Mr. Connor of Liverpool Street School, Hobart. A 'bond of union' had sprung up between Connor and the children that 'renders the time past at the school the most pleasurable they enjoy'.¹¹ But, he continued:

¹⁰ Ibid.
I strongly suspect however that this regulation [i.e. concerning the payment of fees] may in some degree occasion the lowering of the numbers of the School, for there are to my knowledge numerous Parents who will not pay the Master while there is any opportunity open to them of escaping it.\(^\text{12}\)

Bradbury wrote of the poor average attendance of 80 out of 151 children enrolled at the Campbell Street School, Hobart, in the charge of Mr. Nicholson:

I am at a loss to explain satisfactorily this peculiarity, but I think it in a great degree attributable to Mr. Nicholson not making a practice of requiring the weekly fees.\(^\text{13}\)

He reported that the children were sent for a few days in order to have their attendance recorded and 'their attendance under these circumstances [became] so irregular that large numbers of them [were] continually absent'\(^\text{14}\). Bradbury pointed out the harmful consequences of irregular attendance and the problems it posed for the teachers who were 'injuriously affected by the embarrassment which these irregularities [occasioned] to the [their] labours'.\(^\text{15}\)

John Stutzer stated, in 1861, that if a teacher were active and energetic, 'keeping his School in thorough efficiency and determined upon enforcing his due' and if the neighbourhood was 'respectable and not positively poor', then the teacher would have little difficulty.\(^\text{16}\). How often he encountered such an ideal

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\(^\text{12}\) Ibid., p.68

\(^\text{13}\) Ibid., p.69.

\(^\text{14}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{15}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{16}\) Southern Board of Education. Inspector's Report for 1861, p.23.
combination of favourable circumstances he did not say. But he did think that:

Not a few teachers are of a different character, and partly from apathy, partly from timidity, would rather forego their rights than be put to the trouble of enforcing them.\textsuperscript{17}

The weekly collection - extraction, one might say, - of fees was dispiriting to the teacher and injurious to the relationship between teacher and parent and, so Bradbury believed, to the relationship between teacher and child:

The capricious use which the parents make of the School also with certainty tends to lessen it in the estimation of the children and to make them proportionally regardless of its claims upon their attention and respect.\textsuperscript{18}

Stephens thought the 'attractions of the scholastic profession' meagre enough and that material reward for a teacher who conducted his school successfully and a reduction in income for the less able were both necessary. Without directly calling for an abandonment of teachers' dependence on fees, he thought the existing system destructive of endeavour:

Though some there are who from the highest motives, without hope of distinction or reward, throw themselves heart and soul into the work which they have undertaken they must ever be exceptions to the general rule.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., pp.23-4.

\textsuperscript{18} AOT CSO 11/32/683. Secretary's Report for 1845, p.69.

\textsuperscript{19} Northern Board of Education. Inspector's Report for 1862, p.6.
Some teachers made the decision not to persist in collecting fees from unyielding parents. They therefore resigned themselves to a reduced income and small pupil numbers. They may also have exercised a second option. Children who were troublesome, demanding of the teacher's time, making very slow progress or who were very irregular in attendance may have been discouraged from attending by a variety of devices such as sarcasm, forms of physical punishment, victimising and so on. And so might have been the treatment given to children whose appearance and manner may have been regarded by the teacher as unwholesome.

Thomas Arnold, in company with other members of the Board of Inspection, made notes of the school visits they made in 1852 and 1853. Children were 'dirty', 'stupid-looking', 'of a low class, requiring immense culture', 'an ill-looking set', some had 'vacant faces' and the examination results at one bush school were 'beyond measure stupid and obtuse'. In one of the very few private letters by a teacher that has survived, the author has exercised his option. W.C. Blyth, who remained with the Board and Department for many years and who, in the 1880's and 1890's, conducted the Campbell Town School with great energy and methodical approach, wrote to a friend in 1869 from his school at River Plenty:

I get all the children in the neighbourhood excepting some of the very lowest and dirtiest which I find it advisable to get rid

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20 AOT CB 3/1. Notes of school visits by Thomas Arnold and members of the Board of Inspection, July 16 1852 to July 8 1853, visits of May 18, June 27, June, 27, July 5, July 7 1853 and examination results from Black Brush School.

21 AOT ED 31/1. Inspector's Reports. Campbell Town State School, 2.4.91.
of, but I suppose the compulsory system will send me them again. If it does the Local Board shall wash them before they come to school or get them washed, I don't care which. 22

What he meant by 'get rid of' and what devices Blyth used cannot be known, but his approach to unwanted children was likely to have arisen from a knowledge that no considerable discouragement needed to be applied to persuade parents not wholly attached to the proposition that education was of benefit to their children that regular attendance was unnecessary.

In their evidence before the 1883 Royal Commission, 132 Board teachers were asked a series of questions concerning 'free pupils', as they were called:

No.49 Are they as regular in attendance as other children?
No.50 Do they make as good progress as other children?
No.51 Do the paying children associate freely with free children?
No.52 Does the admission of free children create dissatisfaction and lead to endeavours to be relieved from the payment of fees on the part of those who do pay?
No.53 Are the free children generally more troublesome than others?

To Questions 49, 50 and 51 large majorities replied 'Yes'. To Question 52, about two-thirds replied 'No'. To Question 53, almost all replied 'No'. The teachers were then asked Question 54:

22 University of Tasmania Archives W13/1. Letter from W.C. Blyth to Mr. Waldie, 5.9.69.
(1) Would you recommend that, wherever practicable in any large centres of population, free children under the present system be sent to free schools?

(2) Or would it be better that such separate free schools be reserved only for the very lowest and degraded and dissolute class?

Their replies were: Yes, for all, 25 or 19%
: For lowest classes 72 or 56%
: No, 32 or 25%.  

It is difficult to reconcile the answers to Questions 49 to 53 and the responses to Question 54 except as an expression, in Question 54, of teachers' self-interest, although allowance should perhaps be made for the strong and negative reactions that such terms as 'very lowest', 'degraded' and 'dissolute' may have aroused in some of them.

Yet there is an obvious distaste felt by some teachers towards some children, or classes of children, and which may have induced in them an indifference to their regular attendance. Three Inspectors, each with wide teaching and administrative experience in Tasmania and two with long experience of education in England and India, held bush children in low regard. Alfred Garrett wrote in 1899 that he thought the 'material' at Dunalley School poor and that they were 'practically all lower class' and 'certainly below the average in ability'. Albert Brockett wrote that the children at


24 AOT ED 30/1. Inspectors' Examination Reports, 1900-1902. Report by Inspector A.W. Garrett on Dunalley State School, 23.3.99.
one school were 'mostly Roman Catholic of a low stamp'. He thought the children at Don School 'very uncouth', at another school he found the children 'very blunt', at Kimberley School 'the material was of the roughest'. At Stirling School, Brockett was surprised to find the children 'unusually intelligent' and he was similarly surprised by the country children at Rosevale. Samuel Lovell wrote that the children at Quoin School worked with all the disadvantages of bush children and at another school he thought that the children, like other country children, were neglected.

The fundamental problem of Tasmania's low attendance rates was that the power of enforcement of the compulsory clauses of the Act was vested in the localities, that is, the local Boards. It was the Boards which initiated proceedings, legal and informal, against parents. If they were slow to act or negligent.

26 Ibid., Report by Inspector A.L. Brockett on Don State School, 30.9.02.
28 Ibid., Report by Inspector A.L. Brockett on Kimberley State School, 11.9.02.
29 Ibid., Report by Inspector A.L. Brockett on Stirling State School, 30.10.02.
32 Ibid., Report of Inspector S.O. Lovell on Native Corners State School, 10.9.03.
in the execution of their duties, they were so, in part, because many teachers, accepting negligible receipts from fees as irreversible and inevitable, chose not to stimulate Board members into activity. Indeed, there existed in many districts an unspoken acknowledgement between teachers and Board members that the raising of attendance levels lay beyond the strength of their combined efforts. Local Boards, under the 1868 Public Schools Act and later legislation, had powers of general supervision over the schools, the right to visit schools and inspect registers, to report on the condition of buildings and equipment and they had the power to suspend a teacher for misconduct. The powers existed, even if they were, in some districts, infrequently exercised, and it was an exceptional or foolhardy teacher, such as E.H. London at Lachlan School or the teacher at Back River School, who criticised local Boards.

Teachers could not evade their primary responsibility of recording the daily attendance and non-attendance of each child. Regular scrutiny by Departmental Clerks, Inspectors, Truant Officers and Directors saw to that. The accuracy of their record keeping was quite another matter, but, notwithstanding, the books, once handed over to the Chairman of the local board for his attention, thereafter ceased to be the responsibility of the teacher. Whether he or she was the most conscientious or the most feckless of teachers, the most urgent or least caring in pressing upon the chairman his need to take action, initiative

33 AOT ED 1. Lachlan State School, non-attendance returns, April 1896.

passed from the teacher to the chairman with the handing over of the attendance records.

Directors and Inspectors and Enforcement

If, throughout the period of voluntary and compulsory attendance, from 1839 onwards, teachers' attitudes to the problem of attendance was often one of resignation or letting sleeping dogs lie, enforcement of attendance remained for the administrators a fundamental problem of education.

Stephens, in his first report after the passing of the 1868 Act and its compulsory clauses, stated that the new Local Boards were working satisfactorily in the country areas. But one year of operation was enough to convince him that the Act, the first piece of legislation in the British Empire to make school attendance compulsory, had had little influence:

When the Public Schools Act was passed I thought it probable that a stimulating effect might be occasionally produced by threats of conviction under the compulsory clauses, but so far as my observation has extended, I have been unable to see that they have had any appreciable effect in increasing the attendance.

The biggest obstacle, he believed, was 'the absence of any compelling power over the local agency', by which he meant the foregoing by the Central Board of legislative or regulatory control of the local Boards. There were three other obstacles: the grounds for

35 Chief Inspector's Report for 1869, p.18.
36 Ibid., pp.18-19.
37 Ibid.
exemption were so numerous as to make conviction in rural areas 'almost an impossibility'; the confining of clauses of the Act to 'settled areas' gave to the Act only a limited application and the granting by Local Board chairmen of Free Certificates in excess of the small number which the Act permitted.\textsuperscript{38} The weaknesses were fundamental for they were embedded in the legislation itself and its method of operation in the districts. After the passing of the 1873 amendment of the Act, Stephens was less inclined to pass immediate comment and obliquely gave as his opinion that irregular attendance was almost as harmful as absenteeism.\textsuperscript{39} Yet, once again, he laid the blame for low attendance figures on the local boards - on this occasion, on the incompetence of many board members who were unfitted to exercise authority\textsuperscript{40} - for he considered the provisions of the 1868 and 1873 Acts to be 'sufficiently ample and explicit'.\textsuperscript{41} Little mention was made in official reports of the work of Visiting Officers for some years after the appointment of the first of them in Hobart and Launceston in 1874. To a question put to him by a member of the Select Committee of 1882 concerning means by which attendance might be improved, Stephens replied:

\begin{quote}
It is found to be a very difficult question in all countries. I have no doubt that if one could study the operation of the compulsory measures it might be possible to devise some means for making them more effectual.\textsuperscript{42}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., pp. 25-6.

\textsuperscript{41} Chief Inspector's Report for 1874, p.27.

In reply to the question on the number of children on the free list, which Stephens had long regarded as a major reason for non-attendance, he was equally short and unhelpful:

I do not know at all what the case is at present, as last year's statistics are not yet issued.43

Surprisingly, he added, 'This matter does not come under my notice'.44 Committed as he had always been to persuasion, explanation and gentle pressure in the Department's relationship with parents, Stephens, in answering the question of whether the Prussian system of compulsory education would be more effective than Tasmania's system, stated:

The state of things in a British community is so utterly unlike that of Prussia that such a compulsory system seems to be impracticable; theoretically speaking it would be desirable.45

For a man who, as many of his annual reports show, used language with care and precision,46 the use of the words 'impracticable' and 'theoretically speaking' is curious. Stephens' solution to the problems of low attendance, irregular attendance and the pauperising influence of free education was the re-casting of the legislation and regulations and the more efficient administration of the compulsory clauses by Local Boards and Visiting Officers. The improvement of the efficiency of the existing system was the policy that

43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
46 See, for example, his reports for 1869, p.17; 1875, p.28; 1877, pp.8-9; 1879, p.10.
Stephens persisted in throughout his career as Inspector and Director.

Stephens' policy was not James Rule's perception of the problem of low attendance. He wasted no time in putting his views in his first report as Inspector. His point was that the fee based system was simply not working, that it was not fulfilling the purposes that the legislation had intended. Furthermore, the indiscriminate issue of free certificates had demoralised parents and the low level of receipts of fees had become 'the principal cause of insufficient income of many teachers'.\textsuperscript{47} In the following year, 1878, he made the first of many criticisms of the fee payment system:

An extended experience has more fully demonstrated to me that the Free-Certificate system is radically bad. It is contagiously pauperising among people far above destitute circumstances, and fails to secure a satisfactory attendance of children.\textsuperscript{48}

He accused clergy who were members of local boards of favouring members of their own flock in the awarding of free certificates. He argued strongly that the existence of Free Schools and Ragged Schools alongside the Public Schools was no improvement on the free certificate system, not so much for the opportunity they provided to some parents 'of pauperising themselves by shirking an obligation willingly borne by others',\textsuperscript{49} but because the creation of different schools, each based on the proposition that some

\textsuperscript{47} Inspector's Report for 1877, p.11. 
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p.13. 
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
parents could or would pay fees and others not, was socially and educationally indefensible:

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 neutralise that of the slums.50

Social division, clerical nepotism and a pauperising tendency combined with the indignities suffered by teachers to produce an inefficient and corrupting method of funding education which, in any case, failed to improve attendance rates. There were, furthermore, other means of raising attendance levels than by compulsion. Rule was asked by a member of the Select Committee of 1882 his opinion on the view that a standard of education should displace the compulsory legislation that required a child to attend school up to a certain age:

Yes; compulsion should be minimised as far as possible; I am strongly of that opinion.51

At the hearings of the Royal Commission in 1883, Stephens told the enquiry, rather disarmingly, that he had 'very little personal knowledge of the steps taken to enforce the compulsory measures; but it does not appear that satisfactorily regular attendance is ever the result'.52 He added:

50 Ibid.
I have sought in vain on visiting schools for cases which would show that attendance is a consequence of the operation of compulsory measures.53

It seems that, on this occasion at least, Stephens was unwilling to come to grips with the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the compulsory clauses. After 26 years as an Inspector and after 15 years of operation of the clauses, his reply to a question which, in part, asked him if he approved of the compulsory system as currently administered, was to avoid answering it by saying:-

Without official knowledge of the working of the compulsory system in its various details, it is impossible to specify exactly the points in which it fails or in which it requires amendment.54

What did the Chief Inspector mean by 'without official knowledge', one wonders, when statistics and reports of individual cases were abundant. Stephens' only suggestion for improvement was that parents who had been brought before the bench should have their case submitted again at intervals of one month to make sure there had been no backsliding.55 One comment of his is interesting for its expression of liberal opinion on the rights of parents:

It is a grave question whether a parent ought to be compelled to send a child to any school which cannot be described as more or less "efficient".56

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid., p.57.
56 Ibid.
The responsibility, he declared, for efficiency in school management and for maintaining attendance rates rested not with local boards, magistrates or even parents in the final estimate, but with the teacher. \(^{57}\) Such a view, incontrovertible as it may have been, nevertheless fell short of providing a remedy for Tasmania's low attendance levels.

Rule was in agreement with Stephens that the compulsory legislation was 'seldom satisfactory' \(^{58}\), but, then, nobody could be found to disagree. Rule put three proposals to the Royal Commissioners to improve attendance rates. A minimum of attendance should be insisted upon \(^{59}\) and, speaking as if he were an Anglican inquisitor, Rule suggested that:

> In the absence of extenuating circumstances satisfactory to the Local School Boards, the punishment for obstinate recusancy ought to be heavier. \(^{60}\)

He also proposed that the boards should have authority to satisfy themselves that children being taught at home or private schools were receiving an adequate education, although he did not give details of how that was to be done. \(^{61}\) When Stephens retired in 1894 he wrote that:

> The compulsory three day's attendance in each week is enforced in Hobart and Launceston as fully as is possible under existing circumstances, but it is a question whether the law should not be altered so as to make

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57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., p.61.
59 Ibid., p.62.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
attendance on all school days compulsory unless reasonable excuse for absence can be shown.\textsuperscript{62}

His views had changed very little over a period of almost thirty years since the 1868 Act. Some amendment to the law and an increase in the efficiency of both the paid and honorary bureaucracies remained to the end the cornerstones of his policy on compulsory attendance.

Stephens would have been surprised to read in the 1904 Report on Primary Education that Neale, its author, considered 'the compulsory law in Tasmania [to be] very nearly a model law'.\textsuperscript{63} Only Tasmania and Western Australia, he wrote, required children to attend on every day the school was open; only those two States could act without delay against parents whose children were not in attendance; only in Tasmania was a full list of children of school age available to the education authorities;\textsuperscript{64} in Tasmania, the onus of proving that a child was being adequately educated by means other than attendance at a state school was put on the parent; the exemptions in Tasmania were 'wisely prescribed' inasmuch as a child in possession of a 'leaving' or 'compulsory' certificate could not be exempted until after the age of eleven years.\textsuperscript{65} It was the administration of the law that Neale found to be so deficient. Members of Boards of Advice, he wrote, could not be expected to 'jeopardise their business and social interests', a fact of which many defaulters were

\textsuperscript{62} Director's Report for 1894, p. 5.


\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
School registers for each district in the island did not exist and Truant Officers, consequently, were not able to find out which children were not on school rolls. Many children, Neale claimed, did not start their careers at school until nine or ten years of age. But no better evidence of lax administration existed than the disproportionate number of older children in lower classes to which fact the late age at enrolment was closely connected. No fewer than 1516 children aged nine years and older were in the First Class, or 8% of all children in Tasmanian schools. In Second Class, the number above ten years of age was 1432, or 7%; in Third Class, the number above eleven years of age was 1703, or 9%. Neale estimated that about 1200 children between the ages of 7 and 9 years were not at school at all. The Truant Officer for the Hobart area interpreted the compulsory clauses 'in a most liberal fashion' by never prosecuting parents whom he thought were too poor to pay the fine that a court might impose. Before issuing a summons he found out if the defaulters had goods which could be distrained, yet only half the fines imposed had been collected. Magistrates were reluctant to convict, even in the most flagrant cases, and Neale was told

66 Ibid., p.27.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., p.33.
71 Ibid., p.27.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
that 'very often the Bench placed every obstacle in the way of the officer prosecuting'.

Neale was more critical and more enquiring than Stephens, but his recommendations, nevertheless, amounted to little more than tinkering with the engine of enforcement and administration. He proposed a school census and the introduction of a system of transfer notes to be issued when a child left the school or the district. These minor adjustments, were not proposed in the belief, however, that once made, the machinery of enforcement would become efficient. Neale's proposals were stop-gap measures to be enforced until such time as the Tasmanian public education system could be made free. Making use of the arguments put by the members of the 1883 Royal Commission, extracts from which he introduced into his Report, he showed that, by financial re-organisation of the Department, the cost to the government would be that amount of money which would be needed to educate the extra 5000 children that free education would encourage to attend. His estimation, of 5000, which at one point he called 'additional' pupils and, at another, 'increase in average attendance', was not a calculated figure, but it was impressive. If taken to mean 'increase in average attendance', it would have added to the 14,321 children in daily average attendance for 1904, an increase of about one-third. Unit costs, as Neale pointed out, would consequently

74 Ibid.
75 Ibid., p.28.
76 Ibid., p.37.
77 Ibid.
decline. He argued for free education also on humanitarian grounds. Fee payment, he pointed out:

Press[ed] very hardly on the deserving poor who shrank from applying for free education and from the possibility of their children receiving a life-long stigma.

Like James Rule, he also recognised that no enforcement of the legislation could be effective if private schools continued to operate without supervision by the State. He wrote to his Minister in 1906 that, if private schools were to be registered, compulsory attendance could be enforced in the state schools.

William McCoy assumed office as Director after the passing of legislation to register private school in 1906 and after the abandonment of fee payments in 1908. The Boards of Advice, though retaining their title, had been superseded in 1907 by Municipal Councils, but the problems of enforcement remained. McCoy could only repeat what had been said on many occasions before - it was difficult, even, to avoid using familiar phrasing:

The efficacy of the scheme varies according to circumstances. In several districts where councillors realise their responsibilities and take an active interest in the schools the daily attendance is high. In other localities the result is, from various causes, far from satisfactory. After all,

78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
80 AOT ED 9/3/76. Typescript of rough notes by W.L. Neale concerning the registration of private schools, 1906.
81 AOT LA 72/4. Memorandum from Minister of Education to Wardens of Municipal Councils, outlining duties under the Education Act, 8.1.08.
the best attendance officer is the teacher himself.\textsuperscript{82}

By 1913, attendance rates were close to 80%. Over the succeeding decade, that figure had been regularly surpassed and, in 1922, the rate had reached 83\%	extsuperscript{83}. In his Report for that year, McCoy's successor, G.V. Brooks, wrote that 141 schools had achieved rates of 86\% and words such as 'very satisfactory', 'personal interest' and 'a meed of praise' appear.\textsuperscript{84} After 1924, attendance figures no longer appeared in the Director's Reports. A satisfactory rate had been achieved through the efforts and interest of parents, teachers and Boards of Advice, according to Brooks.\textsuperscript{85}

\textbf{Truant Officers}

Visiting Officers, as they were originally known, became part of the enforcement bureaucracy in 1874 when two officers were appointed to Hobart and Launceston. They were appointed with reluctance at a time when the administrative resources of the Board were so stretched that even the most important tasks were not able to be carried out. Stephens had repeatedly - unfailingly - asked for an additional Inspector to assist himself and one other\textsuperscript{86} and warned Parliament of the consequences of inadequate staffing. By 1875, the Chairman of the Board was requesting two additional Inspectors.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{82} Director's Report for 1910, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{83} Director's Report for 1922, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., pp. 2-3.

\textsuperscript{86} See, for example, Chief Inspector's Reports for 1870, p. 16; 1871, p. 16; 1874; p. 25.

\textsuperscript{87} AOT CSD 10/19/292. Letter from Chairman, Board of Education, to Colonial Secretary, 12.5.75.
Butler informed the Colonial Secretary that many schools were not being visited at all:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Schools visited</th>
<th>No. not visited</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>'two visits some oftener'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was a difficult time for the Board which was under attack from the press as being an inadequate instrument for the extension and management of education, as The Mercury editorialised in 1872:

"We cannot express unqualified approval of the machinery of our primary school system for we have no doubt that it is capable of improvement. The constitution of the Central Board is susceptible of reform. True, it is appointed under statutory sanction, but there is a species of irresponsibility attached to the members, not exactly in accordance with the altered political institutions of the Country. Some thoughtful persons are of opinion that the department is of such vital interest to the public that the Chairman of the Board, at least, should be one who could devote the whole of his time and energies to its working."

The Local Boards were also criticised for their shortcomings, as noted in another chapter, and most particularly in the early seventies when their ineffectiveness in raising attendance levels following the 1868 and 1873 Acts became public knowledge.

88 Ibid.
89 Mercury 20.2.72, p.2.
Government funding was tightly controlled and, on the basis of expenditure for each pupil, it was reduced each year in the early seventies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Average daily attendance</th>
<th>Expenditure on each pupil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>£12040</td>
<td>5041</td>
<td>£2 7s 9d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>12337</td>
<td>5187</td>
<td>£2 7s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>12170</td>
<td>5209</td>
<td>£2 6s 8d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>12272</td>
<td>5268</td>
<td>£2 6s 6d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>12865</td>
<td>5867</td>
<td>£2 3s 10d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After much debate, Parliament agreed, as a means of saving money, to the appointment of one Inspector only.91

The appointment of Truant Officers in this period of financial contraction was an attempt by government, not only to improve Tasmania's poor attendance levels, but the appointment was also a way of reducing government expenditure on education by requiring the Truant Officers to make the collection of fees from parents a more efficient system. Improving attendance and the collection of fees formed the largest parts of the Truant Officers' duties. For both purposes a daily routine was established which began with a patrolling of the streets and visits to schools, followed in the afternoon by visits to the homes of parents whose children were not at school and the day ended with office work. John McDermott, on his appointment in

91 HAJ XXXI 1876, paper 81. Additional Inspectors of Schools. Papers and Correspondence.
1895 to Hobart district, was given detailed instruction by the Director:

There is to be a daily visitation of the streets, especially in the more outlying parts, for the purpose of notice and inquiring into the cases of the non-attendance of children. This is to be the principal mode of taking action, but some information may be gained from the official returns of teachers. Parents may be warned verbally or by printed notices to send their children to School, paying fees at any ordinary school, or having them educated free at the Murray Street State School. Every such case is to be noted and followed up, and if there is no legitimate excuse for temporary exemption and the child does not attend, information is to be laid and summons issued. After the case has been heard, another week may be allowed for compliance with the Act, and then a fresh information laid if necessary, the cases never being allowed to drop out of sight.

A record of all cases of non-attendance noted from day to day is to be kept in a book provided for that purpose. The action taken and the result are to be entered and at the end of each month a Return of the work done during the month is to be furnished to the Minister.92

Patrolling the streets as the principal method of detection, haphazard though it may have been, was a surer means of tracing non-attenders than inspection of attendance registers. Consulting the books yielded information on children who were enrolled only. 'Daily visitations of the streets' may have led to the detection of some of the large number of children who were not enrolled at a school of any kind.

92 AOT ED 13/49/188. Secretary's Letterbook. Letter from Director to J. McDermott, 25.4.92.
The monthly returns that Truant Officers were required to submit have not survived and evidence of the nature of their daily work has to be sought elsewhere. In the Annual Reports of the Board or Department, the work of Truant Officers is not often mentioned and, when it is, it is usually reduced to statistics. But, here and there, some indication of the growing demands placed on them can be gained. In 1889, Stephens, in reporting that the system of returns of non-attendance in the country districts seemed to be working satisfactorily, pointed out that in Hobart and Launceston, officers had no means of knowing how many children had ceased to attend schools or which of them were receiving no education at all. He recommended the appointment of special officers to look after neglected and truant children, leaving Truant Officers to deal with children who were less confirmed in their non-attendance:

In addition to the ordinary functions of truant officers, there is much important work to be done in connection with applications for free certificates; and they would also have to give attention to the provisions of the Section of the Act relating to Returns from private schools. 93

The work of the Truant Officer, as far as attendance was concerned, involved the checking of the attendance of all children of school age. The checking of attendance registers of the private schools, the attendance of public school children, those attending the State Free Schools and the Ragged Schools, though Ragged Schools were not part of the public school system, were also his responsibility.

93 Director's Report for 1889, p. 8.
Until the passing of the 1885 Act, the only means available to the Truant Officer of finding out the names of children attending private schools was by asking the teacher. The Secretary to the Board wrote to F.C. Greene, the Launceston Truant Officer, in 1876:

I need hardly tell you that the Board have no power to insist upon private teachers affording any information, consequently this will require some tact.94

The clauses of the Act did little to assist Truant Officers or to raise attendance levels in that the private school returns, being required in January of each year, listed children in attendance the year before and they were therefore of limited application. The threat of a fine of £5 for failure to send in returns was quite useless. In his report for the very year in which the Registration of Teachers and Schools Act, 1906, was passed, Neale wrote that for the first time, the Education Department had been able to collect 'fairly complete and reliable statistics from the "private schools",' but only then as a result of the help given by public school teachers.95

There were no statistics in any form which could be used by a Truant Officer to help him in assessing the number of children of school age in his district and more specific information such as names, ages and addresses were equally elusive. Census figures, though they provided numbers for the entire state, were available only one year in every ten years and were of almost no value. The same was true of the yearly Statistics of Tasmania, largely because of changes of

94 AOT ED 13/18/15. Secretary's Letterbook. Letter from Secretary, Board of Education to F.C. Greene, 23.8.76.

95 Director's Report for 1906, p.3.
schools by pupils and their movement from one part of the colony or state to another. Private school figures were unreliable. The numbers of children 'being educated at home' was based mainly on the parents stating that their children were so educated. Parents also provided information, for purposes of obtaining exemption from attendance, that their children were educated to a satisfactory standard and their word had to be taken as the truth by Truant Officers. Finally, not even the attendance registers of the public schools could be accepted as reliable. The Truant Officers worked in the dark at all times.

Not even the more efficient amongst them could be assured that their efforts were effective or their estimates or calculations reasonably accurate. William Welsh, Truant Officer for Launceston from 1895 to 1910, was possibly the most thorough of all the Truant Officers. Welsh earned the thanks of the Minister for his able and painstaking service and of his Inspector for 'his persistency and admirable tact'. Even he could fall short of moderate effectiveness, as Neale reminded him in 1907:

In reply to your memo. of yesterday's date stating that as far as you are aware there are no children of school age in Launceston and not on any school roll, I have the honour to point out that the statistics show that several hundred of such children are not on any school roll.

96 AOT ED 13/89/185. Secretary's Letterbook. Letter from Director to W. Welsh, conveying Minister's thanks, 9.4.03.

97 Inspector's Report for 1902, p.10.

The Chairman of the Launceston Board of Advice informed the Director that 'there appeared to be a large number of poor children running about the streets and apparently not attending school' and the Truant Officer was requested to follow up the complaint. Such reports, though sometimes exaggerated, were not always ill-founded, and that which, in this case, the Chairman reported, constituted, precisely, the kind of work which all Truant Officers were required to discharge each morning of the school year. The Truant Officer at Queenstown, R.S. Taylor, perhaps the least efficient officer who, in 1907, was dismissed, but later reinstated, was informed by the Director of serious discrepancies in his returns and told that the information supplied by him was 'for all practical purposes useless'.

The more detailed instructions to Truant Officers show that the Department, through the Director and Secretary, consistently urged them 'to use every kind of gentle pressure in the first instance' when discussing with parents the reasons for the child's absence from school. Truant Officers were instructed not 'to resort to the means provided by law until all modes of caution or persuasion by personal interview with the parents, or formal notice, have failed to have any effect'. Should a parent comply with the legal

99 AOT ED 13/55/538. Secretary's Letterbook. Letter from Director to W.W. Lamb, 25.10.94.
100 AOT ED 13/107/43. Secretary's Letterbook. Letters from Director to R.S. Taylor, 13.4.07 and 22.7.07.
101 AOT ED 13/106/314. Secretary's Letterbook. Letter from Director to R.S. Taylor, 4.2.07.
102 Director's Report for 1892, p.7.
103 Ibid.
requirement after proceedings had been undertaken, the action was to be abandoned. Stephens warned, however, that promises by parents were freely given and children attended for a while. 'Continuous and vigilant watching' by the Truant Officer was required if the child were not to slip back into old ways. Occasionally, a reluctance to take more extreme measures was passed on from the Minister to Truant Officers, and, now and again, a Minister would intervene in an individual case:

The Minister directs that proceedings in the case of Mrs. Cook, Elizabeth Street, who was summoned to appear next Tuesday for non-attendance of children be withdrawn, Mrs. Cook having given assurance as to their future regular attendance.

William Welsh received this letter from the Director, W.L. Neale:

There is a family of four between about 7 and 12 years of age who are reported unable to attend school for want of proper clothing. I have thought it well to bring these facts under your notice in connection with your charitable work.

On the other hand, the intention and tone of some Directors' instructions showed little feeling for individuals or parents with what they took to be easily

104 Ibid.

105 AOT ED 13/79/686. - Secretary's Letterbook. Letter from Director to Chairman, Board of Advice, Zeehan, conveying the Minister's wishes, 25.5.01.

106 AOT ED 13/81/275. Secretary's Letterbook. Letter from Director to J. McDermott, conveying the Minister's wishes, 14.9.01.

107 AOT ED 13/112/15. Secretary's Letterbook. Letter from Director to W. Welsh, 6.5.08.
identifiable problems. Stephens wrote to a Truant Officer in 1894:

Frivolous excuses for absences are not to be entertained under any circumstances. Want of boots is no excuse for non-attendance; the teacher is expected to insist upon children coming clean and decent, no matter how poor their clothing may be, but there is nothing to prevent their being admitted without boots.\(^{108}\)

Between the extremes of humane consideration and strict application of the law, there were many individual cases about which the Truant Officers were required to make decisions. Stephens wrote of neglected children to which term he seemed to give two meanings. Some children had suffered from wilful neglect or an indifference bordering on neglect. Others were neglected for reasons beyond the control or will of the parents:

The father may be a labourer working away from home all day, the mother an invalid, and the children left very much to their own devices.\(^{109}\)

Truant Officers were not required to make decisions on whether 'there appear[ed] to be a genuine desire [by the parents] to give the child a fair chance of receiving systematic instruction',\(^{110}\) those decisions were made by Boards of Advice. Their task was to institute proceedings on instruction from the Chairman of the Board. It seems, however, that some Truant Officers took the initiative. Certainly, William Welsh started proceedings against parents without 'referring

\(^{108}\) AOT ED 13/55/538. Secretary's Letterbook. Letter from Director to W.W. Lamb, 8.10.94.

\(^{109}\) Director's Report for 1892, p.7.

\(^{110}\) Ibid.
to the board of advice for instruction'. The Director may well have turned a blind eye to this breach of regulations if the Board was known to be ineffective or somnolent. In any case, the making of initial approaches to parents was the responsibility of the Truant Officer and it was his recommendation that often caused the Board to take proceedings against a parent. In many cases, the Board's role was formal and distant, and personal contact was, by regulation, made by the Truant Officer.

Truant Officers worked at all times under great difficulties. Child populations were never stable and even the number of schools - and, thus, their attendance registers - could come to a sudden end as the Board or Department decided to close them. Equally, new schools were established and more problems were thus created. This table, compiled from Annual Reports over a ten year period, illustrates the officers' problems in their attempts to maintain some administrative control of pupil numbers:

111 AOT ED 9/8/652. General Correspondence, 1905-16. Letter from W. Welsh to Secretary, Education Department, 8.7.07.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Schools open during year</th>
<th>No. of schools opened or closed during year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1387</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers, though constantly reminded by Directors and Inspectors to state clear and specific reasons for each child's non-attendance, were often lax or negligent. E.H. London's Return of Non-Attendance for Lachlan School, April 1896, listed 24 names and, against 12 of them, the remark 'No excuse received' was written. His successor, P.B. Flanagan, made no entries at all in the remarks column for January 1907. A.C. Blackwood, of New Norfolk School, rather limply wrote,

112 These figures are compiled from the Annual Reports of the Board, as follows:

1868, pp. 8-11. 73, pp. 8-13.
72, pp. 8-13. 77, pp. 24-29.

113 AOT ED 9/5/68. Non-attendance returns from Chairman, New Norfolk Board of Advice, to Director, 1907.

114 Ibid.
'As far as I can ascertain I believe these [nine] children are fruit picking'.

Truant Officers were faced with inefficiency, non-co-operation or indifference by teachers and Boards on the one hand and insistent demands by Directors for sterner action against parents on the other hand. John McDermott, who served as Truant Officer for the Hobart district for 14 years, a length of service exceeded only by Stuart and Welsh, received this letter in 1895 from the Director, James Rule, quoting in part, complaints by the Minister, Edward Braddon:

I find on looking through the Hobart Truant Officer's Returns that there has been a palpable decline of activity on his part... If there is not considerable improvement... it will become necessary to consider whether we shall not abolish the Truant Inspector, and give another trial to the local police... The visits at houses of parents seem to me of little use in dealing with the difficulty of truancy. If the children are not at school during school hours they will probably be found (unless sick) in the street and that is where they should be sought.

The threat of re-introducing police as truant inspectors - they had displaced Truant Officers from 1888 to 1890 - was shrewdly judged. No officer, teacher or administrator in the Education Department wished for power to be taken out of their hands and neither did they believe that the employment of the police made for good relations between the Department and parents. Stephens wrote in his Report for 1889:

115 Ibid.

116 AOT ED 13/57/962. Secretary's Letterbook. Memorandum from Director to J. McDermott, 13.9.95.
[Police] are not allowed to visit schools or the children's homes, or otherwise act as truant officers except under instructions from the duly constituted school authority. This is an important point, and I strongly deprecate the practice of setting the police to deal with cases of non-attendance at school as if they were criminal offences.\textsuperscript{117}

Directors were anxious to maintain good relationships with parents. In 1879, George Stuart was reminded that he should not pass on absence notices to parents by asking teachers to send them home with the children.\textsuperscript{118}

Some Truant Officers were able to maintain good relationships with parents and to satisfy the demands of head office. Welsh, in his letter of resignation in 1910, wrote that he would always look back on his 16 years as Truant Officer with pleasure - 'even to the end of my days', he wrote\textsuperscript{119}. Welsh, whose entire long life had been spent in military service until he joined the Education Department in 1895, valued 'the greatest possible assistance and courtesy shown him' by public and private school teachers and parents. He had written about his relationships with parents on an earlier occasion:

\begin{quote}
I find that kindly interest, tact and earnest explanation serves the purpose far more effectively than abrupt threatening of police court proceedings.\textsuperscript{120}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{117} Director's Report for 1889, p.8.
\textsuperscript{118} AOT ED 13/23/736. Secretary's Letterbook. Letter from Secretary to G. Stuart, 23.10.79.
\textsuperscript{119} AOT ED 9/14/111. Letter from W. Welsh to Director, 30.9.10.
\textsuperscript{120} AOT ED 9/8/652. Letter from W. Welsh to Secretary, 8.7.07.
George Stuart went about his work in the Hobart district in a very different way. Compulsion and threat of punishment were the most effective methods since parents, he believed, used every possible excuse to avoid the law and some left the Court 'looking on the matter as a good joke'.\textsuperscript{121} He stated:

In cases where the fine is inflicted and the people will not pay, I should suggest imprisonment instead of distraining on their property as is done under the present system. There are many children truants from the schools whose parents profess that they have no control over them, and they are thus not responsible for them. I should suggest that the parents in such cases should be called upon by magistrates to prove their cases, and that on their so doing, the children should in some way be punished.\textsuperscript{122}

Stuart blamed the Acts for failing to lay down a definition of regular attendance, Parliament for failing to make illegal the employment of children of school age in jam factories and other work places and Parliament for failing to compel teachers at private schools to keep attendance registers and make them available for inspection.\textsuperscript{123} He repeated his views on these three glaring legislative weaknesses when he gave evidence one year later to the Royal Commissioners.\textsuperscript{124} Like Stephens, he believed that adjustments to the

\textsuperscript{121} JHA XLIII 1882, paper 106. Report of Select Committee on Education, 1882, evidence of G. Stuart, p.25.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.

legislative and bureaucratic machinery would secure regular attendance.¹²⁵

The work of the paid, full-time Truant Officers in Hobart, Launceston and, from 1901, in Queenstown and Zeehan on the west coast, was matched by the appointment in 1899, of 15 police officers as Honorary Truant Inspectors in country districts.¹²⁶ Thus the whole island was brought under the supervision of attendance officers of one kind or another. As noted above, their monthly reports have not survived and it is not possible to enter into discussion of their day-to-day labours in any detailed way. Fortunately, for a short period, from 1898 to 1903, figures are available which give some sense of the daily tasks of Truant Officers:

| District | Year | Visits to | | Notices to Parents | | Convictions laid | | Cases withdrawn |
|----------|------|-----------|---|-----------------|---|----------------|---|
|          |      | State Schools | Other Schools | Houses | Total |          |          |          |
| Hobart   | 1898 | 401 | 911 | 2716 | 4028 | 1462 | 22 | 22 | NA |
|          | 99   | 327 | 1050 | 2393 | 3770 | 1735 | 58 | 38 | NA |
|          | 1900 | 368 | 1187 | 2665 | 4220 | 2237 | 65 | 55 | 10 |
|          | 01   | 325 | 1177 | 2204 | 3706 | 2205 | 88 | 82 | 6  |
|          | 02   | 313 | 1288 | 3205 | 4806 | 3821 | 77 | 61 | 16 |
|          | 03   | 395 | 1278 | 3760 | 5433 | 3654 | 24 | 20 | 4  |

¹²⁵ See, for example, Stephens' comments on the courts, factory employment and the private schools in his Report for 1892, p.7.

¹²⁶ AOT ED 13/70/866 to 880. Secretary's Letterbook. Letters from Director to Superintendents of Police, 30.3.99.
These figures only show the work undertaken by Truant Officers in four cities and towns. It is not clear if their visits to schools and houses concerned matters of non-attendance or non-payment of fees or both matters, but the absence of any mention of fees in arrears or fees paid would suggest that the figures dealt with attendance only. The figures show the efforts of the Truant Officers in Hobart and Launceston, John McDermott and William Welsh, to have been 'zealous and untiring', as Stephens had described two Truant Officers on an earlier occasion. If the number of visits made to schools and houses are added up for the six years, 1898 to 1903, Stephens' words take on their full meaning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L'tn.</th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>249</th>
<th>786</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>3058</th>
<th>1052</th>
<th>21</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>795</td>
<td>2348</td>
<td>3395</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>2220</td>
<td>3328</td>
<td>1029</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>01</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>2254</td>
<td>3365</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>02</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>2119</td>
<td>3099</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>2235</td>
<td>3230</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q'town</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>02</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeehan</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>02</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

127 Compiled from Annual Reports for 1898, p.8; 1899, p.8; 1900, p.7; 1901, p.4; 1902, p.3; 1903, p.4.
McDermott made an average of almost twenty visits each day. Welsh, indefatigable but well on in years - he had served with the British Army in India at the time of the Indian Mutiny - made an average of almost fifteen visits daily. In addition, they had to answer correspondence, enter data into the records, send in reports to the Director, co-operate with Chairmen of Boards of Advice and act as storekeepers and relayers of parcels and correspondence for the Board and Department, if resident outside Hobart. This was an irksome duty and much, if not most, of the correspondence between, say, the Launceston Truant Officer and head office in this period dealt with such items as keeping school desks in store, maintaining them and gathering and distributing them amongst schools in the district or sending notices and forms to each teacher.128

The effectiveness of the Truant Officers is not easy to estimate. They worked under the difficulties of inadequate legislation, especially the lack of definition of what constituted regular attendance. The employment of school age children by factory owners, in particular, and the absence of suitable legislation to

128 See AOT ED 13, Secretary’s Letterbook, for many examples of such letters.
make such employment illegal made the work of the Hobart and Launceston Truant Officers very difficult. Their inability to gain access to properly kept records of attendance of children at private schools, at least until 1906, was a serious problem. They did give a great deal of advice and counsel to parents, teachers, Board Chairmen and Inspectors and it may be that the most favourable light in which their worth can be assessed is that of social welfare worker. William Welsh would seem to have regarded his work as a form of social work. Directors were quite full in their praise of the work of Truant Officers, as noted above in the case of Welsh. Stephens wrote to David Moore, Hobart district Truant Officer, in 1888, accepting his resignation and thanking him for 'the admirable zeal and efficiency with which [his] onerous and important duties [had] always been discharged.'

Yet no amount of zeal would make up for breakdowns in the machinery of enforcement. Draft suggestions for dealing with truancy were framed by Joseph Masters, Secretary for Education, in 1911 and sent to the Minister. Masters told the Minister that, in country districts, the police officers, having reported explanations of irregular attendance which they believed to be unsatisfactory, complained that Chairmen of Boards of Advice were unwilling to take proceedings against the parents:

During the March quarter... only eight Boards out of forty-nine instituted proceedings [which] consisted of thirty-one cases, of which eleven were withdrawn, and two were adjourned, the total number of convictions being eighteen.


130 AOT ED 9/19/96. Draft suggestions for dealing with Truancy, 1911.
Masters' solution was to request the appointment of six additional Truant Officers who 'would together virtually embrace all the school districts of the state'. The Truant Officers were regarded by Masters as the backbone of the enforcement process. It was a view shared by his Director, William McCoy, who regarded the Boards and the part time labours of the police as the weaknesses which needed to be eliminated. Perhaps with hopes of embarrassment in mind, McCoy, in 1911, 1912 and 1913, published, in his reports, full lists of the number of prosecutions initiated by each Board of Advice, but he did not report adversely on the work of the Truant Officers.

The Courts and School Attendance

McCoy's listing of the number of prosecutions initiated by each Board of Advice showed the totals for each of the three years, 1911, 1912, 1913. The figures are not altogether reliable. For example, in 1912, the Hobart Board prosecuted eleven parents, yet no prosecutions are recorded in McCoy's Report. Notwithstanding, the total given by McCoy for 1911 was 295 prosecutions only, for 1912 it was 261 and for 1913 it was 313. There are some curious variations which

131 Ibid.
132 Director's Report for 1911, p.5.
133 Director's Reports for 1911, p.5; 1912, p.11 and 1913, p.10.
135 Director's Report for 1912, p.11.
imply a lack of concern by some Boards or inefficiency or unwillingness to prosecute:

**Number of Prosecutions undertaken by selected Boards of Advice (N R = No Return submitted)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1912</th>
<th>1913</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>N R</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaconsfield</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>N R</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bothwell</td>
<td>N R</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>N R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbell Town</td>
<td>N R</td>
<td>N R</td>
<td>N R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devonport</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrobe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilydale</td>
<td>N R</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Norfolk</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringarooma</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waratah</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some Boards, for instance, Hobart and Beaconsfield, discharged their responsibilities in an erratic manner. Laxness marked the activities of the Campbell Town Board and rigour that of Hamilton. Both of them are pastoral centres, but Campbell Town is considerably larger than Hamilton. The Devonport Board seemed to have lost interest; Ringarooma and Waratah, two quite different towns, one a dairy centre, the other a mining town, appeared to have taken a growing interest in their responsibilities.

No doubt, explanations were more complex, but a fundamental reason was the widespread lack of both interest and confidence in Local Boards that, as the chapter on Local Boards has attempted to show, was...

136 Director's Reports for 1911, p.5; 1912, p.11 and 1913, p.10.
widespread and chronic. If ever, it would seem, the Boards had a purpose, it was lost well before the attempts made under the 1885 Act to give them new life.

It was by no means uncommon as noted in the chapter on Visitors and Boards, for members of a Board of Advice to be also Justices of the Peace. The Campbell Town Board, from 1897 to 1903, had nine members, five of whom were J.P.'s and the Fingal Board, from 1897 to 1903, had eight members and six were J.P.'s.\textsuperscript{137} Those that had a say, and often the Chairman of the Board had the final or only say, in deciding whether a parent should be prosecuted were the same individuals who decided whether the parent should be convicted. The decision not to prosecute and the decision not to convict were the products of lethargy and also of self-interest. Boards were inclined to put the interests of their districts before those of the colony or state. Attendance rates, in the calculation of which was involved the number of days in which a school remained open, were an aspect of the economy of a district and reflected the needs of the economy. School children were a source of labour and the number of days attendance from which they might legally absent themselves and the number of days on which the school could, with the approval of the Chairman of the Central Board and, from 1886, the Minister, be closed to meet the seasonal needs of the local economy were vital economic considerations. The inactivity of a local Board and the responsibility its members felt for the local economy were attitudes that shaded into one another and, in their practice, were difficult to separate. Motives are discussed in the chapter on

\textsuperscript{137} Compiled from AOT ED 71/1. Register of Members of Boards of Advice c.1897, Registers of Campbell Town and Fingal Boards and Walch's Tasmanian Almanac, 1897.
Local Boards, the concern here is to show the close connection that existed in the localities between those who brought the charges against parents and those who convicted them, that is, the close connection between prosecutor and judge.

It has already been noted that the number of prosecutions in each year was small and that they formed a very small proportion of the total number of notices which were sent out to parents requesting them to explain their children's absence. Taking the figures already mentioned above (see Note 127) for the period 1898 to 1903, the ratios of prosecutions to notices were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truant Officer's District</th>
<th>Number of notices sent</th>
<th>Number of prosecutions</th>
<th>Ratio %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>15114</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>4695</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average number of prosecutions each year of the six year period was 55 for Hobart and 13 for Launceston. When the numbers of convictions (see Note 127 also) are included in the calculations the results are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Truant Officer's District</th>
<th>Number of prosecutions</th>
<th>Number of convictions</th>
<th>Ratio %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

138 Compiled from Annual Reports for 1898, p.8; 1899, p.8; 1900, p.7; 1901, p.4; 1902, p.3; 1903, p.4.

139 Ibid.
The proportion of convictions to notices sent were, therefore, 1.8% for Hobart and 1.2% for Launceston. These rates were hardly enough to deter parents, as Stephens wished would have happened when he wrote in 1894 that 'the law must be put in operation if only for the sake of example'. It was really only when the parent was actually presented with a summons to appear in court that his prospects of escaping conviction became less likely, as the table above for Hobart and Launceston and the following table for the whole of Tasmania show:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of prosecutions</th>
<th>Number of convictions</th>
<th>Ratio %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But it was a long process from the moment the Truant Officer first sought an explanation from the parent to his referral of the matter to the Board and the Board's subsequent decision on whether it should prosecute. The odds against conviction were very much in the parents' favour.

Over long periods of time and within Board districts, the number of annual prosecutions and convictions varied greatly. Some of the variations can be accounted for by changes in the legislation and administration of non-attendance. The records of the Hobart Court of Petty Sessions are available for most

140 AOT ED 13/55/538. Secretary's Letterbook. Letter from Director to W.W. Lamb, 8.10.94.

141 Director's Reports for 1911, p.5; 1912, p.11; 1913, p.10
of the period from 1869, the year following the passing of the Public Schools Act with its compulsory attendance clauses, to 1913. The following table has been compiled from these records:

**Hobart Court of Petty Sessions**

**Cases of non-attendance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>No. of Prosecutions</th>
<th>No. of Convictions</th>
<th>Possible explanations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1869-73</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inadequate legislation (1868 Act) and consequent ignoring of Act by newly established Local Boards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874-75</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Zeal of newly appointed Truant Officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876-78</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Court records missing, May 1876 to October 1879.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879-82</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reasons for low prosecution rate are not clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>To April 19 only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-86</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Court records missing, July 1883 to November 1886.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>New Truant Officer appointed January 1886.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888-90</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Office of Truant Officer dispensed with, duties taken over by police.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Considerable variation within this period e.g. for 1892, 1901, 1902, 1905, 1908, 1910, 1911 prosecutions exceeded 80. For 1896, 1898, 1903, 1904, 1912, 1913 they amounted to 30 or fewer. Convictions each year formed a fairly constant ratio to prosecutions of about 2/3.

The very low number of convictions from 1869 to 1890, the 1887 figure excepted, may be explained by the fact that the 1868 and 1873 Acts left the bench with the responsibility of deciding what constituted a minimum of attendance. George Stuart testified to the Select Committee of 1882:

Soon after my appointment to my present position I summoned two or three parents for the irregular attendance of their children at school, the attendance of those children having been shown on the school rolls as only eight days in a month; these cases were all dismissed, as the Magistrates said there was nothing in the Act to define what regular attendance should be.\(^{143}\)

Justices of the Peace and Magistrates may also have been aware of public opinion and the views of Local Boards. In 1888, the Hobart Board was asked by the Minister of Education to provide the Superintendent of Police with 'a list of children seen wandering in the city and who [did] not attend any school'.\(^{144}\) On receiving the list - actually, two lists were sent - the Minister requested the Chairman of the Board 'to

\(^{142}\) Compiled from AOT LC 247. Hobart Court of Petty Sessions, Record of Cases Heard, 1869-1913.


\(^{144}\) AOT LA 26/2. Hobart Board of Advice, Minutes, 1887-91, meeting of 14.5.88, p.7.
cause proceedings to be taken. The outcome of this lengthy process was a mere ten prosecutions for the year of which the bench decided to convict only five. Such perceptions by a bench of the intentions of a local board may not have been uncommon - even if the board had none of its members on the bench. In small communities - and even Hobart in the 1880's could be regarded as a small community - it was unlikely that the J.P.'s would take a course of action independent of the local board's explicit or unspoken intentions. Few of the J.P.'s could have believed that the exercising of their authority, which was essentially negative in its operation and which was the final authority in a lengthy process of law enforcement, was sufficient by itself to bring about an improvement in Tasmania's school attendance rates.

Such would seem to have been the unspoken views of some J.P.'s. In a period of 45 years, between 1869 and 1913, the Court of Petty Sessions at Campbell Town heard a total of 56 charges and convicted only 23 parents for failing to send their children to school. Stephens' wish that the law, in its operation, should make an example of those it punished, was not taken seriously in Campbell Town. Perhaps it was the Campbell Town Board that was the cause of the apparent indifference of the bench. Details of the number of prosecutions initiated by the Board are not available, but, as noted above, no prosecutions were initiated in 1911, 1912 or 1913 and it is possible that the Board, over a long period, made every attempt to

145 Ibid.
146 AOT LC 247. Hobart Court of Petty Sessions, Record of Cases Heard, 1869-1913.
147 AOT LC 83/14. Campbell Town Court of Petty Sessions, Record of Cases Heard, 1869-1913.
avoid having to prosecute parents. The minutes of meetings of the Board from 1886 to 1908 show that the Board met 130 times, or about six times each year. In that time, matters connected with non-attendance appeared as agenda items on 35 occasions only, and many of these were of a general character, such as the sending of returns to the Director.\textsuperscript{148} In 1896, the Chairman stated that:

The names on the list were nearly always the same and that he had done his utmost to induce parents to send their children, without success.\textsuperscript{149}

In 1902, the Director wrote to the Board and 'expressed satisfaction at the excellent returns from Campbell Town District'.\textsuperscript{150} In 1907, the Annual Report of the Director of Education was read to the Board which was:

Adversely criticised by members, who expressed their opinion that the neglect referred to did not apply to the work of this Board.\textsuperscript{151}

In 1914, the Director wrote that all three of the full-time schools, Campbell Town, Epping and Cleveland, in the charge of the Board, deserved special mention for their good attendances.\textsuperscript{152} Over a long period of time, the Campbell Town Board made every effort to encourage parents to send their children to school, to persuade and to reason with them. Such an outlook implies that Board members considered prosecution a last resort and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{148} AOT LA 8/3. Campbell Town Board of Advice, Minutes Book, 14.10.86 to 2.1.1908.
  \item \textsuperscript{149} Ibid., meeting of 2.4.96.
  \item \textsuperscript{150} Ibid., meeting of 12.12.02.
  \item \textsuperscript{151} Ibid., meeting of 5.9.07.
  \item \textsuperscript{152} Director's Report for 1914, p.7.
\end{itemize}
less productive of improved attendance rates than direct and personal approach. Board members may well have had the experience of one particular Board Chairman who complained to the Director that the bench in the district was 'entirely in sympathy with the parents'.\textsuperscript{153} The Chairman gave instances and concluded his letter to the Director:

\begin{quote}
While this is the temper of local justices, you will see that it is little use our making much effort to improve matters.\textsuperscript{154}
\end{quote}

Franklin district, a timber and fruit region, had a Board which thought quite differently. In the period from 1869 to 1899, it initiated 381 prosecutions for non-attendance - 325 more, over a shorter period, than the Campbell Town Board had undertaken - and the bench handed down 176 convictions.\textsuperscript{155} This represents a rate of 46\%, not a particularly rewarding result, perhaps, for a Board so conscientious in the performance of its responsibilities. The persistence of the Board over so many years, however, may have been worthwhile, insofar as a combination of prosecution and conviction with other less coercive methods did bring the district recognition for its high attendance rates in the Director's Annual Report\textsuperscript{156}. Beaconsfield, a mining community, also had a good attendance record,\textsuperscript{157} although it is unlikely to have been the sole consequence of the number convicted. Over the period

\begin{flushright}
154 \textit{Ibid.}
155 AOT LC 282/1 Franklin Court of Petty Sessions, Minutes of Proceedings, 1869 to 1899.
156 Director's Report for 1914, p.8.
\end{flushright}
1884 to 1913, 148 prosecutions were undertaken and 51 convictions were handed down, a rate of 34%.

Boards of Advice, that is, those which took an interest in their work and were active in its furtherance, made their own decisions on the effectiveness of prosecutions and convictions in the whole range of persuasive and coercive choices that the law and regulations made available to them. For the three years only for which figures are available for the whole state, it is clear that many decided not to undertake prosecutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Boards</th>
<th>Number of Boards which did not prosecute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Boards instituted proceedings against certain parents when other means had failed, but, in such cases, they do not seem to have used the courts as an instrument for setting an example to other parents. Campbell Town Board could do no more with Robert Phillips, an habitual offender in a number of areas, than prosecute him as he defaulted:

158 Director's Reports for 1911, p.5.; 1912, p.11 and 1913, p.10.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Offence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.7.76</td>
<td>Assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.9.81</td>
<td>Disturbing the peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.3.85</td>
<td>Assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.86</td>
<td>Disturbing the peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.1.87</td>
<td>Arrears of rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.10.87</td>
<td>Obscene language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.8.93</td>
<td>Child not attending school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.9.93</td>
<td>Failure to pay general rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.94</td>
<td>Assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12.94</td>
<td>Child not attending school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.4.96</td>
<td>Child not attending school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.8.96</td>
<td>Failure to pay general rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.4.97</td>
<td>Arrears of road rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.7.1900</td>
<td>Child not attending school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11.05</td>
<td>Allowing a horse to stray</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Boards took proceedings against parents as a matter of policy and appeared to attain high attendance rates as a consequence. The Zeehan Board, in a west coast mining district, initiated 21 prosecutions over a three year period\(^{160}\) and was given 'pride of place' by McCoy amongst all other Boards for the high attendance of the schools in its district.\(^{161}\)

\(^{159}\) AOT LC 83/14. Campbell Town Court of Petty Sessions, Record of Cases Heard, 1869-1913.

\(^{160}\) Director's Reports for 1911, p.5; 1912, p.11 and 1913, p.10.

\(^{161}\) Director's Report for 1911, p.5.
If Boards exercised choice in making use of their authority to prosecute, so did the courts in the exercising of the choices available to them. The ratio of convictions to prosecutions varied greatly between courts, as noted above, and so did the amount of the fine imposed. Since the courts did not have the power to imprison offenders, they imposed a wide range of fines, but it was very uncommon for a fine to have exceeded ten shillings, even for habitual defaulters. The 1885 Act specified a maximum of 5s. for a first offence and 20s. for each succeeding offence. Sorell Court, in the period from 1899 to 1913, heard 104 cases of non-attendance at school and convicted the defaulters in 63 of the cases, or 60%. Most of the fines imposed were for one shilling or 2s.6d. and a few were for five shillings, but none was higher.162 Beaconsfield Court was reluctant to convict; in the period 1889 to 1913 it heard 148 cases and convicted the defaulters in 51 of these cases, or 34%.163 The range of the fines imposed was very similar to that of the Sorell Court. Franklin Court, in the years from 1869 to 1895, convicted defaulters in 46% of cases, as mentioned above, but it made different judgments in those cases. In the early years, a defaulter was instructed to pay the arrears of fees without a fine or court costs being imposed or he was instructed to send the child to school regularly. In later years, fines were imposed:

162 AOT POL 621/1. Sorell Police Station, Information Book, 1899 to 1913.

163 AOT LC 38. Beaconsfield Court of Petty Sessions, Record of Cases, 1884-1913.
Franklin Court of Petty Sessions
Cases of non-attendance, 1869-99

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Number of prosecutions</th>
<th>Number of convictions</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1869-73</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Fines of 10s. and 12s 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874-86</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fines imposed were mostly one shilling or 2s.6d several at 5s. one at 10s. one at 15s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887-99</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>172</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>381</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The range of choices available to the Boards and the Courts and the kinds of relationship that existed between a Board and a Court made uniformity in the matters of prosecution and conviction a bureaucratic impossibility. Not all the encouragement and gentle reprimanding of which the Minister or central education authority were capable, could bring about an increase in the number of prosecutions or convictions. Directors of Education thought increases desirable, but their pleas, as they admitted, went unheeded by the honorary functionaries of Board and bench.
CURRICULUM, TEACHING METHODS, QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION 
AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS.

Curriculum, Teaching Methods and Books to 1886

Variously known as Mode of Instruction, Programme of Organisation and Instruction, Course of Instruction, Standard of Instruction and Syllabus the curriculum is taken to mean the planning and organising of a body of material suitable for teaching and learning and the imparting of skills.

In the period before Sir John Franklin set out his Regulations for the Free Day Schools in 1839, management of nearly all of the colony's schools lay in the hands of the Church of England. The schools were supervised by the parish clergy and teachers were engaged as candidates, suitable or unsuitable, made themselves available. Archdeacon William Hutchins spoke of the system followed in the schools, as Anomalous\(^1\) and an unknown author later wrote on the Report of the Commission of enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges, 1845:

The system followed in these schools was professedly Bell's. But it has been perhaps more appropriately designated by the late Archdeacon as an Anomalous system, which probably means no system at all.\(^2\)

Other than this and a few other isolated comments on Bell's system, there are no references in the Report to the existence of a curriculum in the period before

\(^{1}\) AOT CSO 8/122/2996. Report of Commission of enquiry into J.D. Loch's charges, 1845, p.8.

\(^{2}\) Ibid., p.3.
1839. W.E. Nairn, the first Secretary to Franklin's Board, told the Commission he had visited the schools immediately after he was appointed and stated that:

The instruction given was extremely limited, there was no uniformity of system, and, in most of them, no adequate supervision.³

He was asked if 'each Master followed his own Plan', and replied that 'there were no regulations issued for his guidance'.⁴

Franklin's Regulations embodied, therefore, the first attempt in the colony to provide a curriculum and to insist upon teachers following it. The schools were organised on the basis of eight classes and the curriculum was graded accordingly. Four subjects were to be taught and a fifth was available for the more advanced students. Spelling was graded so that the beginners learned the alphabet, children in the second and third classes learned words of two then three and four letters. In the fourth class, they were to learn monosyllables of five or six letters, in the fifth, sixth and seventh classes they learned words of two, three and four syllables and in the eighth class they were 'expected to spell any word'.⁵ In Reading, the

³ Ibid., p.71.
⁴ Ibid.
children were divided into two classes. The lowest class, made up of those in the first, second and third classes, were to use only the Spelling Lessons, other classes were to use the Reading Lessons and the eighth class were 'to read daily from the Bible'. All children were enjoined 'to read distinctly and rather slowly.' In Writing, the children were not classified and:

The only instruction which the Board deem it necessary to give the Master is, that the children should not be allowed to commence small hand before they can write a good large hand.

As for Arithmetic, the Board's instructions were just as brief:

In addition to the instruction which the children receive in the different rules, they should be continually exercised in mental arithmetic, and not confined to merely repeating the different tables by rote.

The fifth subject, Dictation, was included in the curriculum 'to secure a perfect knowledge of orthography' for children who had already learned to read and write well. The three R's were taught to boys, but Arithmetic was excluded from the girls' curriculum and needlework and knitting were added.

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6 Ibid., p.10.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., p.9.
These outlines of subjects were accompanied by short descriptions of how they should be taught. Teachers were instructed to teach Spelling in the following way:

A monitor is chosen for each class; the lesson card is suspended against the wall, the class standing round; the monitor points to the first word in the column, which he pronounces; in the earlier lessons each child takes a letter, and in the others a syllable. Thus the word "Be" - the monitor pronounces the word, the first child begins "B", the second child takes the next letter, "e", and the third pronounces it, and so on through the whole column: this is at times varied, one child both repeating the letters or syllables and pronouncing the word. After being engaged for some time with one column, the children are required to spell it off: this is done by the monitor taking the lesson card in his hand, and proposing the words to be spelt; it being the duty of the Master to take care that the children understand the meanings of the words which they spell.\(^\text{12}\)

In Reading, the simple mechanical responses to stimuli which characterised the learning of Spelling was retained, but Reading was expanded to include the interrogation of the children 'in order to ascertain whether they [understood] what they [were] reading'.\(^\text{13}\) The principle consisted of breaking down a sentence into single words and of the teacher asking questions of each word, such that a simple, brief and unambiguous answer could be given by each child. The example given was the sentence, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found' from which arose such questions as, 'Whom are we to seek?' which, yielding the response, 'The Lord', led to the next enquiry, 'When are we to seek the Lord?' to which the response, 'while he may be found' led to the

\(^{12}\) Ibid., pp.9-10.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p.10.
question, 'What is meant by seek?' to which the children answered, 'Enquire after'.

The principle of breaking down a word or phrase into its constituent parts, even if it was extended by interrogation, did little to develop the child's understanding of what had been read or uttered. A child progressed, that is to say, the child was promoted to the next class and the work became fractionally more difficult. But the process by which he learned remained the same. A child, therefore, may have progressed from the first to the eighth class over a period of years - the classes were not groups of children who stayed together for a period of one year - and, in so doing, received exactly the same method of instruction throughout the years. And the interrogation system yielded little understanding because the mere responses of the children were assumed by the teacher or monitor to be evidence of understanding and, in any case, enquiry by the teacher deeper than the literal meaning of phrases was not common. The monitorial system, as this method of teaching was known, was essentially the lodging in the child's mind of a prodigious number of facts, each often quite unrelated to the other and rarely exploited by the teacher to help the individual child in his development of concept. The facts, having been lodged in the mind by a process of constant repetition and infinitesimally graded accretions of information, were then thought to be capable of instant recall in response to an appropriate stimulus.

The monitorial system had the great advantage of cheapness. The teacher was poorly paid, his wife even more so, and the monitor's services could be had for

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Ibid.
nothing or for some trifling expenditure on a prize or book. Such an attraction was sufficiently compelling to assure monitorialism of its almost universal application. But the cost in other ways was considerable. The core of the monitorial method was stimulus and response and the most efficient learning environment for the making of correct responses was one which was controlled entirely by the teacher, such that order, organisation and the unrelenting employment of the child for every minute of the school day became essential to its operation. The child was forever busy, the teacher forever supervising. The monitorial system, in its effects on the child, recalls the condition of men in factories, as Adam Smith described it:

> The understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man whose life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects too are perhaps always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients for removing difficulties which never occur.\(^\text{15}\)

James Bonwick was, 'from an early age, brought up' at the Borough Road Model School, and he taught for six years at schools connected with the British and Foreign Schools Society\(^\text{16}\). He arrived in Tasmania in 1841 and began teaching at the Liverpool Street School in Hobart and had immediate success. Pupil members increased almost five-fold within six months. He taught as he had been taught at Borough Road. He was asked what he


understood by the British and Foreign Schools system and replied that it was a difficult question to answer:

[It] would be best explained by a description of the mode of instruction in the Borough Road school. The object of the system is to bring together the children of all religious sects in the school, and to combine a high degree of intellectual training with general religious Instruction. One of its distinguishing features is the Monitorial system, but the precise degree of instruction seems to have undergone some changes.

Bonwick remarked that his earliest remembrance of the monitorial system was that:

Printed passages of Scripture placed upon large boards were hung up in the Schools for the purpose of teaching the children to read.

He mentioned that he used the Interrogative System in junior classes, or rather, that his monitors used it.

Bradbury was asked in 1845 by the Commission of Enquiry which system of teaching teachers were directed to use. He replied:

The monitorial or "Bells" is the one supposed and intended to be followed - but it is not uniformly so - in many instances the Masters are unacquainted with the method, the number of children is too small and other causes have made it in some cases inapplicable. It has also occurred that objections have been made by Parents on the ground, as expressed by them, that their children are sent to school to be taught and not to teach.

17 Ibid., pp.136-37.
18 Ibid., p.137.
19 Ibid., p.147.
20 Ibid., evidence of Charles Bradbury, p.129.
Bonwick, who was well able to teach "Bells" or the British and Foreign Schools Society system, as both were monitorial in method, took his teaching further than the displaying of large boards and the interrogative system, though, clearly, according to Bradbury, he was one of few teachers who was capable of doing so. In his replies to questions from the Commissioners of Enquiry, Bonwick stated that he taught a number of subjects, Drawing, Singing, Mental Arithmetic, Mensuration, Geography and Geometry, 'together with simultaneous lessons on Natural History'.

Bonwick learned the method of simultaneous lessons from John Thomas Crossley, his 'ever-to-be-revered Master', who taught him at Borough Road. Crossley had been a pupil at the school from the age of five years and had attracted the attention of Joseph Lancaster. He became a Monitor in 1809, General Monitor in 1812, Assistant in 1815 and later, Superintendent. From this strong background in Lancaster's monitorialism, Crossley developed an interest in a technique which was designed to displace monitorialism, namely, simultaneous training or education. Crossley was not an original thinker, as Bonwick acknowledged, and his ideas sprang from David Stow's The Training System. Stow had founded the Glasgow Educational Society in 1824 which led to the

21 Ibid., evidence of James Bonwick, p.147.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., p.83.
founding, by him, of the Glasgow Normal School in 1827, the first normal college in the United Kingdom. At the time of the book's publication, in 1836, Stow was Secretary of the School and he remained its chief influence until his death in 1864.

Stow rejected the monitorial system entirely. Bonwick's description of it as the combining of high intellectual training with general religious instruction were the very principles which Stow believed the system was incapable of embodying. He wrote:

[Some writers say], 'Give the children of the poor moral and religious instruction, and they will become virtuous and good', just as if moral instruction were one and the same thing with moral training, and the mere knowledge of what is right synonymous with the doing of it.26

The distinction he made between training and instruction was central to his thesis:

We understand, then, the precept to be - 'train', not simply teach or tell; and the whole nature of the child, not merely his intellect or memory, up from the beginning of life to manhood, 'in the way he should go'. If a child is to be trained in the way he should go, the trainer must be with him to superintend, guide, and direct him. The child's affections, and physical and moral habits, must be properly exercised and trained.... This, then, is our warrant for the term The Training System.27

Stow thought it not surprising that he should be asked such questions as:

26 Ibid., p.2.
27 Ibid., p.36.
In your system do you use a gallery? Do you demand simultaneous answers? Do you use ellipses? Do you ever mix them with questions? How do you act when the children cannot answer? Do you tell them at once? Does the Training System require a play-ground? Is the master with the children at play? Have you Bible training lessons? Do the books you use contain the substance of your oral training lessons? Do you give prizes? What corporal punishment do you use? Do you give oral gallery lessons on science, etc? Of course no one could put any such questions who had ever read this manual of the system, or witnessed it in operation at Glasgow, where these and other points were first established, and presented to public attention.28

Moral training, so ineffectually taught under the monitory system, was one of two 'new and fundamental' elements in Stow's training system.29 The other was 'Picturing out in words' - 'first the mental picture and then the lesson'.30 Picturing out was made up of a number of processes, simultaneous and individual questions and answers, simultaneous and individual ellipses, analogy and familiar illustrations and physical exercises by both the teachers and pupils.31

Simultaneous lessons were an acknowledgement that individual questions, while suitable for small class numbers, were not possible when the numbers increased. The size of Glasgow and many other British towns and cities had grown at an astonishing rate and the influence of numbers was felt 'every day in politics, in religion, and vice'.32 In the classroom, large

28 Ibid., p.38.
29 Ibid., p.8.
30 Ibid., p.199.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., p.154.
numbers - Stow's term was the 'sympathy of numbers' - could be 'a most important influence for good or for evil, according as the children are or are not properly superintended and trained by the master': 33

With a gallery of 70 or 80 of nearly the same age (and the nearer the better) the questioning, and development, and training may be conducted chiefly simultaneously and, thus, whatever answers are brought out by the trainer, from one or more of the children, can be made the possession of all, so that everyone may learn what any one knows - thus diffusing knowledge more widely, and causing the variety of natural talents and dispositions to operate favourably on all. 34

The sympathy of numbers, in the gallery and the playground, Stow's 'uncovered' school room', 35 exerted a power for intellectual and moral improvement that individual training could not exert. The purpose of simultaneous questioning was not the eliciting of responses in unison, but the gaining of the simultaneous attention of all the children in order that those who responded and those that did not, that is, each individual, received his or her 'daily cultivation' of the mind.

The active participation of each child was integral to Stow's ultimate purpose of the moral reclamation of society and the purpose of participation was the development of children's ideas. Ideas were led out by simultaneous questioning; they were led on by ellipses and questions combined. Elliptical questioning involved the omission of a word or phrase

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., p.126.
35 Ibid., p.207.
from a sentence and the supplying of it by a class. The sentence may also be rearranged by the teacher to elicit a similar kind of response by the children. Stow gave his own examples:

If the master has been speaking of the weather, and says - The Sky threatens .... (the pupils filling in) rain; the trainer may invert the sentence thus - it threatens rain today from .... the appearance of the sky.36

Active participation and the development of ideas were important processes in 'the carrying out of proper family training into the public school'.37 The school was to act as 'an assistant to parents, but never to supersede their exertions at home'38 and both school and home would work together to civilise society and cure its ills.39 These goals the monitory system could not attain. The intellectual abilities of the monitors were low and were sufficient only for the teaching of facts, of sounds, names, letters and words and the following of a system of teaching by rote:

But [monitors] cannot develop the ideas of the children, or their extent of knowledge, nor can they work the facts, repeated or dwelt upon, into the minds of their classes. Most unquestionably, they cannot morally train.40

Stow's moral training system did not grow out of the monitory system and neither was it a modification. It was a practical, fully developed system of education with radical social goals which

36 Ibid., p.230.
37 Ibid., p.40.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., p.2.
40 Ibid., p.316.
owed nothing to its predecessor. Bonwick, constrained as he was to teach by the monitorial method, was nevertheless its colonial exponent, and he was not alone. Of the six trained teachers who had been brought out from Britain in 1841, five had been trained at Borough Road Training School, although one had been in attendance for five months only. The sixth had trained under Stow at the Glasgow Model School. They were favourably reported on by Bradbury and others, but none remained with the Board of Education long enough to have a lasting influence on the other teachers. Bonwick resigned within two years of taking up his appointment at Liverpool Street School, Hobart, giving ill health 'brought on by anxiety as regards the success of the school, and inhalation of bad air in an ill-ventilated crowded apartment' as the main reason, but 'the very bad, insecure, and indecent state of the premises' and the unwillingness of the Board to spend money in repairs were other reasons. Four of the other five had resigned by 1850 and the sixth by 1852. Their influence could have been considerable. They numbered six out of a total of about 21 teachers, none of whom was trained, although ten of them had had experience as teachers. Untrained teachers were assigned to them for periods of months or longer and, with only about fifteen teachers to be trained, the task should have been completed within a few years.


42 Ibid., p.148.

43 Ibid., p.145.

44 Ibid.

45 Annual Reports for 1850, pp. 9-22 and 1852, p.7. Not one of the five teachers' names appeared in the Reports of these dates.
Some of the six, no doubt, made use of Dunn and Crossley's *Daily Lesson Book* which had been published by the British and Foreign School Society in 1840. The book was written for children who '[had] overcome to a considerable extent the mechanical difficulty of reading'. The pieces selected for use in the daily lessons were poetry and prose stories. The poems were chosen:

To favour loving and trustful feelings - a taste for the enjoyment of natural scenery, - and the cultivation of a humble, contented and domestic spirit.  

The prose pieces included extracts relating to 'natural history, travels, home and foreign productions, the elements of political economy, slavery, war, temperance, economy, cleanliness, trustworthiness, obedience to laws, sanctification of the Sabbath, and piety'. Two methods that formed prominent parts of the scheme of lessons were the Analyses of words which included not only the roots of words, but 'everything requisite to the most exact understanding of the lesson' and the Saturday's Lesson. This was a brief review, undertaken each Saturday, of the week's lessons. These 'recapitulatory exercises' consisted simply of illustrations of words or things. The most important section was that which explained, and gave examples of, the simultaneous lesson. The lesson

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46 H. Dunn and J.T. Crossley, *Daily Lesson Book for the Use of Schools and Families*, p.3.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., pp.3-4.
49 Ibid., p.4.
50 Ibid.
should take the form, wrote the authors, of a familiar and colloquial lecture to children seated at their desks or in a gallery and broken up by brief questions 'and enlivened by the introduction of elliptical questions':

In this way the interest of a class or the whole school may be sustained for at least twenty minutes, beyond which time it is not advisable to lengthen the address. At the close, those who can write with sufficient facility shall be directed to put down from memory what they can recollect out of the lecture. This exercise will be found eminently useful, not only in forming habits of attention, but also in facilitating the expression of thought with ease and accuracy.\(^\text{51}\)

Dunn and Crossley suggested that brief notes were quite sufficient as a basis for asking questions in a simultaneous lesson:

\begin{verbatim}
Temptation
Character of tempter, opinion of others, strengthening of character.
1 Various temptations
2 Way to avoid temptation
Lesson 1. Avoid the first beginnings of temptation
Lesson 2. Self-denial brings with it a sure reward\(^\text{52}\)
\end{verbatim}

They recommended that the subject matter of the simultaneous lesson be brought into the week's daily reading lesson.

\(^{51}\) Ibid.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., p.117.
The Daily Lesson Book was reprinted in Hobart in 1849 for use in the public schools, but it was not the first. From the first year of the Board's existence, manuals had been produced in the colony. In 1840, The Faith and Duty of a Christian, a publication of the Church of England Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, was used in all schools with the support of all Protestant denominations. It was non-sectarian and it was designed to instruct children in Christian precepts and to act as a guide in their daily conduct. Bradbury examined the children on their knowledge of it. At Bothwell School he wrote that the children 'were much cast down at [his] finding them deficient in the memorising of [the manual]'. At New Town School, where an unusually large proportion of the children were in the upper classes, Bradbury reported that 'the whole of the 1st Class of 30 committ[ed] The Faith and Duty of a Christian to memory'. The upper class at New Norfolk was also capable of such a feat. Schools were also provided with copies of Scripture Lessons, although, in 1841, the Board complained that there were enough only to furnish each school with six copies. In the early years, books were in short supply. In 1840, there were 22 public schools and the colony could not afford much more than one copy of certain books for each school, although reading books were issued at the rate of one between two children. The following order was placed with John Pickton, of London, bookseller to the British and Foreign Schools

54 Ibid., p.247.
55 Ibid., p.251.
56 AOT CSO 5/243/6343. Letter from Secretary, Board of Education, to Colonial Secretary, 14.1.41.
Society. The Tasmanian school population at the time was 1148.  

30 Normal School Manuals  
30 sets Spelling Lessons  
30 sets Easy Reading Manuals  
30 sets Arithmetical Manuals  
30 Intellectual Calculators  
30 sets Tables  
15 dozen Scripture Lessons  
45 dozen Daily Lesson Books No.1  
45 dozen Daily Lesson Books No.2  
45 dozen Daily Lesson Books No.3  

In addition to The Faith and Duty of a Christian and Scripture Lessons, children were required to learn by heart the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.

The three Daily Lesson Books, which were not connected in any way with Dunn and Crossley's book, were reprinted in Hobart by the Government Printer in 1845 and they came into common use thereafter. Their contents form a sharp contrast with those of The Faith and Duty of a Christian, signifying a movement away from a wholly religious basis of instruction to a much wider and distinctly more secular view of the world. Religious instruction remained the central feature of class-room teaching, but from the 1840's the curriculum became increasingly secularised. The contents pages of the third book in the Daily Lessons series illustrate this well. The first of the five sections was a series

57 Secretary's Report for 1840, p.6.  
of fables, in prose and poetry. The second was entitled 'Natural History' and dealt with animals, fish, insects and minerals. The third section, 'Religious and Moral Lessons', was the only section which referred to religious belief. Half of the section comprised stories from the Bible; the other half was made up of prose extracts and verse on Self-Denial, The Folly of Pride, The Law, The Sluggard, Human Frailty and the like. The fourth section, 'Geography', comprised lessons on physical geography, including lessons on phenomena such as Fingal's Cave and the Giant's Causeway. The final section, entitled 'Miscellaneous', comprised a large number of lessons on grammar, travel, nature study and four lessons on political economy, Money, Exchange, Commerce and Coin. They were written to show children, in a very simple way, how men and women earned their livelihoods, how trade affected living standards and the value of thrift and hard work.

The secularisation of the curriculum, or, at least, of the lesson books, was English in its origins as, indeed, were the books. Secularisation, however, was far from complete and it was not the intention of the British and Foreign Schools Society, or of Dunn and Crossley, that it should be complete. Secularisation of the Tasmanian curriculum in the 1840's consisted largely of providing the child with a body of useful knowledge and only in part was that knowledge of direct use in the child's earning of a livelihood later in life. The lessons on political economy in Dunn and Crossley's book had such titles as Human Industry, Wages, Machinery, Cottage Comforts, Savings Banks and

60 Third Book of Lessons for the Use of Schools, pp.vii-x
the British Constitution and were similar, for example, to the four lessons in the third Daily Lessons Book. In each book they occupied a small space in the table of contents and the useful knowledge that took up the rest of each book, apart from the section on Religious and Moral Lessons, was of a kind that could have had little direct bearing on the daily business of life, the getting, saving and spending of the rewards of labour. In the third book of daily lessons, two sections, those entitled 'Natural History and Geography' and many lessons from the Miscellaneous section, or, in total, more than half the book, was given over to what might be called the expansion of the child's knowledge of the world, namely natural phenomena, organic and inorganic, and the place of man in nature. Much of this aspect of useful knowledge was made up of stories set in parts of the world of which the children could not have had, nor ever would have, a first-hand knowledge. Useful knowledge, in that sense, was meant to be stimulating to children and to fill them with awe, interest and wonder as they learned or read of other people and other lands. Useful knowledge was much more than practical knowledge. It was introduced into Tasmanian schools as a result of growing dissatisfaction with monitorial methods of teaching and, even more so, it was introduced to increase the stock of knowledge that children should possess and their understanding of nature, human society, the variety of human activity and relationships and the individual's place in society.

The desire to increase the sense of wonder of children and to stimulate responses in them is revealed by an examination of the work of the schools during the 1840's and of the formulation of Board policy. Charles

Bradbury, on his visit to Longford School in 1846, wrote:

The children are distinguished for their earnestness and avidity in the pursuit of any subject of inquiry which may arise during an examination. There is no school where the pupils take more real interest on such occasions. It is most gratifying to observe their eager countenances and evident activity of their minds bespeaking the genuine enlistment of their desires in the prosecution of their studies. This hearty goodwill in the pursuit of information says very much in favour of the tone in which they are taught and reflects much credit upon their teacher.62

The contrast with the tone of the Infant School at Launceston was great. Many of the children were under two years of age, but such was the order and discipline that prevailed that:

Even the youngest are learning letters and there are some 9 or 10 who read well enough to read the Bible.63

Mr. Connor, of Liverpool Street School in Hobart, was trained at Borough Road and, as Bradbury reported in 1845, his kindness and consideration for the children were indefatigable:

On every opportunity he takes a number of children with him into the fields or to see certain things and instructs and advises them respecting all they may meet with. In maintenance of this practice he has arranged with the Mechanics' Institute, who have liberally given permission, that 12 of his pupils should accompany him to the several

62 AOT CSO 11/32/683 Secretary's Report for 1846, p.239.
63 Ibid., pp.234-35.
lectures given there. The children of course are delighted with this.\textsuperscript{64}

Bradbury, on his visits, found the teacher at the other Hobart school, Campbell Street, to be of quite a different stamp:

There is no aiming at the abstract views of general cultivation of mind and character - [Mr. Nicholson's] is the old-fashioned unambitious mode of instruction and in a most effectual manner he certainly carries it out.\textsuperscript{65}

The Board itself aimed at widening children's knowledge and in the 1840's, apart from introducing into the schools the three books mentioned above, \textit{Faith and Duty of a Christian}, the three, later four, \textit{Daily Lesson Books} and Dunn and Crossley's book, the Board brought into the schools books in the Irish National series.\textsuperscript{66} They remained the standard text books for almost forty years. The Board also encouraged teachers to give tuition in extra subjects and many did so. History, English Grammar, Geography, Drawing, 'the more familiar branches of Natural Philosophy, and the early lessons in Mathematics', were offered in a large number of schools.\textsuperscript{67} Under Franklin's Regulations of 1839, girls were excluded from Arithmetic lessons, but the Regulations were changed in the following year and in 1840, girls in 20 of the 22 public schools were being taught the subject.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{64} AOT CSO 11/32/683. Secretary's Report for 1845, pp.63-4.

\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Ibid}., p.73.

\textsuperscript{66} AOT CSO 11/32/683. Secretary's Report for 1845, p.2.

\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{68} Secretary's Report for 1840, p.1.
The secularisation of knowledge and the attempts to replace monitory methods with simultaneous questioning were aspects of the Board's policy which was to do more than merely add to the child's stock of knowledge. The sustained attempts by the Board, in the first decade or so of the colony's public education system, to develop the understanding of the child, to make the child aware of social and human problems, to widen the child's experience of life, no matter how vicariously, are evident in the choice of school books and the engaging of six trained teachers from England. It is also evident in the Board's provision of school libraries in 1846. In some schools, they were a great success:

The pupils of [New Town] School have shown great interest in the establishment of a School Circulating Library for their use. They have subscribed readily towards it, have formed themselves into a little Book Society with code of regulations, secretary, librarian, etc. and hold meetings, keeping minutes of their proceedings. These matters are evidently a most desirable pastime for them and the teachers have the good sense to promote them in every way. There are now about 20 volumes in the collection.\(^{69}\)

The Liverpool Street School library had 72 volumes and 44 subscribers out of 133 pupils enrolled, and the books were generally so much in circulation that 'the Book case [was] mostly empty'.\(^{70}\) Bradbury suggested a number of titles, many of which were books of useful knowledge:

\[\text{The Books should consist chiefly of lives of eminent men - Travels, Voyages, Historical}\]

\(^{69}\) AOT CSO 11/32/683. Secretary's Report for 1846, p.250.

\(^{70}\) Ibid., p.347.
Subjects, Accounts of Arts and Manufactures, Natural History, Chemistry, Science and Moral Tales.\(^1\)

The Governor, William Denison wrote, in reply 'I highly approve of this proposition'.\(^2\)

The poor quality of the teachers, particularly noticeable after the departure of the six imported teachers, continued throughout the forties and fifties to hold back any developments in curriculum and teaching methods that Bradbury, Arnold and Stephens, among the Inspectors, and Denison may have wished to introduce into the system. In this chapter, it will be enough to touch on the failure of Denison's attempt to establish a Normal School in the early fifties, the importing of eight trained teachers and the beginnings of the pupil teacher system of training. The Normal School was a dismal failure\(^3\) and was closed down before it had completed the training of a single student. A Model School was opened in Hobart in 1854\(^4\) and eight teachers, some of whom were engaged to teach at the Model School, arrived from Britain in 1855.

Arnold, who had made the improvement in the quality of teachers his main task, reported that the English teachers amongst them had not been 'so carefully

\(^1\) AOT CSO 24/24/594. Letter from Secretary, Board of Education, to Colonial Secretary, 11.8.47.

\(^2\) Ibid., letter drafted by Colonial Secretary for Lieut-Governor, n.d.

\(^3\) See, for example, AOT CSO 24/200/7493. Letter from T. Arnold to Lieut-Governor W.T. Denison, 28.7.52 and AOT CSO 24/208/7858. Letter from R. Leach, Master of the Normal School, to T. Arnold, 9.11.52.

\(^4\) Secretary's Report for the half-year to 30.6.54, p.4.
selected... as either the Scotch or the Irish'. In 1859, Thomas Stephens, in his Annual Report, wrote that it had 'yet been found impossible to procure, except in a few isolated instances, any but unskilled and inexperienced workmen'.

The Annual Reports of the fifties were largely devoid of references to the curriculum. If Arnold's main concern had been the quality of the teaching, his Annual Reports and his reports on school visits show almost no interest in curriculum and methods of teaching. He referred, here and there, to a teacher who followed the British and Foreign Schools system and, on one occasion, he mentioned that John Frost, the former Chartist, was practising 'Mnemonics, or a species of *memoria technica* at his school at Richmond. Other than these comments, Arnold showed no great knowledge of curriculum or method. Stephens was knowledgeable and interested, though he had never taught in a school. In his second Report, that of 1858, he was very critical of the poor teaching he had observed in many schools. He complained that teachers failed to make use of the Bible with its 'rich and varied store of materials for interesting and instructing young children':

> I have found children under eight years of age wearily spelling through a chapter in

75 *Hobart Town Gazette*, Secretary's Report for 1855, p.941.

76 *Northern Board of Education. Inspector's Report for 1859*, p.9.

77 *Secretary's Report for 1850*, p.19.

78 *Secretary's Report for 1854*, p.9.
Leviticus, St. Paul's Epistles, or in Ecclesiastes.  

He remarked that it was a not uncommon excuse for teachers to blame the stupidity of the children for low standards, 'while the fact that this very stupidity arises from the Teacher's inability to develop their faculties is entirely lost sight of'.  

He complained that teachers taught Grammar by cramming the children's memories 'with a host of abstract rules and definitions'.  

He would have been glad to have seen all Grammar text-books 'entirely discarded from [the] Public Schools', but he also knew that the textbooks were the only means by which Grammar could be taught by some teachers, no matter how badly they did so.

The Annual Report for 1859 gave a very detailed list of the levels of attainment reached by children in the 3 R's. It also showed the number of children studying extra subjects included in which was a figure representing the number of children taking Lessons on Objects. Only 35 children, probably all of whom were taught by the same teacher, out of the 2537 children on the rolls, were being taught 'Object Lessons'. Object Lessons had first been introduced into Tasmanian public schools in 1840 in the form of the third Daily

79 Northern Board of Education. Inspector's Report for 1858, p.6.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Southern Board of Education. Annual Report for 1859, p.3.

84 Ibid., p.4.
Lesson Book. The preface to that book, 540 of which were issued to schools in that year, stated:

Attention is particularly requested to the Lesson on Glass.... which has been taken, with a few alterations, from Lessons on Objects, according to the system of Pestalozzi, and is intended to show how the Master ought to make his Pupils familiar with the general and distinguishing properties of all material substances. To teach the system with effect, they are recommended to provide themselves with specimens of all the inanimate objects mentioned in the Lessons, and with drawings of all the animals. They will also find, that the same system of teaching may be advantageously applied, to impress on the minds of the children the contents of descriptive lessons, on any subject, by causing them to repeat in order each particular of the information conveyed in such Lessons.85

In the hands of a trained teacher, the object lesson could have been very effective provided participation by the pupils - Pestalozzi's self-activity - was understood by the teacher to be of greater importance than the acquisition of knowledge. The lesson on glass which was mentioned in the preface took the form of a very brief lecture by the teacher on the history and manufacture of glass, followed by questions and answers on the physical properties of glass in which new concepts such as transparency and brittleness were introduced to the children. The trained and educated teacher could use the simple object, a piece of glass, to build a lesson, drawing on history, geography, manufacturing processes and extending the child's vocabulary. In the process, therefore, the teacher would develop all the 'faculties' of the child and promote his natural development.

85 Third Book of Lessons for the Use of Schools, pp.iv-v.
In the hands of the ill-educated, inexperienced or incompetent teacher, the object lesson could be, at best, a sterile exercise and, at worst, confusing and obstructive of the child's intellectual development. It was obvious from the figures mentioned in the 1859 Report, however, that only the trained and skilled teacher attempted it. In the 1840's, the complaint was made that most teachers were not competent to teach by the monitorial method; by the end of the decade of the fifties this remained true of many teachers and only a tiny number had progressed further by attempting either Stow's simultaneous questioning or Pestalozzi's object lessons.

Nonetheless, Stephens wasted little time after the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Boards in 1863 to introduce the first curriculum since the publishing of the original curriculum of 1839. It was taken, almost without alteration, from Robert Lowe's 1862 English Revised Code. The ordinary course of instruction in each school was thereafter to comprise Reading, Spelling, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography, History and Singing. Many teachers were already teaching extra subjects, that is, those subjects in addition to the 3 R's, as the 1859 Annual Report of the Southern Board had shown, and the number of children receiving such tuition from a total of 2537 children, was considerable:

86 Annual Report for 1865, pp.22-3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scripture Lessons</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading monosyllables</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading easy narratives</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Books of General Information</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing from Copy on Slates</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing from Copy on Paper</td>
<td>1245</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing from Dictation</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Abstracts or composition</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Rules</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound Rules</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion and Practice</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Rules</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mensuration</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algebra</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessons on maps only</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From local text books</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ditto, Mathematical and Physical</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parts of Speech only</td>
<td>672</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsing and Syntax</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derivations</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The range of subjects is very wide. It indicates that a number, a small number, of teachers had had a sound, extended education, sufficient to allow them to take their pupils for advanced studies, such as foreign languages, moral philosophy, Euclid and geometry. The table also shows that the educational backgrounds and training of many teachers were so weak that they could not venture past the teaching of the 3 R's. In map work, 65% of pupils received no education at all, parts of speech were unknown to 74% of them, 79% were taught no history and music, singing and drawing were not attempted in most schools. Such a range of abilities among the teachers had been the subject of many annual reports, by Stephens in particular:

87 Southern Board of Education. Annual Report for 1859, p.4.
Differing widely in natural energy and aptitude, in experience and intellectual attainments, they are, with few exceptions, if not always successful, at least earnest and diligent in the performance of their school duties. The majority have entered upon them without previous training, and are only now learning their business. The failures of others are sometimes attributable to a misdirection of their labours, but more frequently to an attempt to teach a variety of subjects without due regard to the capacity of the children and their future destination in life. 88

With no prospect in view that the existing system of training teachers by pupil teacher apprenticeships - in fact, the apprenticeship system was consolidated in 1865 - would be abandoned in favour of a Normal School system, Stephens and the Board Chairman could not afford to wait until such improvements took place before a new curriculum was introduced.

The new Programme of Organisation and Instruction of 1865 set down standards of attainment for promotion of a pupil to a higher class. It was, therefore, a system of classification for both pupils and teachers. Stephens remarked that the programme was sufficiently detailed for the teacher's purpose 'and to show him clearly what degree of proficiency will be looked for by the Inspector when he visits the School, and what subjects the Board expects to be regarded as of primary importance'. 89 The curriculum laid down standards for each of six classes in the 3 R's and, in addition, pupils were expected to show evidence of progress in other subjects and certain qualities of understanding and expression in the 3 R's. Reading was to be done

88 Inspector's Report for 1863, p.23.
89 Inspector's Report for 1864, p.21.
from books in the Irish National Board series and pupils were expected to show clarity of speech, fluency, expression and intelligence in addition to mastering the mechanical aspects of reading. Writing standards ranged from forming letters on blackboard or slates to writing from dictation 'from a short ordinary paragraph in a newspaper, or other modern narrative, slowly dictated once by a few words at a time'. In Arithmetic, pupils in Class I were expected to write and identify figures up to 20 and add and subtract figures up to 10; Class III pupils were expected to work sums in simple rule as far as short division and Class VI were required to work sums in Practice or Bills of Parcels and, additionally, to understand Proportion and the theory of Fractions. Aspects of English Grammar were part of the additional requirements, so that identification of a noun, verb and adjective in a sentence was expected of Class III pupils and sentence analysis was a requirement of Class VI pupils. Scripture History requirements were simply that children in Class III were expected to show a general knowledge and children in higher classes 'a proportionately fuller and more intelligent knowledge'.

Stephens, in explaining the reasons for the introduction of the new curriculum into the schools, noted that it was a requirement of the Board to ensure that 'even the poorest children attending the Public Schools [were] instructed carefully and well'. He continued:

90 Annual Report for 1865, p.23.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
To prevent misconception on the part of Teachers some clearly defined statement of the essential points must be set forth; and as no line of demarcation can be drawn between good and inferior Schools, the regulations must be issued in a form which will be applicable to the humblest schools, and yet throw no impediment in the way of an able Teacher who aims at higher results than are usually attained. 93

The carefully chosen words were meant to reassure teachers and, yet, to make it quite clear to them that higher standards of teaching were to be expected of them. Stephens stated that the scheme of classification, being almost identical with the standards of the English Revised Code, would enable comparisons to be made 'between our own educational results and those of the Mother-country' 94. The new scheme was designed 'to supply standards whereby the results of [teachers'] labours may be approximately measured' - in other words, the new curriculum was as much an attempt to improve the quality of the teaching as it was an attempt to set standards for the children to reach for.

The new programme was put to the test in 1868. Stephens systematically examined the children in the Hobart district 'with the object of ascertaining:

1. The proficiency of each child in the several subjects of instruction, and

2. the amount of skill, assiduity, and intelligence displayed by each Teacher in carrying out the system of instruction prescribed by the Board of Education. 95

94 Ibid.
The principles of examination were more complicated - 'tedious', was Stephens' word - than the application of one fixed standard. The Inspector first had to decide whether each child had been placed by the teacher in the right order in his class for reading competency and, second, to decide on each child's absolute proficiency in the various subjects set down in the Programme of Instruction. The teacher's skill was set against the judgement of the Inspector who applied the standards he had found to prevail in other schools. Thus, schools and their teachers were ranked, each against the other. The simplest test of a teacher's skill and ability, and one which Inspector's applied as a yardstick, was the proportion of children to be found in the highest classes. Stephens stated that, in country schools, at least 50 per cent of the children should be in Class III and higher classes.\textsuperscript{96} The results of Stephens' examination confirmed his view that the standard of teaching was low:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number present at Examination</th>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Div.1</td>
<td>Div.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2491</td>
<td>722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1874, Stephens examined 1806 pupils in country schools and found that 898, or 49%, had not advanced past the standard of Class I and only 186, or 10%, had

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., p.15.

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
progressed beyond Class III. The results in Reading, he found, were good, since it was the chief basis of classification and it received the teacher's best attention. On the other hand, the results were good because the standard was low. The standard was also low in Arithmetic and Stephens reported that it was usual for the greatest number of failures to be found in Arithmetic:

It is impossible to give any general statement of the efficiency of this branch of instruction; the extremes of good and bad teaching, and every intermediate stage are well represented.

He listed the very simple tests which a pupil had to pass in order to be promoted to the next class:

- Class I: Writing the figures 1 to 10 from memory.
- II: A sum in simple addition, to three places.
- III: Correct working of one sum in simple rules out of four or five.
- IV: A sum in compound rules - "some such easy sum as, 'A man with £1500 paid £606 13s. 4d. to one creditor, and £391 7s. 9d. to another. How much had he left?"
- V: Seldom represented except in the & VI large town schools.

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98 Chief Inspector's Report for 1874, p.25.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
Only in Writing and Spelling were the test results fairly satisfactory. Stephens wrote, 'this is the only branch in which a decided general improvement can be observed in a ten years retrospect'.

Stephens was always at pains to point out that the numerical results of annual testing did not do justice to the good teachers and that the unsatisfactory results obtained in many schools were often due more to 'imperfections in the system under which they work' than to 'demerits of Teachers'. The imperfections, apart from the inadequacies of the teacher training system, included books which were unsuitable. In 1859, Stephens complained that the Scripture Lessons published by the Irish Board from the Douay and English versions were inferior in all respects to Trimmer's Scripture Lessons which were well arranged and, in the right hands, could be made intelligible and interesting to children. He ordered copies from England of Bromby's Lecture on Moral and Religious Training, for circulation among the teachers. The entire Irish Series of Reading Books he thought 'unsuitable in many respects, especially for Australian Schools; but no satisfactory substitute has been found'.

His mild words were not echoed by James Rule who made a thorough attack after a careful analysis of the

102 Ibid.
103 Ibid., p.25.
104 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
subject matter of the Irish series. The burden of his criticism was that the language was much too difficult for children, irrespective of the standard they may have reached. The series, and the New Series in particular, attempted to achieve two objects and succeeded in neither attempt. The book set out to teach children to read and to acquire useful knowledge at the same time. The chief use of class reading books, he wrote, is 'to teach children to read, that is to name words at sight, and understand the import of the ordinary forms of speech used by educated people'. Words should not be used figuratively and the difficulty of words and sentence structure should be introduced gradually. He was doubtful if useful knowledge could be acquired at the same time as the child was reading the book, but the material must, he emphasised, in any case be within the child's intellectual range. If that were not so, confusion resulted and 'the mischievous habit induced of reading without the attempt to understand the subject read'. All of these remarks, he stated, also applied to 'didactic and moral lessons, specimens of oratory, poetry, etc.' So intricately involved were the sentences and figurative expressions and so well above their heads were the extracts selected that the children were quite incapable of grasping the ideas they contained.

108 JHA XXIX 1875, paper 70. Public Education. Memorandum to the Board of Education from Mr. Rule, 10.3.75.

109 Ibid., p.6.

110 Ibid.

111 Ibid., p.7.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.
The specimens of oratory had been selected from the speeches of Burke, Sheridan, Fox and Grattan and 'they were not only ridiculously out of place, but also positively mischievous'. The selections of poems had 'no simple rhymes ... in the early books to give children an easy introduction to poetry:

The lofty imagery of Milton and Byron is beyond their reach; and almost equally so are the moral disquisitions in verse of Dr. Johnson and Pope. Much of the poetry, so called, is the work of obscure authors, and has no excellence of any kind to recommend it.

The allusions made in the didactic and moral lesson required an extensive knowledge of ancient and modern literature and history and:

As very few teachers can be fairly called well read in either ancient or modern literature, they cannot make the reading intelligible without having recourse to an encyclopaedia.

An example of the high-flown language of the books was quoted for a purpose by Stephens in one of his Reports:

Pearl consists of concentric coats of the same substance as that which forms the mother-of-pearl of the shell; they are produced by the extravasation of a lapidifying fluid, secreted in (?) the organs of the animal, and filtered by its glands.

He attributed a poor standard in Reading to such material 'which had to be translated into English:

114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.
117 Chief Inspector's Report for 1875, p.28.
before [it could] be made intelligible to the children'.118 One pupil chose the topic of 'Warren Hastings' from his Reading Book as the subject for 'original composition' and with this result:

**History of Warren Hastings.** - Warren Hastings sprang from an illustrated race. When he was eighteen years old his uncle Howard determined to take care of him. At ten he was removed at Westminster School. He was born on the 6th December. He lives in a constant vapour bath. His mind bears a singular analogy boy like. He was contained in easy confinement during many months. The office of Ministry was abolished. More than a hundred thousand people fled from their homes to pestilent jungles preferring faming and fever.119

He also quoted in his Annual Report an example of letter writing taken from the copy book of a boy in the Fourth Class:

Dear Sir,

As my last letter was on the interesting subject of Geography, I now with ineffable pleasure resume my pen to write of those mighty Orbs the contemplation of which puts even our Arithmetic to the test etc., etc.120

The Irish Reading Books, Murray Burgess complained, developed neither taste nor expression and did little to encourage reading out of school hours.121

Thomas Stephens and other Inspectors thought that text books, not merely the Irish Series Books, were a barrier to good teaching and were often misused by

118 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
120 Chief Inspector's Report for 1870, p.17.
121 Deputy Inspector's Report for 1867, p.16.
teachers. The Annual Reports made frequent references on this point. A good teacher, wrote Stephens, 'will know how to dispense entirely with the use of text books below the Fourth.'\textsuperscript{122} Rule believed that the thoughtless use of text books by teachers caused 'severe memory work from books [to be] inflicted on children!'\textsuperscript{123} It was not uncommon for an Inspector to see a teacher giving a lesson entirely from a book, not departing from it for an instant to explain an obscure point, add something of interest to the lesson or generalise the knowledge it contained in its pages.

Text books remained the staple fare for many children even after the gradual abandonment of the Irish Series and the introduction in 1879 of:

A series of Reading Books lately adopted in New South Wales, which have been compiled expressly for Colonial schools, [and which] are on the whole better suited to our requirements than any others, (and their name is legion).\textsuperscript{124}

That series, known as the Australian Series, gave way, after 1895, to the 'Royal Readers' which were English publications, over stamped 'Education Department, Hobart'. The words and sentence constructions were carefully graded and they were suitable for children's compositions.\textsuperscript{125} They barely mentioned Australia. The Fourth Book, for example, dealt entirely with British History from pre-Roman times to the Armada. They were

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{122} Chief Inspector's Report for 1884, p.10.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Senior Inspector's Report for 1890, p.10.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Chief Inspector's Report for 1879, p.10. (Though this section of the chapter deals with the period to 1886 only, discussion of text books is continued past that date).
\item \textsuperscript{125} Inspectors' Reports for 1895, p.11 and 1898, p.13.
\end{itemize}
nationalist in tone and outlook and, in prose and verse, they glorified the English heroes, Alfred and Henry V, builders of the British nation, the Vikings and Normans, and national victories, such as the defeat of the Armada. Inspector Brockett was a great enthusiast:

A well told story of a gallant deed, or a description of the doings of our great men in "the brave days of old" will be of infinitely more interest and service to children than any bald record of events, or columns of figures, while the flushed cheeks, kindling eyes and rapt attention of his listeners will be a very sufficient reward to the teacher for any trouble he may have been at to gather the material for the lesson.126

The Royal Readers remained in use for many years.

In 1901, appeared the first issue of The Tasmanian School Journal. It had a publishing life of only a few years and was succeeded by The Victorian School Paper and, later, The Tasmanian School Paper. The Journal was edited and published by Alfred Taylor, the Public Librarian, and cost one penny. The Journal and School Paper were praised by Samuel Lovell for their simple and bright dialogue. He gave his opinion that the day of dry, formal reading books was at an end and that Tasmanian pupils had 'from month to month, a supply of interesting reading matter suited to their tastes and years.'127 The combining of various school papers with the Royal Readers provided Tasmanian teachers with stimulating and carefully graded reading material which was also suitable for spelling, writing and composition lessons. Lovell had no regrets at the passing of 'that

126 Inspector's Report for 1900, p.12.
extraordinary compilation once inflicted on our schools under the name of the "Irish Series".\textsuperscript{128}

Object Lessons, or the Fate of a Teaching Method

The curriculum laid down in 1865 was later modified to include object lessons. Stephens wrote in 1869 that, although their introduction had been of recent origin, object lessons 'and their use and treatment are little understood in the great majority of schools'.\textsuperscript{129} Stephens had either not known of the importance of object lessons in the Board's curriculum of the 1840's - he did not arrive in Tasmania until 1856 - or he chose to overlook it, perhaps with the aim of making a new start with the method and introducing it afresh to the teachers. Stephens was a great enthusiast for object lessons. He wrote, in 1874, that, while teachers may have understood the term to mean 'oral lessons upon material objects of use or interest', he was at pains to point out to teachers that it meant much more:

It also includes all lessons given without book to large classes, or groups of classes, which are based on the principles and practice of inductive teaching, and there is no more valuable agency for developing intelligence, and giving life to the dry routine of ordinary school work.\textsuperscript{130}

The significant phrases were 'without book' and 'inductive teaching'. The first was not simply an attempt by Stephens to discourage the use of the Irish Series books by teachers, desirable as he thought that

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{129} Chief Inspector's Report for 1869, p.18.

\textsuperscript{130} Chief Inspector's Report for 1874, p.26.
objective to be. Teachers, in their dependence upon the text book for classroom teaching, had become limited by the book to the knowledge the book contained. Teaching became a matter of reading from the book, for teacher and class alike. Explanation, extension of knowledge, concept development, analysis and generalisation were confined to the extent which the book permitted or encouraged further enquiry. To many teachers, enquiry was unknown, or, if known, distrusted. Hence, the unease which teachers felt, in their ignorance, for any suggestion that they should attempt to understand 'the principles and practice of inductive thinking'.

From the early seventies onwards, the officials of the Board and Department, in their school visits and reports, unfailingly pressed the benefits of object lessons upon the teachers. The advice was usually expressed in practical terms. 'Object lessons is only another name for collective oral teaching,' wrote Stephens in an annual report, one year after his discussion of inductive thinking.131 Object lessons were best suited to subjects other than the 3 R's and particularly to those subjects which had a science basis to their knowledge:

The instruction in the outlines of physical geography, the science of common things and natural phenomena, in the details of various trades and manufacturing processes, in the principles of domestic and social economy, and even in the simpler elements of natural history and physical science, might find its place in the teaching of an efficient Common School without any interference with what we term the "essential" subjects.132

131 Chief Inspector's Report for 1875, p.29.
132 Ibid.
In 1878, the Programme of Instruction was extended to include the teaching of object lessons to all six classes and the requirement that Inspectors, while continuing to report on the examination of each child in the 3 R's, should also report on the examination of each class in the other subjects of the curriculum. Stephens could not discern any improvement in the quality of teaching as a result of the changes. Rule's language was more direct:

"Object Lessons" as a means of imparting useful knowledge and developing thought, are estimated at their proper value by very few of the teachers; and only a minority of these attempt with any success what used to be called "drawing out", now more aptly designated as "inductive" teaching. Some carry the method too far, and seem to expect children to evolve thought concerning things distant in time and place, without data, from their inner consciousness; vague aimless guessing is mistaken for thought.

The keenness of Rule's disappointment lay deeper than the failure of teachers to understand the proper value of object lessons. It lay in their inadequate training as teachers and in the sketchy and limited education that many had received as children and later in life. These fundamental weaknesses emerged in the inability of some teachers to judge children's capacity for abstract thought, but it was the teachers' incapacity to evolve their own thoughts concerning things distant in time and place that also concerned Rule. Pestalozzi's Lesson on Glass would have been too daunting a task for many teachers and too demanding of


135 Inspector's Report for 1877, p.16.
whatever educational and professional strengths they may have possessed. So many teachers in Tasmania had concluded their formal education when they left school at Class VI or even Class V level and few of them had taken their education further.  

Both Stephens and Rule were well aware that in the hands of untrained and incompetent teachers, the teaching of object lessons was harmful and best not attempted. Yet, there was the view, which each expressed, that, if a teacher had had some training, that training would be extended and enhanced by the teacher showing a willingness to learn the skills of giving object lessons. Stephens believed:

There is nothing in the whole range of instruction which is so well adapted for awakening the interest and sharpening the wits of children as are these collective oral lessons when given by teachers who have mastered the Socratic method, and take the trouble to make themselves acquainted with "common things" - the popular name for the only form of science which comes within the reach of elementary schools. Unless the teacher is fairly qualified in this respect he will probably do as much harm as good by attempting to give Object Lessons.  

The inadequate education and training of teachers apart, there existed other limitations on 'the art of oral teaching'. It was neither suitable for the teaching of many aspects of the 3 R's - and would have been regarded as a frivolous and wasteful use of time in the teaching of these essential subjects had it been attempted - and nor was it practicable in many rural schools where pupil numbers were small and the number


137 Chief Inspector's Report for 1880, p.10.

138 Ibid.
of children of similar intellectual development was limited. The third disability was the very small number of children in the entire education system whose attainments had allowed them to be placed in higher classes. In 1880, the proportion of children above Class IV was only 7%.\(^{139}\)

Even in the hands of a trained and capable teacher, the giving of object lessons was beset with difficulties of a more domestic kind. Richard Smith, Head Teacher of New Norfolk Public School in 1882 and, later, of Trinity Hill and Battery Point Schools, a man, according to the writer of his obituary, of 'unfailing energy and fidelity as a teacher whose 'fine personal character' had had 'an elevating and stimulating influence' on teachers and children, declared to the Select Committee of 1882:

I am unable to get a globe which I badly want, also a box of objects to enable me to give object lessons. When a young teacher leaves a town school to take charge of a small country school, he has, generally, teaching materials of a very inferior quality and deficient number. I have recently had three good maps, but for many years I was unable to get any at all. A map of Tasmania is still greatly needed.\(^{140}\)

Stephens had remarked, years earlier, that had he had the time, he would have drawn up his own map of Tasmania to make up the deficiency.\(^{141}\) One wonders why Smith had not put together his own collection of objects and how formidable a barrier to the teaching of object lessons was the absence of 'a box of objects'.

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139 Ibid.


141 Chief Inspector's Report for 1875, p.28.
James Rule, in 1886, conceded that another part of the difficulty with object lessons was conflicting advice from various educational authorities:

It is in the minority of schools that Object Lessons are attempted. Among text books on practical teaching there is a wide divergence of opinion shown as to the sequence and methods that should be followed in this part of a teacher's work; and if he has not himself clear notions on elementary science such books will lead him astray.\textsuperscript{142}

It was not practicable for the two Inspectors, greatly burdened with work as they were, to coach individual teachers or hold classes for groups of them. No doubt, some Head Teachers who were in charge of pupil-teachers gave advice, but neither Stephens nor Rule ever recommended that form of instruction as a means of solving the difficulty. Certain books, however, were recommended as guides to teachers whose confidence and ability to teach object lessons were insufficient. Paul Bert's \textit{First Year of Scientific Knowledge} was cheap enough to be within the reach of teachers\textsuperscript{143} and, in 1890, copies of Prang's \textit{Handbooks} were supplied to each teacher.\textsuperscript{144} Joseph Masters, in his Inspector's Report for 1891, suggested teachers should keep 'a large note-book for preserving under appropriate headings such facts as their reading and observation might supply'.\textsuperscript{145}

Self-education seemed to have had gradual effects on the quality of the teaching of Physical Geography,

\textsuperscript{142} Senior Inspector's Report for 1886, p.9.
\textsuperscript{143} Inspector's Report for 1888, p.15.
\textsuperscript{144} Director's Report for 1890, p.8.
\textsuperscript{145} Inspector's Report for 1891, p.12.
Elementary Science and Agriculture, but progress was very slow. Object lessons, Rule reported in 1889, were attempted in most schools, 'generally feebly', and some teachers made 'good beginnings in elementary science' 146 Stephens had hoped that the granting of special allowances to teachers who had had success with the teaching of object lessons in elementary science would provide a stimulus to emulation, but, with the onset of the depression in the early nineties, nothing came of it. Samuel Lovell was a keen proponent of elementary science and noted gradual improvements in the answers by the children to questions which were 'often very full, intelligent and accurate' 147. But he thought the teaching was often 'merely verbal' 148 and Joseph Masters wrote that teachers, instead of 'putting simple scientific principles in such a way as they shall excite interest, and be readily grasped by beginners', made their teaching 'discursive and superficial'. 149 Some teachers replaced the teaching of Elementary Science with the teaching of the principles of Agriculture 'narrowed down to a short weekly lesson', 150 the practical value of which was not very great. 151 In some schools, object lessons had become little more than recreation and, in some cases, a diversion. 152 Alfred Garrett wrote that:

146 Senior Inspector's Report for 1889, p.10.
147 Inspector's Report for 1896, p.10.
148 Ibid.
149 Inspector's Report for 1897, p.11.
150 Inspector's Report for 1899, p.10.
151 Inspector's Report for 1899, p.10.
152 Inspector's Report for 1900, p.11.
They are rarely "Object" lessons in the proper sense of the word - the "object" being usually conspicuously absent. To make them really useful, they should be carefully planned and graduated leading up to the teaching of some Elementary Science in Class VI. The scheme might lead up to agriculture, or mining, or mechanics, according to the locality of the school. Health and temperance, the proper treatment of animals and the A, B, C of agriculture all find a place in these lessons in most of the schools.153

Indeed, he continued, in some schools, 'our old friend, "the Camel", with other stock subjects is being laid on the shelf; and their places in the lists are being taken by topics of nearer and more real interest'.154 Lovell's thought little of the work done by teachers in Nature Study - 'something under the name of nature study is attempted in nearly all schools',155 and Brockett thought lessons in Nature Study to have been, in many cases, little more than botanical discourses156 and 'dry-as-dust object lessons without objects'.157 The teaching of Nature Study and the giving of object lessons, unlike the teaching of Drawing and some other subjects, seem to have benefitted not at all from the increasing numbers of Training College students taking up positions in the schools since 1906 and neither did it benefit from the holding of method classes in the main population centres.158

153 Ibid.
156 Ibid., p.13.
158 Ibid.
After nearly three-quarters of a century Pestalozzi's Object Lessons were almost as far from universal application in the schools of the public education system as they had been since their official introduction in 1840. Only the very brightest children had learned from object lessons and only the better educated and trained teachers could teach object lessons with competence and with the ability to arouse enthusiasm and participation in their pupils. In short, the transition from 'teaching from the book' to oral lessons with a level of active participation by pupils was necessarily protracted, as Stephens never tired of repeating, in the absence of an adequately qualified and trained body of teachers.

The Curriculum, 1886 to 1903

The Royal Commissioners of 1883, had they chosen to do so, could have examined the public schools' curriculum in its details. Thinking the subject too vast to be comprehended within their extensive term of reference, 'to enquire into the existing systems of Public Education in Tasmania and the neighbouring Colonies', they took the view that the curriculum should be retained at the existing standard, adding that greater attention should be given to technical teaching and object lessons and recommending that drill and gymnastics 'be more fully recognised as part of the educational course'.\(^{159}\) The Commissioners were influenced in the making of their recommendation by the replies they were given to two questions. The first they put to Masters of Superior Schools, 'Would you think it quite practicable for boys or girls of

ordinary ability to go through the six classes of the Programme of Instruction in six years, between the ages of 6 and 12 and 7 and 13? Fifteen of the 22 replies were in the affirmative, five stated that it would require more than ordinary ability and two stated that it would be practicable, but that the results would be superficial'. The second question was put to 132 public school teachers, whose experience ranged from less than one year to more than 20 years. The teachers were asked if they thought it desirable that the standard of instruction in the public schools be raised. The answers reveal a marked lack of confidence by the teachers in their own abilities and, perhaps, in the support they received from the Local Boards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undesirable</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague answers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desirable: in large schools</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>: in some branches</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>: in higher classes</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>: if seventh standard</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>: established</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>: Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>: Yes, with the establishment of a Government Grammar School</td>
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<td>132</td>
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With the exception of six teachers, none was willing to contemplate a revision of the curriculum if such a revision were to affect them, although eleven teachers

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160 Ibid., p.187.
161 Ibid., pp. 193-95.
162 Ibid., p.196.
favoured a raising of the standard if opportunities were given to pupils to continue their education past Class VI.

The Commission's recommendations were heeded. No revision of the curriculum did take place. In 1887, however, and consequent to the 1885 Act, the standards were raised, as they had been in 1878, and, here and there, a few subjects were expanded and Physical Exercises for the First Class and Drill for all other classes were introduced. Teachers were not required, but were merely encouraged, to teach extra subjects such as Linear Drawing and Singing, Poetry, Object Lessons and History. Children were examined on the 3 R's only and 'full mastery' was required of them. Fair proficiency only was required of them in other subjects. The regulations proposed the establishing of Kindergarten classes, but this regulation remained a dead letter for two decades. The period of twenty years from the 1887 Regulations is almost devoid of any attempt to revise the curriculum - there were a few minor changes made in 1892 and 1900, but they were of no consequence. The period is marked by continuing, but largely unavailing, attempts by Directors, Inspectors and one or two Ministers to encourage, advise and instruct teachers, whose qualifications and training seem hardly to have changed over the twenty years, to improve their skills in teaching, management and organisation. The painful progress made in the teaching of object lessons, discussed above, is an epitome of the almost static nature of the curriculum.

163 Annual Report for 1887, Regulations concerning Standard of Instruction.

164 Ibid.

If extra subjects were all too often neglected by teachers, the attention and time they were required to give to the essential subjects fell short of the Inspector's mark. The standards in the 3 R's were, of course, laid down in the regulations, but each Inspector set his own standards within the regulations. James Rule was critical, analytical, quick to see deficiencies in a teacher's method, equally quick to apply remedies and unwilling to put a fair face on incompetence, lack of skill and slowness to learn on the part of teachers. Joseph Masters was at pains not to offend and his comments about teachers are of the kind that might be used by teachers themselves in describing those pupils possessed of few qualities and whose work in class ranged from the mediocre to the average, namely, 'doing quite good work, but there is room for improvement'. Braddon criticised Masters in his Annual Report in 1897:

While I can speak in favourable terms of the energy of the Northern Inspector, I regret to say that his work in reporting to the Department has occasionally been incomplete or indefinite and, so, has involved further inquiry and labour.\(^{166}\)

Samuel Lovell was also inclined more to praise or make innocuous comments than criticism, but his perception of faulty method and inadequate organisation by a teacher was more acute than that of Masters. How much these aspects of personality affected the quality of the teaching in the Inspectorial districts is hard to say, but impressionistically, it may be judged as minor when compared to such matters as the education, training and experience of the teachers, the school

\(^{166}\) Annual Report for 1897, p.4.
buildings, interiors and surroundings and relationships with parents and children.

In any event, the Inspectors' Reports have to be accepted for what they are and, in the essential subjects, there was considerable unanimity of viewpoint. Arithmetic continued to give teachers and children alike the greatest difficulty and, year in, year out, it showed 'the poorest results'\textsuperscript{167}. Teaching was mechanical and it was 'common to find the "answer" obtained to a sum totally without meaning to the children'.\textsuperscript{168} Too many teachers had 'themselves not mastered the subject' and others, who were 'well known as excellent arithmeticians', failed to follow up their sound instruction to ensure the children had retained it.\textsuperscript{169} Teachers were not thoroughly at home with the more advanced rules, their teaching was mechanical and they 'got into a groove and into particular ways of stating sums'.\textsuperscript{170} Methods of working sums were shown but not explained and 'rational teaching followed by appropriate exercises [was] found noticeably wanting in many schools'.\textsuperscript{171} Children were unable 'to apply well-known rules to concrete examples'.\textsuperscript{172} Rule reported that too little attention was given in the schools to Arithmetic and 'in all but a few the foundation [was] unsatisfactory'.\textsuperscript{173} Mental Arithmetic was neglected in

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{167} Senior Inspector's Report for 1886, p.8.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{169} Senior Inspector's Report for 1887, p.9.
\textsuperscript{170} Inspector's Report for 1888, p.15.
\textsuperscript{171} Senior Inspector's Report for 1891, p.10.
\textsuperscript{172} Inspector's Report for 1892, p.12.
\textsuperscript{173} Senior Inspector's Report for 1893, p.10.
\end{flushleft}
too many schools\textsuperscript{174} and he reported that few teachers made use of the abacus or bead frame:

Several of the small schools have, instead of the bead frame, a single wire with ten beads strung upon it. This is only a little more helpful than Nature's primeval abacus, the ten fingers.\textsuperscript{175}

Lovell found that younger children in his schools were taught to 'prove' their sums, but, in the higher classes, the checking of calculations was unknown.\textsuperscript{176} Brockett wrote that a well-graduated course in Mental Arithmetic was 'the best preparation for written work involving any mental effort'.\textsuperscript{177} Garrett, in 1902, could not report any marked improvement in the general results in Arithmetic, but he did notice some improvement in method.\textsuperscript{178}

These unceasing corrections of weaknesses in method, made in annual reports, school reports and in discussion with the teachers, not only seemed to have no end, they must also have appeared to the Inspectors to have had precious little benefit. Their patient correcting of a teacher's faults at the end of a lesson was a form of teacher training akin to the teaching given to the children, that is to say, it was an attempt to eliminate errors in a person whose foundations in Arithmetic were insecure. The causes of poor teaching were obvious to all. Gerard Bourdillon's search for causes was a repetition of what had been

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{174} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{175} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{176} Inspector's Report for 1898, p.13.
\item \textsuperscript{177} Inspector's Report for 1900, p.12.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Inspector's Report for 1902, p.12.
\end{itemize}
said many times before, namely, that teachers were ignorant of the more advanced processes in Arithmetic and that their instruction was too mechanical.\textsuperscript{179}

Reading, though it consistently showed the highest number of passes, was far from being well taught. Rule complained that:

\textit{The cultivation of intelligence \[was\] not always found concomitant with fluency and correctness, or even with elocutionary display.}\textsuperscript{180}

The mechanical way in which Arithmetic was taught and learned in many schools was commonly found, not surprisingly, to be the dry, uninspired way in which Reading was also taught and learned:

\begin{quote}
It is still only in the minority of schools that Reading is well taught, most of the teachers being satisfied when children can name words at sight, with passable fluency. Clear articulation is too little cultivated, and in some cases intelligence not at all. When there is questioning it is often limited to the long and uncommon words that occur, and the dictionary meanings are accepted without regard to their fitness with the context. It is not at all general to find questions put for the purpose of testing children's apprehension of what is stated in the passage they have read, or the connection of one statement with another.\textsuperscript{181}
\end{quote}

Masters found a similar unwillingness by teachers to take their classes beyond the 'saying' of words:

\begin{quote}
In exceptional cases only are [the children] well practised in substituting terms of their own for those in the lesson, or in expressing
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{179} Inspector's Report for 1888, p.15.
\textsuperscript{180} Senior Inspector's Report for 1886, p.8.
\textsuperscript{181} Senior Inspector's Report for 1892, p.10.
the substance of a sentence in their own words - a form of mental drill so very valuable that it should never be omitted.\textsuperscript{182}

Inspectors were quite easily upset, it seems, by the poor pronunciation of the children and their reports often contained examples that had offended them. Expressionless reading had a similar effect:

The monotonous or sing-song intonation so often met with, shows that the teacher does not understand what good reading is or else that he lacks sufficient decision of character to remedy what he will probably freely acknowledge to be very objectionable.\textsuperscript{183}

Writing included penmanship, spelling and composition. Penmanship was quite well taught, particularly after the style was changed from sloping to straight.\textsuperscript{184} The most common criticism by Inspectors was the continued use of stumps of pencils. The supply and regular use of metal pencil holders was constantly urged upon the teachers.\textsuperscript{185} Spelling, from time to time, appeared to win the favour of most Inspectors. The most frequent suggestion made by them was for teachers to exploit every means of improving spelling, by dictation, the training of eye, ear, intelligence and hand, transcription, derivations of words and composition.\textsuperscript{186} At other times, it seemed to the Inspectors that standards in spelling had declined.

\textsuperscript{182} Senior Inspector's Report for 1893, p.12.

\textsuperscript{183} Inspector's Report for 1900, p.11.

\textsuperscript{184} Inspector's Report for 1892, p.14.

\textsuperscript{185} For example, Inspectors' Reports for 1891, p.10 and 1892, p.14.

\textsuperscript{186} Inspector's Report for 1901, pp.7-8.
perhaps because teachers relied too much on dictation\textsuperscript{187} to the detriment of other means:

It is certainly best that each child should be practised in detecting his own mistakes by comparing his writing with the printed page, rather than that he should have them detected for him by his teacher or by a class-mate, as is very commonly done.\textsuperscript{188}

Other subjects, if they were attempted at all by teachers, were, in the main, poorly taught. Elementary Science and Nature Study, as has been noted above, were often not taught and, when they were taught, the results were indifferent.\textsuperscript{189} Scripture History and English History - there was no Australian or Tasmanian History - was studied by a small minority because it was not taught in Classes I to IV. Reports on History teaching were generally favourable.\textsuperscript{190} Geography was possibly the best regarded by the Inspectors of all the extra subjects,\textsuperscript{191} although teaching often was little more than the memorisation of names and places and few teachers had the natural talent to teach the subject in 'a really graphic manner'.\textsuperscript{192} Grammar, if taught at all, became, in the hands of some teachers, largely a series of exercises in analysis and parsing of sentences,\textsuperscript{193} but 'learning by rote of long passages from text-books had become, over the years, less and

\begin{itemize}
\item[187] Inspectors' Reports for 1893, p.15 and 1901, p.8.
\item[188] Inspector's Report for 1893, p.15.
\item[189] For example, Inspectors' Reports for 1892, p.14 and 1896, pp.9-10.
\item[190] Ibid.
\item[191] Senior Inspector's Report for 1891, p.10.
\item[192] Inspector's Report for 1901, p.8.
\item[193] Inspector's Report for 1893, pp.15-6.
\end{itemize}
Singing and Drawing drew comments from Inspectors more for the small number of schools in which they were taught than the quality of teaching. Drill and Physical Exercises were often neglected and were poorly taught. Masters wrote in his Report for 1888 that:

Drill would, I think, receive more attention from teachers if it were more generally understood that it is designed to have an important bearing upon the ordinary routine work of the school, and is not something extraneous, and almost optional.

Moral lessons were often incorporated into Scripture History. Masters reported that he was pleased to see it was 'generally receiving more definite treatment'. A number of public school teachers also taught at Sunday School and their confidence in teaching these lessons may have been well founded. Needlework earned little more than a footnote in Inspector's Reports, as if they were not comfortable with expressing opinions on it. Their comments were very general and were of little use to teachers. 'Needlework received due attention' as Lovell wrote in 1896, was not particularly helpful. Often, Inspectors made no comment at all.

194 Senior Inspector's Report for 1892. p.10.
195 See, for example, Inspector's Reports for 1897, p.11 and 1898, p.12.
196 See, for example, Inspectors' Reports for 1888, p.17; 1894, p.9 and 1901, p.8.
197 Inspector's Report for 1888, p.17.
The Curriculum, 1904 to 1913

William Lewis Neale, the South Australian Inspector who had been invited by the Premier to report on Tasmania's system of public education, repeated, in his Report of 1904, in a much blunter way, what Inspectors had been saying about the curriculum and teaching methods for decades past. His opening statement to the section on teaching methods was almost an understatement compared to judgements that he was to make later in the Report:

As the modern conceptions of education have not had any authoritative exposition in Tasmania, the methods in use are mostly those of the old-time schools. The methods used do not tend to give the child the chance of getting ideas, nor towards giving him the power of expressing himself in any way.200

Neale's criticism of the curriculum and teaching methods was not only a condemnation of what he had observed, it was a condemnation of what had been the curriculum and methods for many years. The details of his attack may be summarised in tabular form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Summary of Neale's Criticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>&quot;Alphabetic&quot; and &quot;pattern&quot; methods (teacher reads a pattern, children repeat the words) condemned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>No individual training, no practice in oral description or telling of stories. Written composition in upper classes only.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing  Study of forms not accurate enough to secure good writing; writing for expression of thought has been little used.

Arithmetic  Learning of rules and dealing with numbers as abstractions condemned. Concrete number study by use of counters, weighing and measuring, diagrams, paper, illustrations not used.

Drawing  Freearm, freehand and mechanical drawing on paper and blackboard with pencil, chalk, brush and colours not used. Subject not seriously introduced into curriculum.

Needlework  Practising of stitches only, designing, cutting out, fixing, machine sewing not attempted.

History  Not studied until Class V, no modern methods e.g. pictures, diagrams, maps, lantern slides. No emphasis on 'typical leading men' and events.

Geography  Mostly the memorising of names which 'cannot produce real knowledge'. No use of sand trays, relief models, no observation of surrounding country.

Poetry  Much neglected, children not interested. Poetry as 'the literature of power' (the power to induce good motive and conduct and to refine) not understood by Tasmanian teachers. Not correlated by them with Geography and History.

Scripture Lessons  Confined to reading of text-book and asking of questions on it. Teachers have no conception of intellectual and moral benefits to pupils of constructing the historical background and making the 'historical hero become a real person'.
Elementary Science  Purpose is to produce 'the scientific attitude of mind - the scientific habit'. No experimental work undertaken in Tasmanian Schools, the heuristic method is unknown.

Physical Culture and Drill  The new scheme introduced two years earlier accords 'with the views of the highest educational authorities'. Continuous expert guidance and supervision of teachers is necessary.²⁰¹

Neale considered that the Tasmanian curriculum was designed with the view to allowing a child to complete his or her education, passing through all classes, by the thirteenth birthday. This, he believed, could only be achieved if the child started school at the age of six years, but the requirement of the law that attendance was not compulsory before seven years of age, the division of the course into a number of classes and the late start by many children prevented 'a large proportion of the children from ever getting through'.²⁰² He continued:

The Tasmanian Course of Instruction is of the type in vogue twenty years ago. Neither in the prescription of subjects nor in the graduation of each subject does it bear any resemblance to modern curricula. Its main purpose is to give information, but it only provides part of the necessary information, and but one aspect of that part. It is not formative in the higher sense.²⁰³

Neale did not consider that the terms of his instructions required that he draw up a new curriculum.

²⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 40-2.
²⁰² Ibid., p.42.
²⁰³ Ibid., p.43.
However, he did present in his report an outline, subject by subject, of the alterations he would make. A number of these were incorporated into his criticism of existing teaching methods (see table above), but he made a number of additional suggestions which were quite new to Tasmanian teachers. Conversation lessons, that is, the telling of a story by the teacher and the re-telling of them by the pupils on slate or paper, he suggested should be introduced into the lower grades.\(^{204}\) Drawing and Nature Study should also be taught in the Infant Classes. He recommended a graded course in ethics and morals to develop 'character, conduct and patriotism'.\(^{205}\) He strongly recommended that a new subject, manual work, be brought into the schools:

> A body of real knowledge such as gives lifelong power would be thus acquired, concurrently with hand and eye training and mental discipline.\(^{206}\)

He considered that there was a tendency 'to prescribe too much in modern curricula'\(^{207}\) and thought there was a real danger, if such happened, of 'frightening teachers, especially untrained teachers'.\(^{208}\) For this reason he hesitated to lay down a new curriculum and, for the same reason, he disagreed with the view that a curriculum other than one that was centrally designed and supervised could improve the quality of teaching in the schools.

\(^{204}\) Ibid.

\(^{205}\) Ibid., p.44.

\(^{206}\) Ibid.

\(^{207}\) Ibid., p.45.

\(^{208}\) Ibid.
After his appointment as Director in late 1904, Neale moved cautiously in the matter of constructing a new curriculum, partly because he feared opposition. He stated that a number of head teachers were 'less concerned about doing better for the children than about seeking their personal advantage by methods not usually approved' and no doubt he judged correctly that they would resist change. Neale introduced a new course for the Preparatory Class, but his proposals for new courses for the other classes remained in the outline form he had presented them in his 1904 Report. He resigned from the Education Department in 1909, but was, in effect, dismissed after almost three years of bitter argument and recrimination with the teachers. That extraordinary episode will be discussed later in this chapter. Neale's ideas on curriculum were strongly influenced by the new view on education, then gaining ground amongst teachers in England and the United States, which was known as the New Education.

In the introductory statement to his 1904 Report, Neale wrote:

A real education system must develop every side of a child's nature towards complete realization of all he is intended by Nature to be and can be, and it prepares him for all his ethical, moral, social, and civic relationships. It gives him the power to think rightly on all questions, and to act rightly in all relationships. Education is thus a preparation for complete living; it is thus the generation of power both in thought and in action; it is thus a process of self-realisation. These are roughly, the positions of what is known as the "New Education".  

209 Director's Report for 1907, p.5.

210 Ibid.

New Education was an ethical principle - Neale spoke of New Education and 'the marvellous possibilities of the human soul'\textsuperscript{212} - which drew its distinctive features from 'the conceptions of human nature given by modern psychology and the related sciences'.\textsuperscript{213} Neale often used the word, 'many-sidedness', emphasising the three aspects of the child's consciousness, feeling, knowing and willing. Education's purpose was not only the informing of the mind, but also the training of the will to desire to do good and the educating of the emotions to form a child's attitude and impel the child to good conduct.\textsuperscript{214}

William Taylor McCoy, an Inspector of Schools from New South Wales, was also a New Educationist. He succeeded Neale as Director in 1910 and he immediately brought in a new Course of Study for all classes. McCoy kept Neale's curriculum for the Preparatory Class and added a Seventh Class curriculum.\textsuperscript{215} He wrote:

> The syllabus aims at giving the child power to apply his knowledge, at developing an interest in nature and in his surroundings, at stimulating within him a spirit of enquiry, and at encouraging his mental activity.\textsuperscript{216}

The new course which owed a great deal to the programme of instruction in McCoy's native State, was broadly as Neale and other proponents of New Education would have

\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{213} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{215} Educational Record, 6,4, September 1910; 6,5, October 1920 and 6,6, November 1910.

\textsuperscript{216} Director's Report for 1910, p.2.
devised it. The changes in the content were not numerous. Geometrical Work was introduced into all classes and Algebra was taught in the three highest classes though both were optional studies for girls. Manual Work was brought in for the first time and was taught to all classes and Drawing and Music were given greater prominence in the time-table. The differences between the new curriculum and the 1887 course of study lay not so much in the content as in the attempts to replace learning from books with self-discovery, self-activity and enquiry, in short, as New Educationists put it, the joining of the 3 H's - hand, head and heart - with the 3 R's. The course of study, which ran to over 50 pages, emphasised the training of pupils in observation, thought and expression. McCoy wrote in 1911, that many teachers had made 'a close study of the explanatory notes and directions issued for their guidance' and many of them understood that:

To awaken curiosity and a love of reading in children is to put them in the way of becoming self-educators all their lives; their schools are hives of activity where the pupils take a delight in their lessons because of the opportunities allowed them for self-realisation, self-expression and self-activity.217

McCoy reported, in the same year, that the new course of instruction had already begun to make itself felt in the schools by the higher standards shown by candidates for entry into the Training College and for examinations for State scholarships.

Praise for the teachers' effectiveness may have been deserved in many cases. Inspectors reported that teachers' programmes of work, made up four weeks in advance as required by the new course, were greatly

217 Director's Report for 1911, p.2.
improved. Some teachers seem to have taken the exhortations of the Director seriously and Inspectors reported improvements in pupil enquiry and participation in subjects which had a large practical component. Geography, it was said, was being taught 'more and more on realistic lines [with] pictures, charts and maps being freely used', and another Inspector reported that the subject had undergone very great changes, although not all credit could be given to the new course. In 1913, three of the five Inspectors reported considerable improvement in Reading, one reported a fair standard and the fifth thought it was unsatisfactorily taught. The course of study for Arithmetic was being given a practical emphasis and arithmetical problems were often associated with a child's daily experiences, they reported.

Some teachers had attempted to build into their classroom teaching the ideas that Neale and McCoy had raised and discussed in their circulars to teachers, at schools of instruction and in the monthly Educational Record, a copy of which was sent to each school. Two concepts, in particular, the heuristic method and correlation of subjects, were frequently mentioned by Inspectors. Alfred Garrett, in 1907, was constrained to advise the junior teachers in his district that they should not get carried away with the heuristic method, although there is the suspicion that, to

218 Inspectors' Reports for 1912, pp.14-5.
219 Ibid., p.19.
220 Ibid., p.20.
221 Inspectors' Reports for 1913, pp.15-19.
222 Educational Record, 6,5, October 1910, p.64.
223 Inspector's Report for 1907, p.10.
Garrett, the principles of heuristic teaching - 'the art of making children discover things for themselves' - that Henry Armstrong had developed a decade before,\(^\text{224}\) amounted to little more than questioning and answering.\(^\text{225}\) Correlation was an idea that had some practitioners, but Garrett complained:

> Nature-study, geography and history are all in their nature intimately correlated. Teachers have not grasped this fact with sufficient firmness. They do not teach these subjects so that the lessons in one throws light on the others.\(^\text{226}\)

The practice of correlation and heuristic method spread very slowly,\(^\text{227}\) as the Inspectors must have expected. A body of teachers who were so poorly qualified, inexperienced and inadequately trained, many of whom were struggling to maintain a modicum of classroom effectiveness, could hardly have had a sufficiently secure foundation to launch themselves into the new spheres of correlation and heuristic method.

**The Standard of Instruction**

Thomas Stephens, as Secretary and Inspector to the Northern Board of Education, wrote in his Report for 1862:

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\(^\text{225}\) Inspector's Report for 1907, p.10.

\(^\text{226}\) Inspector's Report for 1913, p.17.

The first step towards the inauguration of a better state of things must be the establishment of a definite standard of classification for Teachers, and a uniform system of organisation for Schools... the minimum of attainments that will be looked for in each class should also be defined in order that the Teacher may clearly understand what will be required of him, and may be deterred from concentrating his attention upon a particular section of his School or wasting his time upon subjects which are not of primary importance.228

A scheme of classification would also make it possible for a standard to be established throughout the public schools system.229 Such a scheme was introduced late in 1864. It was taken, as noted above, almost without amendment, from the English Revised Code which had also been adopted in the Common Schools in neighbouring Victoria.230 Comparisons were therefore possible between Tasmania's public schools and others, although there were some obvious pitfalls:

The aphorism which tells us that "nothing is more fallacious than facts except figures" is specially applicable to educational statistics of all kinds, which are always apt to mislead unless the data from which they are compiled are accurately defined.231

Comparisons of standards were not often made, although the temptation to do so, in order to reinforce argument, must, at times, have been strong. Murray Burgess, on one occasion, alluded to the average ages of children, according to the standards attained, in

228 Inspector's Report for 1862, p.6.
229 Inspector's Report for 1863, p.21.
Tasmania and England, but he offered no evidence or figures.\textsuperscript{232}

Stephens, six years after the introduction of the new classification scheme, reported that the general character of instruction, though not improving as rapidly as he would have wished, was unmistakeably moving in the right direction and that the Programme of Instruction contained all that was necessary for the teacher to increase his efficiency.\textsuperscript{233} He was most gratified, two years later, to report that good schools were 'certainly more numerous, and very much more efficient' than they had been before the classification scheme.\textsuperscript{234} Efficiency throughout the system, however, remained low. The most frequently used test of the quality of teaching was the number of children in each class and Stephens, in 1873, though not for the first time, gave figures to show how widespread was the inefficiency of the public schools:

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & Class I & II & III & IV & V & VI & Total \\
\hline
Div.1 & 662 & 563 & 786 & 598 & 337 & 160 & 38 & 3144 \\
Div.2 & 662 & 563 & 786 & 598 & 337 & 160 & 38 & 3144 \\
Number & 21 & 18 & 25 & 19 & 11 & 5 & 1 & \\
Ratio % & 21 & 18 & 25 & 19 & 11 & 5 & 1 & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Low rates of attendance and irregular attendance and the ineffectiveness of the Local Boards were frequently mentioned as 'fruitful causes of inefficiency', but no cause was so productive of poor standards as teachers

\textsuperscript{232} Deputy Inspector's Report for 1867, p.15.
\textsuperscript{233} Chief Inspector's Report for 1871, p.16.
\textsuperscript{234} Chief Inspector's Report for 1873, p.25.
\textsuperscript{235} Ibid., p.24.
who were not competent. Stephens, being obliged to accept the teachers employed by the Board, whether competent or incompetent, was not prepared, however, to tolerate inefficiency. Neither would he accept teachers' explanations that the curriculum was at fault:

The Programme of Instruction is simplicity itself as compared with those of other countries, and yet a large percentage of the failures at a School Examination are clearly traceable to a misconception or careless reading of its plain directions.

Stephens' admission that the demands made upon teachers and pupils alike in Tasmania were not unduly heavy was founded on a thorough and first-hand knowledge of the public schools of Victoria and New South Wales which he had gained as early in his career as 1862, and possibly earlier. He was of the opinion, in fact, that the programme of instruction and associated regulations were not demanding enough. He wrote in 1875:

I strongly contend for the establishment and maintenance of such uniformity of practice as will prevent the classification and management of our Schools from being thrown into confusion with every change of Teachers.

Ten years after the Programme of Instruction had been brought into the schools, Stephens was able to make use of a wide range of statistics, chiefly examination results, average ages of pupils and percentage numbers

236 Ibid., pp.26-7.
237 Chief Inspector's Report for 1875, p.28.
238 AOT CSD 4/37/444. Letter from T. Stephens to W. Henty, Colonial Secretary, 7.6.62.
239 Chief Inspector's Report for 1875, p.29.
of children in each class, to show that the standards had deteriorated:

Total Number of Children examined and the Proportion of Children Fit for Each Class (% rounded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Class I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He commented that the figures confirmed the conclusions he had reached by observation alone,241 and, certainly, if he had measured the differences in the proportion reaching Class IV and beyond, the deterioration was quite marked. About 2 in every 3 children (67%) had reached no higher than the second class. His second set of figures was concerned with the placement by the teachers of children into particular classes. Stephens examined 4039 children over an eighteen month's period and set the failure rates derived from his own examination results against the teacher's placement of pupils in particular classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Class II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failure rates</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, 24% of the children in Class II were fit only for Class I, 23% of Class III children were fit only for Class II and so on. He stated that a 20% failure rate 'might be excused in particular cases, but even this rate [was] far too high for an average'.

240 Chief Inspector's Report for 1876, p.27.
241 Ibid., p.28.
242 Ibid., p.27.
243 Ibid.
He remarked that entry into Class II should be within 'the range of an ordinarily good Infant School, and is often reached by children under 7 years of age'.

He stated that English examination standards had risen in recent years and, therefore, comparatively, Tasmanian standards had slipped behind:

Any child passing Standard I [in England] would pass creditably in our Class II, or be fit to be placed in our Class III.

The marked difference between his examination results and those of the teacher he put down, in the individual case, either to an inability to test a child's proficiency or else:

[the teacher] had been tempted into direct contravention of his instructions through a desire of getting temporary credit by a good show in the higher classes.

Inspectors and some teachers, it seemed, shared no ground in common. To the two explanations of incompetence and, in effect, cheating. Stephens added a third - that some teachers had ignored 'the plain instructions of the programme'.

Examination results also showed the very wide differences between subjects. Stephens results for 1880 were typical, over a number of years, of the magnitude of these differences:

244 Ibid.
245 Ibid.
246 Chief Inspector's Report for 1878, p.9.
The figures support the long-held view that Arithmetic consistently recorded the greatest number of failures. But they concealed the very low quality of teaching in many schools and the very high quality in others. More than one quarter of all the passes in Classes IV, V and VI were from Battery Point School, in Hobart, as were almost a half of all Class V passes.249

James Rule kept examination records for the northern district of the colony over a number of years and they show a considerable improvement in the pass rates for the 3 R's.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Failed in Writing</th>
<th>Failed in Arithmetic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class II</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

249 Ibid.
250 Inspector's Report for 1881, p.11.
He warned, however, as Stephens had done, that using the criteria of classification, average age of pupils and percentage of passes was not a sufficiently accurate or fair way of assessing the standard of instruction. These criteria would be admissible only if all children began school at the same age, maintained uniformly regular attendance and did not move from one school to another. The fairest way, Rule suggested, was the comparison of the examination results of each individual child with the results for that child in all previous years, 'helping and hindering circumstances being carefully taken into account':

Progress of 2152 Pupils present at Former Examinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Very slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nothing appreciable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Good progress' in Rule's rather crude classification meant that a child, having passed in the 3 R's, could move up to the next class within one year. That only 13% were capable of doing so in a course of study that covered six years said very little for the standards of teaching. The difficulty with Rule's scheme was that little reliance could be placed on teachers' ability to keep records or on the willingness of the overburdened Inspectors to do the same. His scheme was never

251 Inspector's Report for 1865, p.27.
252 Inspector's Report for 1881, p.11.
253 Inspector's Report for 1883, p.10.
adopted by the Department. More than twenty years later, the 'school history of each child', as Neale called it, was still far from the minds of the Education Department administrators.\textsuperscript{254}

Stephens tried a different approach. In 1879, he placed, alongside each other, percentage pass rates for all six classes throughout the colony, according to various criteria:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & Class I & III & IV & V & VI \\
\hline
Classification by Teachers (all schools) & 34 & 28 & 20 & 11 & 5 & 1 \\
Classification by Stephens (all schools) & 38 & 28 & 22 & 9 & 2 & 1 \\
Classification of one selected school by Stephens & 26 & 29 & 18 & 11 & 11 & 4 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

The school selected and examined by Stephens was 'an illustration of what ought to be achieved in the majority of our schools if it be desired that they shall be described as generally efficient'.\textsuperscript{255} Stephens obviously considered that, ideally, 26\% of pupils should reach Class IV or a higher class, instead of the 12\% he had himself classified by examination. The difference of 14\% was very great, especially as both figures were arrived at by the same person. There were, furthermore, considerable differences between Inspectors in the assessing of standards. At the meetings of the Select Committee in 1882, Stephens was asked, 'Are there no instructions issued to regulate

\textsuperscript{254} JPPP LI 1904, paper 49. Report on the System of Primary Education in Tasmania, 1904, p.60.

\textsuperscript{255} Chief Inspector's Report for 1879, p.10.

\textsuperscript{256} Ibid.
the interpretation of the standard by Inspectors upon their inspection of schools? to which he replied:

A good many years ago I drew up, at the request of the Board, some preliminary instructions for regulating the interpretation of the standard, etc., and they were issued to one Inspector but I do not know with what result. I am not aware of the existence of any such instructions at the present time.257

It was a curiously guarded answer to be given by the Chief Inspector. Presumably, the preliminary instructions were those issued in 1869 which gave only very broad directives concerning the examination of pupils. Indeed, the instructions did not even seek to establish standards of examination between Inspectors.258 Thirteen years later, the problem had still not been tackled, as Stephens admitted to the Select Committee, when confronted with the facts, that a newly-appointed Inspector had no knowledge of previous practice and that not even the Chief Inspector, that is Stephens himself, could advise him.259 Yet Stephens made frequent references in his Reports to the absence of standards.260 Rule's evidence to the Committee was of a quite different kind. He considered the programme of instruction to be 'sufficiently definite to prevent any serious divergences in their interpretation'.261 He also


258 HAJ XXXI 1876, paper 81. Additional Inspectors of Schools. Papers and Correspondence, pp.15-6.


260 See, for example, Chief Inspector's Reports for 1871, p.16, 1873, p.24.

stated that it was the practice of Inspectors to confer on any doubtful point.\textsuperscript{262}

Such strongly opposed views and apparent confusion may do no more than to represent the confidence of Stephens in James Rule and Rule's self-confidence, but each differed in their view of the kind of education a child should have received by the time he or she had left school. Stephens expressed himself in official language, the language of the programme of instruction:

By the time [the Sixth Class] is reached children are expected to have mastered the subjects comprised in the earlier books of the [Irish] Reading Series, to write to dictation on paper with neatness and facility, to spell correctly, to have a thorough knowledge of the Compound Rules of Arithmetic, and a good general knowledge of the elements of Grammar and Geography.\textsuperscript{263}

Rule's view was, of course, also the standard laid down in the regulations, but in addition he spoke of the 'lowest standard' a child should reach on leaving school:

This standard implies ability to read ordinary narrative with fluency and intelligence, to write on paper from copy and on slate from dictation, and to work sums in the first four arithmetical rules and the addition of money.\textsuperscript{264}

This lowest standard was the standard for Class III as set down in the 1878 curriculum and was the standard reached by many pupils, since so few of them took their education past the third class. Rule's realistic

\textsuperscript{262} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{263} Inspector's Report for 1868, p.15.
\textsuperscript{264} Inspector's Report for 1881, p.11.
assessment of standards was coupled with the knowledge that most of what had been learned was forgotten after the child left school. For those who stayed on at school to Class VI, Rule, in 1881, recommended a new standard:

As a foundation for the knowledge of human affairs required by every citizen, the instruction prescribed for the sixth or highest class is insufficient; and it would be well to supplement the programme by adding a seventh standard, to give direction to the instruction of scholars attending school after having reached the highest at present recognised.265

Stephens was not an advocate of a seventh standard and his efforts as Inspector continued to be expended on increasing the proportion of children staying on at school past Class III. Rule also worked to this end, but wished to add the incentive of a seventh standard. Their differing viewpoints may have made little difference to their work of examination. Their influence on teachers is not known except that Rule enjoyed a very high reputation as a teacher and as Head Teacher at the well regarded Battery Point School. Stephens had never been a teacher and his only contact with children was as an Inspector.

The first half of the 1880's was a particularly lively period of educational debate, excited by the work of the Select Committee of 1882 and Royal Commission of 1883 and the passing of the Education Act in 1885. The Select Committee had little to say on standards of education, resting content with the recommendation that a certificate of exemption from school attendance be given to pupils who had attained a

265 Ibid.
certain competence. The Royal Commission of 1883, however, was concerned with standards. In addition to the question it put to 132 public school teachers, as mentioned in notes 161 and 162 above, the Commissioners asked 32 Masters of Superior Schools if they thought the standard of instruction in the public schools sufficiently high. Only four thought it not high enough; six did not reply, and 22 thought it sufficiently high. To the question, 'Would the raising of the standard of instruction encroach on the field occupied by private enterprise?' 22 replied in the affirmative. In the face of opposition from two such self-interested groups as the public school teachers and the Masters of Superior Schools, the Royal Commissioners recommended the standard of instruction remain unchanged.

The Commission touched briefly on other forms of opposition to raising the standard of teaching. The Commissioners noted that the 1867 Royal Commissioners were 'embarrassed by a widespread feeling' that:

The education imparted at the Public Schools exceeded what was necessary or befitting the station and prospects of the larger class of scholars who attend them.

268 Ibid.
269 Ibid., p.187.
270 Ibid., p.xlii.
271 Ibid., p.xxii
For their part, the Commissioners of 1883 gave the opinion that the existing curriculum should not be curtailed and they made use of Matthew Arnold's views on the matter:

It is an alleged disadvantage that already popular education in France was carried so far that society began to be dislocated by it, - that the labourer would no longer stay in the field, nor artisan in his workshop, that every labourer would be an artisan and every artisan a clerk.272

Objections to raising the educational standard in Tasmania followed similar lines. When the parliamentary debate on the Bill opened in August, 1885, the editor of The Mercury wrote:

We believe that it will be found that Parliament will be ready to make any sacrifice that may be required of it, in order to obtain a good workable system of education for this Colony, one that will adapt itself to the growing requirements of the people, and will not need amendment for many years.273

The Mercury stated that education was 'one of the most important duties of Government' and that:

there cannot be a question that it must be dealt with in a thoroughly liberal and efficient manner.274

The newspaper believed the battles within the debate would 'rage around the questions of a Minister of Education, free teaching and the Boards of Advice!'275 It could well have mentioned payment by results as an additional question, but its prediction was otherwise

272 Ibid., p. xxiii
274 Mercury 27.8.85, p.2.
275 Ibid.
accurate. No debate at all took place on the curriculum of the public schools. There was discussion on the ages at which children should enrol and leave school, otherwise there are two references only to standards. Braddon, the Bill's proponent, in discussing the clause dealing with the ages of attendance, said that:

the standard fixed was exceedingly moderate, being that of a ploughboy, and not that of a barrister.276

The other reference was to the clause dealing with certificates of competency by which a child, having attained the compulsory standard of education, could claim exemption from attendance. The clause was agreed to, without debate.277

James Rule, some years later, made a reference to public expectations of the education system:

Many persons who experience difficulty in finding domestic servants to suit them are ready to conclude that the State Schools are to blame in the matter. They assert that the instruction is too high for common people, making them discontented with their lot in life and ashamed of useful work.278

The other form of opposition to raising standards that the 1883 Royal Commission touched upon was fairly short-lived. It arose from discussion in England in the early eighties on the question of overpressure being exerted on pupils in public schools.279 The Mercury considered that the problem had no direct

276 Mercury 3.9.85, p.3.
277 Mercury 5.9.85, p.3.
278 Senior Inspector's Report for 1893, p.11.
279 Mercury 6.1.85, p.2.
relevance for Tasmania as it appeared that the method of examination by Inspectors and the system of payment of results, which did not obtain in Tasmania, were the chief causes.\textsuperscript{280} Rule thought that over-pressure was not a general fault in Tasmanian public schools. An excessive amount of mere memory work was present in some schools and the responsibility for it he laid squarely on the parents who foolishly believed their children were not doing well at school unless they were given 'many exercises and lessons to prepare at home'. Certainly, 'overworking the young brain' was not the fault of teachers.\textsuperscript{281} The 1883 Royal Commission drew upon the evidence of witnesses to form the same conclusion that 'the strain upon the mental resources of the great majority [was] light enough'.\textsuperscript{282}

The activity in educational matters that characterised the first half of the eighties was followed in Tasmania, as in most colonies, by twenty years or so of stagnation. The curriculum changes of 1887, such as they were, had barely taken effect in the schools before the depression of the nineties put an end to further curriculum development. William Neale's highly critical report of 1904 was therefore all the more disturbing. He made use of the same methods, based on data, as Directors and Inspectors had been using for several decades past. The proportion of children in each class he found to be:

\textsuperscript{280} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{281} Inspector's Report for 1884, p.2.

\textsuperscript{282} JHA XLV 1883, paper 70. Report of Royal Commission on Public Education, 1883, p.xxiii.
The distribution by age showed a very wide range. Class I, for example, had children of all ages enrolled and Class IV had a range of eight ages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neale pointed out that a high proportion of the children were in the lower classes and that the ages of many of them were very high. He might well have mentioned the effects on the quality of teaching in

283 JPPP LI 1904, paper 49. Report on the System of Primary Education in Tasmania, 1904, p.33. (The percentages are rounded).

284 Ibid.

285 Ibid.
classes with such a wide age range. Another method of Neale's had also been a commonly used means of estimating standards in Tasmania, that is the proportion of children thought fit to be in each class by Inspectors and teachers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>By Inspectors</th>
<th>By Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neale commented:

[These figures mean], for example, that Inspectors consider that only 4 children out of every 100 on the school roll have done the work Tasmania prescribes for Class V, and are thus fit for Class VI, which, by the way, has not quite as high a standard of work as is laid down in some other States for Class V.\(^2\)\(^8\)\(^7\)

The differences between the two assessment are also quite striking, as they had been in the assessments of teachers and an Inspector in 1879 (see note 255 above). Nevertheless comparison of the Inspector's assessments spanning the 25 year gap between 1879 and 1904 show that the standard of instruction had improved, if measured by the proportions in the higher classes:

\(^2\)\(^8\)\(^6\) Ibid., p.34

\(^2\)\(^8\)\(^7\) Ibid.
Neale also made a comparison between the standard of instruction in Tasmania and New Zealand, the first time such a comparison had been published. He stated that the necessary information was not available to allow him to make a comparison with other States, but the information on New Zealand examinations was sufficient for the purpose:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Average Age at examination</th>
<th>Percentage of Children fit to be in class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N.Z.</td>
<td>Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper I</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neale's comment was:

The children in Tasmania are, class for class, older than those in New Zealand, and a much smaller percentage are in the upper classes, with corresponding larger

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288 Chief Inspector's Report for 1879, p.10; JPPP LI 1904, paper 49. Report on the System of Primary Education in Tasmania, 1904, p.34

289 JPPP LI 1904, paper 49. Report on the System of Primary Education in Tasmania, 1904, p.34.
percentages in the lower classes. In each class in New Zealand the work is more difficult, but I do not wish to emphasise that consideration.290

He gave two reasons for 'the trouble' as he called it:

1st The unintelligent and lax administration of the compulsory law in most districts, hence, many children do not begin their school life till long after the prescribed age of seven years.

2nd The teachers are not pressed to make any special arrangements for such laggards and for the dullards. They are also allowed to keep the children in the Preparatory Class and in the First Class for long periods. (I personally found numbers of children who had been three and even four years in Class I).291

Neale gave many instances, in all subjects, of errors, misunderstandings, poor expression and other weaknesses, which he recorded as he examined large numbers of children. The innumerable details - they occupy six pages of a 61 page Report - need not take up space in this chapter, but in one section of the Report, 'The Results of the Teaching', two points were emphasized by Neale. Noting that only a small percentage of children reached the higher classes, he wrote that even if the pupils in all classes above the Preparatory Class were doing their work exceptionally well:

The total results of the school system of Tasmania would still be unsatisfactory; for

290 Ibid.
291 Ibid.
many of the children should have been doing much more advanced work.\textsuperscript{292}

In Written Arithmetic, he found that if children were taken 'by ever so little out of [the] narrow path' of the curriculum they became hopelessly lost. The Tasmanian curriculum, unlike those in other States which were 'very wide', was narrow and mechanical and encouraged 'coaching' and 'drilling' in only four or five types of sums for each class.\textsuperscript{293} Neale was astonished to find that, until a short time before his arrival in Tasmania, the Education Department supplied the Inspectors with only one set of sums for the whole year:

There has, consequently, been nothing to prevent practically every teacher in the State knowing (for many months in the majority of cases) the exact sums his children would be required to work. How far the sums have been passed around one cannot know, but it was a teacher who first gave me the information. I was assured that this had been the method of examination for many years past. It seemed incredible.\textsuperscript{294}

The entire system of examination in Tasmania Neale found to be 'totally meaningless from every point of view'.\textsuperscript{295} The Director, Joseph Masters, could give him no interpretation of the published statistics and the three Inspectors agreed with him that 'all [their] labour ended in practically nothing'.\textsuperscript{296} Teachers were able, under the system of classification, 'to classify [children] for the day of the Inspector's examination', rendering the system 'utterly valueless'. He avoided

\textsuperscript{292} Ibid., p.45.
\textsuperscript{293} Ibid., p.47.
\textsuperscript{294} Ibid., p.32.
\textsuperscript{295} Ibid., p.31.
\textsuperscript{296} Ibid.
blaming teachers and Inspectors, who had 'exceptionally high literary qualifications' and who were men of the 'highest personal character'. However, the Inspectors were poorly paid, had no educational library provided for their use by the Department and had been 'given no opportunity of seeing in other countries':

The results of the marvellous development during the last twenty years of the ideals and methods of the New Education.

Neale, in 1906, accompanied the Inspectors on their visits to schools to examine the children. The Inspectors were asked to make concluding remarks, often of two or three words only, as summaries of their examination. Neale also supplied one or two word summaries and they show that his opinion on the quality of teaching in Tasmanian schools had not changed. This table has been compiled from the reports and is a graded summary of Neale's comments on the 336 schools he visited:

297 Ibid., p.29
298 Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Fair</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Moderate</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unsatisfactory</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very bad</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very bad indeed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shocking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shockingly bad</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deplorable/Disgraceful</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No comment made</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the first seven categories — the categories are the author's, though the words are Neale's — can be regarded as the best grades, the rest being unsatisfactory for various, unstated reasons, then only 111 schools out of the 312 schools upon which Neale made comments, or 35%, could be regarded as 'satisfactory', although categories such as 'moderate' and 'very moderate' can hardly be regarded as commendations.

299 AOT ED 30/3. Inspectors' Examination Reports, 1906.
The very strong evidence that Neale presented concerning the limited scope of the curriculum, the low standards of attainment, the poor quality of the teaching and the ineffectiveness of the system of examination was challenged. Samuel Lovell wrote his Report for 1903 while Neale was in Tasmania pursuing his enquiry into primary education. Lovell's defence was an attempt to show that the education system was not 'so woefully backward' as its critics had claimed and, in any case, he wrote, primary education in many other parts of the world was also undergoing 'very vigorous criticism' and children admitted into the Tasmanian schools from other States did not cause Tasmanian teachers 'to blush at the enormous inferiority of their own work'.

It was hardly a closely argued defence, but it was appropriate for an annual report and Lovell, in fact, had already made two detailed defences in The Mercury under the pen name 'Inquirer'. The Chairman of the Hobart Board of Advice, A.J. Taylor, petitioned Parliament in defence of Tasmanian primary education, criticising much of what Neale had to say in his Report. Taylor showed Neale to be in error in a number of points of facts, some of which were important to the overall case that Neale was making. Other criticisms by Neale of the curriculum were met by similarly detailed rebuttals. Taylor's petition, however, was not written with the purpose of bringing Neale's Report into discredit so much as to defend the Director, Inspectors and teachers against the unfair charges which he believed Neale to

300 Inspector's Report for 1903, p.7.

301 Mercury 15.4.04, p.5 and 20.4.04, p.5.

have made against them. Taylor admitted that there was a 'necessity for immediate reform in many directions' and, impliedly, in the direction of curriculum reform.

In the period from the publication of the Neale Report in 1904 to 1913, the press gave warm, though by no means constant, support to the curriculum changes, the schools of instruction, the influence of teachers who had been trained at the new Training College and the re-awakened interest of many teachers. Opinions by the press were not consistently held. The Mercury, never committed itself to the New Education, but it did favour, at one time, some expansion of the curriculum beyond the 3 R's. The newspaper, however, believed that:

The object of the State should be to give the children a plain, substantial education, not to bother them with a lot of nonsense about art, science and even agriculture. All this is mere leather and prunella.

The same newspaper, in 1909, welcomed the announcement of the name of the new Minister for Education and hoped that he would not be carried away by 'faddists and persons who think that they can do something to elevate the whole school system' and claimed, in an unconcealed attack on New Education:

It is now quite plain that the introduction of new subjects, such as chip and paper

303 Ibid., p.3.
304 Ibid.
305 Mercury 3.5.07, p.4.
306 Mercury 30.10.08, p.4.
307 Mercury 25.8.09, p.4.
cutting led to the neglect of the essentials, especially of arithmetic and other necessary subjects of school work. The Examiner had very little to say on the curriculum and was more concerned with the cost of public education and the administration of the Education Department. In the bitter and long-running dispute from 1906 to 1909 between Neale and the teachers, the newspaper reduced the complexities of the antagonism to a matter of loyalty in which The Examiner gave little of its space or consideration to the effects of the dispute on the children:

There must be a system under which discipline can be maintained and which will prevent the rank and file publicly criticising the policy of their departmental superiors.

The majority of teachers and their organisation, The Tasmanian State School Teachers' Association, opposed Neale on a number of issues, many of which were union or industrial matters rather than educational. The curriculum changes that Neale proposed, however, was a major cause of unrest amongst them. The changes, the Association claimed, amounted to nothing more than 'a fancy education'. Norman Ewing, a lawyer and politician, was invited, in 1908, to address the annual conference of the Association. He said that 'all the host of fancy educational subjects were all right in certain circumstances, but those circumstances were not in evidence [in Tasmania]' His next statement was greeted with prolonged applause:

308 Ibid.
309 Examiner 30.10.08, p.4.
310 Mercury 1.7.08, p.6.
While the State had such a limited financial capacity, it would do infinitely better to see that its children were so trained as to fit them for the kind of life they would have to lead in after years.\textsuperscript{311}

The Association's President, J.J. Low, attacked Neale's curriculum proposals and, in doing so, showed, deliberately or unwittingly, very little understanding of them. Individual teaching in schools had long been obsolete, he said, and continued:

[One] ideal was that the teacher who had 60 children should plan to teach 60 classes. This instruction undermined the fundamental idea of a class. If followed out, each child would secure about five minutes apiece as the whole of their direct teaching.\textsuperscript{312}

Ewing's address - The Mercury called it an 'exceedingly ill-advised harangue'\textsuperscript{313} - and Low's belligerence were perfectly in tune with the mood of the meeting. Relationships between the teachers and Neale continued to deteriorate until Neale's dismissal in the following year.

The Inspectors, with the exception of Lovell, were enthusiastic about the curriculum changes introduced by Neale and McCoy. Lovell, in giving testimony to the 1909 Royal Commission on the Education Department, which was really an enquiry into Neale's administration, stated that the standards had not improved since Neale's taking over the Directorship, and that the teaching methods were not 'superior to

\textsuperscript{311} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{312} Ibid., p.5.
\textsuperscript{313} Mercury 2.7.08, p.4.
those formerly employed. But George Heritage, a fellow Inspector, was as full in his praise as Lovell had been dismissive. He was asked by the Commissioners if there was 'a progressive development going on in the State', to which he replied:

I have been connected with the Education Department since I was 13 years of age, and I can say at no time previous to Mr. Neale's coming here has there been anything like the educational progress there is now.

The reports of the other Inspectors, Brockett, Davis and Garrett, in the period 1905 to 1913, were in similar vein. Samuel Lovell, his contrary advice to the 1909 Royal Commission notwithstanding, was quite sure two years later that the skills of the teachers were improving, the 'purely mechanical and rote order' methods, he said, were giving way to 'a high degree of skill and mastery' in many cases. McCoy wrote that many teachers had applied themselves to 'a close study of the explanatory notes' which accompanied the 1910 Course of Study and they:

Had succeeded, not only in grasping the spirit underlying the course, but in making it felt in their schools.

Those whom he said were too indolent to make themselves acquainted with the course, he described, in the new educational language of the day, as 'inefficients'. Brockett wrote of 'the adoption [over the previous few

314 JPP LXI 1909, paper 1. Report of the Royal Commission on the Education Department, 1909, pp.36-7  
315 Ibid., p.487.  
316 Inspector's Report for 1911, p.11.  
317 Director's Report for 1911, p.2.  
318 Ibid.
years] of better methods and increased teaching power." Heritage wrote of History and Geography being presented 'in a more attractive manner than formerly from the improvements in text-books and in pictorial illustrations'. Davis reported that 'most of the children [could] now write continuous narrative in fair English'. Garrett wrote in 1912 that the teachers' programmes of work had shown great improvement and Heritage stated:

Quiet, orderly conditions and a cheerful, honest and responsive tone are among the outward and visible signs of satisfactory school government. The number of teachers who rise to the ideal standard is increasing, and shows satisfactory advance even in the smaller schools.

Inspector Wright reported that a pleasing feature of his visits had been the attitude of the majority of teachers to their work. 'They approach it with open minds, and are ready and willing to receive and adopt any suggestions tendered', he wrote.

The improvements in standards and methods of teaching were not as profound or widespread as these extracts of Reports indicate. There were many adverse comments made by Directors and Inspectors, yet their mood was unmistakably buoyant and optimistic.

320 Ibid., p.15.
321 Ibid.
322 Inspector's Report for 1912, p.15.
323 Ibid., p.16.
324 Inspector's Report for 1913, p.20.
'Literacy', the Government Statistician, Robert Johnston, wrote in 1891, 'can only in a very narrow and restricted sense ever be accepted as an index of the "Education of the People". But he added 'the power to read and write' could give an indication of the effectiveness of 'the culture of the Common School system'. By 'culture' he seemed to mean much the same as Stephens frequently stated aim of education, 'the raising of intelligence' in the community or perhaps he meant the enhanced ability of men and women to participate in the literary and work-a-day life of their society. Obviously, literacy figures could be used comparatively or as a measure of the intrinsic effectiveness of a public school system over a period of time. Different methods of compilation, the exclusion or inclusion of racial groups, the ratio between town and country dwellers, the age distribution of a population, the selection of particular age groups or of all persons and the imprecise or changed meanings of the terms 'can read' or 'can write' make comparisons difficult or hazardous. This is not to say that Johnston and others did not make comparisons with literacy rates in other colonies. When they did so, however, the comparisons consistently showed up Tasmania in the worst light, differences in method notwithstanding. The differences between Tasmania's levels and those of other colonies are sufficient in their magnitude to justify comparisons:

325 Census of Tasmania, 1891, p.xl.
326 Ibid.
Percentage Literacy Rates at Census Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>Asia</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>Asia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43(1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>83(2)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) 1871
(2) Figure is derived from combining figures for two categories, 'Could read' and 'Could write'.

Note: The Tasmanian figures are for the total population, Victorian figures are for persons five years and older; New Zealand figures are similarly based, with Chinese and Maoris excluded from the census; Australasian figures are for total population. Tasmania's figures are thus shown in a less favourable light.

The differences between Tasmania and the other colonies show a consistently poorer performance by Tasmania and the differences, at certain dates, are very striking. Tasmania's difficulties in raising its levels of literacy were always hampered by the very low base.

For that reason, Tasmania's incremental improvement in its literacy rates were considerable and the raising of the rate from 53% in 1861 to 78% in 1911, an improvement of 47%, is a measure, not only of the very considerable problems involved in raising levels from such a low base, but also of the growing effectiveness of the Tasmanian public education system.

As was the case in other colonies and, indeed, in many communities, Tasmania's literacy rates were consistently lower in rural areas than urban areas:

**Percentage Literacy Rates, Tasmania, 5 to 15 Years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Tasmania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Read and Write</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Read and Write</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Read and Write</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Could not Read</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
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The disadvantages suffered by country children arose from a number of causes, economic and social. The main educational problem, and the most intractable problem, standing in the way of improving rural literary rates was the continuing existence of the small bush school, in the charge of a single teacher, usually a young woman or adolescent girl, whose own education, in many cases, did not fit her for teaching the children much beyond Class III or IV.

Literacy rates were never published in the Annual Reports of the Board and Department and neither was comment made on the literacy statistics which were

328 Census of Tasmania, 1901, p. li.
published each year in *Statistics of Tasmania*. Literacy in Tasmania, adult or juvenile, was not a topic commonly raised in the editorial columns of the newspapers. Whenever it did appear, the newspapers took care to explain, and thereby defend, Tasmania's low rates, even though the defence may at times have bordered on the absurd. The *Mercury*, in 1872, in commenting on 'the sad state of deplorable ignorance in which the youth in the bush in Tasmania [was] growing up', considered the census figures for 1871 constituted 'a forcible remonstrance against limiting our educational machinery'. The editor continued:

But in this are we worse than our neighbours? We believe not, for we find from the recent proceedings of a criminal sitting of the Supreme Court of Victoria... an almost incredible amount of ignorance on the part of the young exists; to a degree, in fact, that in one case was the means of allowing a ruffian to escape the punishment of his crime. Child after child, in several cases before the Court, displayed an incredible degree of ignorance. The name of a Supreme Being they had never heard, except in the oaths and blasphemy which hourly defiled their infant ears.329

Though the standard of Tasmanian public education was regularly discussed in Annual Reports and was a major subject of enquiry in the Royal Commissions of 1867, 1883 and 1909 and the Select Committee of 1882, literacy itself was discussed only in passing and statistics were not cited. It was as if the absence of discussion and public airing amounted to a silent acknowledgement of Tasmania's comparatively low educational standard.

329 *Mercury* 7.5.72, p.2.
Training of Teachers

The most common form of training teachers during the period to 1913 was the pupil-teacher system. It developed out of dissatisfaction with the inefficiency of monitors and the failure of the Normal School. It was gradually done away with after the establishment of the Training College.

It was not the most enduring of the systems, however. From the time of the Franklin's Regulations in 1839, the employment of monitors had been an important part of training, though it was never regarded as satisfactory. The very poor quality of the teaching, if their classroom activities can be so described, has been discussed in the chapter or curriculum and in this chapter. It is enough to say that the kinds of training the monitor received depended on the care, interest, knowledge and teaching skill of the supervising teacher and that they seemed neither to gain the assistance nor the sympathy of Inspectors. In 1851, the training of paid monitors was introduced. The period of training with a teacher, of whom 'a certain degree of competency was required', was four years, during which time the monitors were to render assistance to the master of mistress and to study the principles of education. Completion of the training earned the monitor a certificate and eligibility for a scholarship to the Normal School. The system of paid monitors was to continue until after the opening of the Training College in 1906.

The Governor, Sir William Denison, and Thomas Arnold, dissatisfied with the system of unpaid monitors and the complete absence otherwise of a training scheme, proposed, in 1850, and persuaded the

330 Hobart Town Gazette February 1851, p.131.
Legislative Council to fund, a Normal School for the training of teachers. On the recommendation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, a Master was engaged and he arrived in Tasmania in 1850. The scheme was a disaster from the outset. The establishment of the Normal School coincided with the gold discoveries in New South Wales and Victoria, the emigration of many Tasmanians to those colonies, the uncertain and depressed economy which resulted and, above all, the failure of Roger Leach and his Normal School to attract applicants. Leach wrote to Arnold in 1852, recommending increased salaries to teachers as an inducement for them to remain within the system:

Under the pressure of existing circumstances three [students] have already left the Institution, and so great are the inducements from without, and so unsatisfactory the conditions and enrolments of the Schoolmaster that it would scarcely be a matter of surprise should the remainder at a convenient opportunity follow their example. My impression is that without some alternative we shall hardly bring them all together again after the Christmas recess.331

Arnold could not have been surprised by Leach's letter. He had received, a few months earlier, a letter of resignation from one of the students whose father had been successful at the diggings and who subsequently found, as he informed Arnold, that the Normal School no longer had his approval and, furthermore, did not agree with his constitution.332 Arnold wrote to the Colonial Secretary, for the Governor's information, that 'one or two of the other boys appear[ed] to be in a restless, unsettled frame of mind, and that it [was] not

331 AOT CSO 24/208/7858. Letter from R. Leach to T.Arnold, 9.11.52.

332 AOT CSO 24/200/7493. Letter from W.H. Hurst to T. Arnold, 27.7.52.
improbable they will follow Hurst's example.\textsuperscript{333} The Governor noted:

\begin{quote}
I don't wonder at the Boy withdrawing himself from the School - under the present system we can hold out but little inducement to a person to educate himself as a school master.\textsuperscript{334}
\end{quote}

The failure of the unpaid and paid monitor systems and the Normal School forced attention on to a new proposal, the pupil-teacher apprenticeship. The success of the scheme, depending as it did on the competence of the teachers and the quality of their own training, was not assured, but the failure of the Normal School gave Denison and Arnold no alternative, short of the partial solution of importing trained teachers from Britain. The difficulties in the way of the proposal were formidable. On their tour of the island's schools in 1853, the Board of Inspection attempted to examine the 46 masters. The 22 mistresses were not invited to be examined. Fifteen of the 46 masters either declined, made an excuse or failed to present themselves at the appointed time. Nine were prevented from attending by accident. Three teachers the Board abstained from inviting and one had since relinquished his school. Thus, 18 only presented themselves for examination. Eleven of these were granted certificates of various kinds and seven were not recommended for a certificate.\textsuperscript{335} With this poor material, Denison and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{333} Ibid., letter from T. Arnold to Colonial Secretary 28.7.52.
\item \textsuperscript{334} Ibid., note by W.T. Denison, dated 29.7.52, on back of T. Arnold's letter of 28.7.52.
\item \textsuperscript{335} VPLC III 1853, paper 46. Report of Board of Inspection on the State of the Public Schools of the Island, 1853, pp. 5-6.
\end{itemize}
Arnold proposed to introduce a pupil-teacher training scheme. In a letter to the Board of Education in 1854, Denison enthusiastically outlined Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth's scheme and recommended it warmly. The scheme was adopted in 1855, with almost no variation from the original. Candidates had to be 13 years of age, and not younger, and were required to produce certificates of character 'signed by some Minister of Religion.' They had to pass a preliminary examination in reading, writing and the first four rules of arithmetic and an examination at the end of each year in all the subjects taught in the schools and, in addition, Skill in Teaching and, for the fourth and fifth years, Agriculture. The apprenticeship period was five years, but a candidate was permitted to sit for an examination for any later year providing he or she was not younger than 18 years of age at completion of the apprenticeship. The supervising teacher was required to give one and a half hours of special instruction each day to his pupil teacher.

A Model School was established in the same year in the Liverpool Street School in Hobart. Henry Cotton reported that not only was the school a source from which the Board could obtain qualified teachers, but it also provided the means by which a uniformity could be

336 AOT CB 3/2. Board of Education Reports. Letter from W.T. Denison to Chairman, 2.1.54.

337 Ibid., Regulations concerning pupil teachers, 11.5.55.

338 Ibid.

339 Ibid.

340 Ibid.

341 Inspector's Report for half-year ending 30.6.54, p.4.
introduced into the system. Cotton regretted that so few had applied to become pupil teachers, but, as Stephens pointed out:

The grand defect of the Pupil Teacher system is...that it leads to nothing certain in the way of employment for those who have completed their apprenticeships.

In 1865, the Regulations made a number of changes to the course of study, first issued in 1855, and reduced the length of the apprenticeship from five years to four. Almost twenty years after the first acceptances of pupil teacher applications in 1855, and despite the reduction of the length of the apprenticeship to four years and increases in salary thereafter, the system had still not made its influence felt. In 1873, the Board employed 127 teachers:

8 were trained and certificated in Britain.
17 others were also certificated. Ten were former pupil-teachers and seven others 'had raised themselves to this position entirely by their own exertions'.
13 others, not yet certificated, were former pupil-teachers.
24 others, uncertificated, were classed as 'competent'.
65 others, wholly untrained, 'none [of whom] could be placed in a higher rank than the upper division of the Probationary Class'. Many of these were unlikely 'to rise to a satisfactory standard of efficiency'.

343 Ibid.
344 Inspector's Report for 1864, p.22.
346 Chief Inspector's Report for 1873, p.25.
In 1874, Philip Smith, a wealthy Midlands grazier who owned 'a large quantity of land in several districts of the Colony' and who also occupied 'about 10,000 acres of Crown Lands,' offered £1000 for the establishment of a training school. After a number of delays by the government in acting upon his offer, a Select Committee was formed to enquire into the need for a training college. The Committee sat, heard witnesses, took evidence, wrote its report and made no recommendations. Stephens was aware that, even should a training college be established immediately, it would 'take years to provide a supply of regularly trained Teachers' and he pleaded that 'some subsidiary agency be organised without delay'. In 1875, he suggested a scheme, which, he modestly noted, was proposed, 'at the same time, or shortly afterwards', by the Council of Education in New South Wales, whereby teachers in bush schools would attend, for a period of months, a nearby school with other teachers:

For the purpose of receiving instruction of an elementary kind and acquiring some practical knowledge of school-keeping. Stephens wrote that the scheme, simple and cheap:

Embrace[d] all the elements essential to success - the mutual responsibility of the Teacher and the candidate, and the

347 JLC XIV 1868, paper 72. Progress report of Select Committee on agricultural and pastoral depression, 1868, evidence of P.T. Smith, p.8.


349 JHA XXXI 1876, paper 111. Report of Select Committee on Training Schools, 1876.

350 Chief Inspector's Report for 1875, p.29.

351 Ibid.
supervision of an Inspector over the whole process.\textsuperscript{352}

The scheme came to nothing and in the following year, 1876, it became quite plain that the government would not establish a training school and that its decision would mean a delay in its establishment extending over many years. Stephens' proposal in 1875 for teachers to attend a nearby school was put forward half in anticipation of the government declining to act in the matter of a training school and half in the realisation that the pupil-teacher system was inadequate and needed either extension or modification. There were a number of problems with the system and they were reducible to two, namely, that it was insufficient as a means of training and it did not supply enough teachers to meet the demand in schools. As to the first weakness, James Rule, as Stephens had done many times, pointed out that pupil-teachers, at the completion of their apprenticeship, had:

Acquired self-possession in presence of a class [were] capable of commanding it, and [were] well-drilled in mechanical routine; but few ha[d] a knowledge of principles sufficient to suggest new or modified methods to suit different circumstances.\textsuperscript{353}

Pupil-teachers had only a crude general knowledge which was 'very small in amount'.\textsuperscript{354} Not only were pupil-teachers incapable of adopting new methods, the amount of work required of them each day in the classroom was 'quite incompatible, in all but exceptional cases, with fair progress in learning'.\textsuperscript{355} Rule suggested that the Model School, established in 1854 and later abandoned,

\textsuperscript{352} Ibid., p.30.

\textsuperscript{353} Inspector's Report for 1877, p.14.

\textsuperscript{354} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{355} Ibid.
be re-formed to take in young men and women holding the Tasmanian Associate of Arts degree. Such recruits, he argued, would be as good as passed pupil teachers and decidedly superior to applicants of middle age 'whose training [was] generally a hopeless work.' But candidates of any kind, he wrote, would not be forthcoming until their service was made more secure and the position of teacher made equal, class for class, with that of departmental clerks.

Should all these difficulties of recruitment, training and prospects have been resolved, however, the problem of staffing the schools with competent teachers would have remained. Stephens pointed out in 1876 that, in the previous twenty years, that is, in all of the years he had been employed by the Board, he had only seen 'one regularly trained teacher introduced.' This meant that the only teachers in the service of the Board in 1876 who had attended a training college were the one teacher mentioned by Stephens and however many of the eight British teachers, who had been brought over in 1855, had remained with the Board. All others had trained as pupil-teachers or had had a similar training. Since the pupil-teacher system was so inadequate, it followed that the responsibility of developing the skills and capacities of passed pupil teachers in the ways which Rule, for example, had suggested, rested on nine teachers or fewer. Such was the acuteness of the problem, that Stephens proposed that some older teachers, 'who naturally shrink from presenting themselves for examination', might be given

356 Ibid.
357 Ibid.
358 Chief Inspector's Report for 1876, p.28.
honorary certificates. They could then be put in charge of schools and their great experience used to give further training to passed pupil-teachers. He complained that only one Infant Teacher had had any regular training and the Board had no school in which others could be trained. It would have been quite possible for the Board to bring out a group of trained teachers from Britain, as it had done in 1841 and 1855, to train pupil teachers in a Model School or the schools themselves, but such a move would have caused 'the dismissal of a corresponding number of deserving persons who only require[d] the means of qualifying themselves for their duties'. Stephens also stated that:

> It must be remembered that in about 70 per cent of the Public Schools the attendance ranges from 10 to 35 scholars, and the State can hardly be expected to provide highly qualified masters for work which is within the compass of a competent teacher of infants elsewhere.

A number of teachers, realising both their own imperfect training and also the impossibility of improving their training by attendance at a training school or model school, undertook to train themselves. They prepared themselves for the teachers' annual examinations, studied books on school management, took every opportunity to confer with more experienced teachers and 'most important point of all, they

359 Ibid. These teachers, and their successors, were the certificated teachers complained of by Neale in his 1904 Report.

360 Ibid.

361 Ibid.


363 Ibid.
carefully prepare[d] lessons before giving them in school'.

"In a word", wrote Bourdillon, 'they [took] up teaching as a profession'. But of the great majority, he wrote:

It may safely be stated that a considerable number of untrained teachers have never once considered that there is any special art in teaching - at any rate, any art that they may acquire.

Some teachers were not as critical of the pupil-teacher system as the Inspectors. In reply to a question from the Royal Commission in 1883, 45 answered that, in their opinion, the pupil-teacher system did produce efficient teachers, 12 replied to the contrary and the remainder, 75, did not reply at all - although this was hardly a convincing response in favour of the system.

They were asked if they thought any large proportion of pupil-teachers, having served their apprenticeship, stayed on as teachers with the Board, and 29 replied affirmatively, 20 negatively and the remaining 83 did not reply at all. When asked, however, if they would recommend the establishment of a Training School, 103 replied that they would so recommend, 16 wrote that they would not and only 13 failed to send in a reply.

When the Commissioners asked them if they had had any experience or knowledge of training schools, sufficient to enable them to offer suggestions on the kind of training school best suited

365 Ibid.
366 Ibid.
368 Ibid., p.206.
369 Ibid.
to the colony's needs, 93 replied that they had not, 7 replied that they had experience or knowledge and 32 did not reply. The knowledge that teachers had of training schools or of wider aspects of teacher training was inconsiderable and their interest no greater.

In 1887, the three certificated teachers arrived from England to teach at the Model School. The School took in, on an annual basis, two students awarded exhibitions under the Philip Smith endowment, two others awarded government studentships and four other students assisted by a Parliamentary vote-in-aid. The old code of Regulations for Pupil-Teachers, laid down in 1865 and barely amended thereafter, was substantially revised in 1888. Stephens, taking the opportunity to express, yet again, his views on the pupil-teacher system- 'the principle of the employment of pupil teachers is not very cordially supported by competent authorities' - emphasised the importance of one change in the Regulations, the placing of future candidates on probation. In this, the Board had the strong support of most experienced teachers. Entry standards were not raised, even though some considered that the recent substantial increase in salaries justified their being raised. Stephens rejected the proposal, arguing that superior candidates would come forward if the range of subjects were limited and 'a

370 Ibid., pp. 206-08.
371 Annual Report for 1887, p.4.
372 Director's Report for 1888, p.7.
373 Ibid.
374 Ibid.
thorough and intelligent knowledge..., fairly insisted on. 375

Rule quoted the words of a Victorian Inspector of Schools, Henry Rix:

Pupil teachers, until they are sixteen or perhaps seventeen, years of age, should not be allowed to teach more than three hours each day. It is injurious to their mental and physical health to teach the whole day, and then with jaded minds to spend an hour at study after school. 376

Rule pointed out that Tasmanian pupil-teachers studied for two and a half hours each day, one hour in receiving instruction from the Head Teacher and one and a half hours in lesson preparation. 377 Rule was also concerned that though the growth in the number of pupil teachers gaining employment with the Department was slow, they and the paid monitors, nevertheless, formed too large a proportion of the total number of teachers. 378 He argued that if the number of apprentices in any school were to exceed the number of adult trained teachers the ability to supervise them was reduced and 'efficiency [would be] sacrificed to economy.' 379

William Neale took this point up in his 1904 Report and made it his chief criticism of that 'universally condemned' system, the training of pupil teachers:

375 Director's Report for 1888, p.7.
376 Senior Inspector's Report for 1888, p.11.
377 Ibid.
378 Ibid.
379 Senior Inspector's Report for 1893, p.11.
The system is only possible where the head teachers themselves are trained, and are competent to instruct the pupil teacher. In a school system where the head teachers are untrained, the pupil teachership as a means of training must be practically valueless.\textsuperscript{380}

Neale, in acknowledging that other State Education Departments trained pupil teachers, stated that they had made considerable modifications to their systems, whereas Tasmania had not done so and had left its conditions of entry and the entrance examination almost untouched.\textsuperscript{381} In fact, 'it has been sufficient that the Inspector was satisfied that the candidate has been educated up to the standard of Class V, the class below the highest in the ordinary school.'\textsuperscript{382}

Neale recommended a two-stage approach to the reform of teacher training. The immediate step to be taken was the introduction into the Department of 'a few up-to-date men and women' from the other States.\textsuperscript{383} Some would be placed on the staff of the Model School, as vacancies occurred. Two schools, one in each of the cities, would be placed in the charge of capable organisers and teachers, a few young men and women expert in teaching singing, drawing, nature study and manual work and two kindergarteners.\textsuperscript{384} In Hobart and Launceston, classes of teachers would come together, under the direction of the two imported organisers to study teaching method and in the country areas the Inspectors would hold two or three day Classes of

\textsuperscript{380} \textit{JPPP} LI 1904, paper 49. Report on the System of Primary Education in Tasmania, 1904, p.18.

\textsuperscript{381} \textit{Ibid.}, p.21.

\textsuperscript{382} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{383} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{384} \textit{Ibid.}
Instruction with the help from time to time of the 'young experts'. Within a year or two all country teachers would have attended the Classes. Holiday courses and summer schools would provide further opportunities of greater duration for continuing the study of method and management. 'Ere long', he wrote, enthusiastically:

Educational congresses, exhibitions of school methods and work, would probably be organized by the teachers themselves, and the spirit of the whole service would become educational and progressive.

For the teachers of the future, Neale had in mind the establishment of a training college.

This form of training, known as the 'Previous Training System', was based upon the induction of 14 year old candidates, giving them two years of education in subjects of a secondary curriculum, with no teaching to be permitted, followed by two years actual teaching in the schools and concluding with a fifth year at the Training College at which teaching of the principles and methods of teaching, introduced in the first two years, would be extended and developed. The students, 'Junior Teachers' as they were to be known, were to be paid incremental allowances, with the allowances for females fixed at 80% of the male allowances.

385 Ibid.
386 Ibid.
387 Ibid.
388 Ibid., p.23.
389 Ibid., p.24.
Neale's Report was an indictment of the entire system of primary education in Tasmania. He wrote:

Hardly an echo of the educational renaissance of the last quarter of a century seems to have reached Tasmania.390

Parliament agreed with this judgment and invited Neale to become Director of Education, an offer which he immediately accepted.

In 1906, the Training College was established and located in Hobart Technical College buildings until the Education Department could find the money to put up its own buildings. The Principal was John Johnson, a primary school headmaster from Timaru, New Zealand. Johnson was an M.A. in Psychology from the University of Otago and an active member of the New Zealand Educational Institute, the teachers' organisation, of which he had been president, and literary editor of the Institute's publication, the New Zealand Journal of Education. It was through his editorship and his many contributions that he was able to put his views on educational reform and the training of teachers and become known in New Zealand and, later, in Tasmania.391 Neale and Johnson, in 1906, devised a training programme which combined the advantages of the pupil teacher scheme and the previous training scheme without the disadvantages of either392 Neale wrote:

The pupil teacher has been condemned because as a child himself he has charge of children, knows so little more than they, and cannot

390 Ibid., p.21.
391 Mercury 24.2.06, p.4; 23.1.1933, p.4; and Educational Record 15.1.1933, p.18.
392 Director's Report for 1906, p.6.
for lack of education and development appreciate the higher aspects of his work. 393
And, with less evidence, he wrote of the 'previously trained' assistant as having 'lost the power to speak in the simple primary language of little children' and concluded, over-demonstratively, that 'the difference between the speech of the ordinary child of ten years and that of the University graduate is as great as between two languages of the same group.' 394 The programme, extending over five years, was as Neale had outlined it in his Report with the additional precaution taken of a candidate being required to act as a Monitor in his or her own school before acceptance and gaining a satisfactory report from the head teacher on the candidate's suitability for training. 395 To extend the training of teachers it was decided that, for a trial period of five years, teachers would be relieved of their duties at school to attend the college for the senior year, studying the same course as the fifth year Junior Teachers. 396 In the same year, 1906, seven young teachers were selected to train at institutions on the mainland. One was sent to Froebel House, Sydney, and six to the Melbourne Training College, two of them to study general subjects, two to study woodwork and drawing and two to study domestic economy and cookery. 397 Neale's Schools of Instruction were introduced in the same year and the first, lasting for three weeks, had an attendance of 80 teachers. 398

393 Ibid.
394 Ibid., p.7.
395 Ibid.
396 Ibid.
397 Ibid.
398 Ibid.
The Educational Record, first published in 1905, kept all teachers informed of training programmes and was itself a means of training teachers. Elkington's twelve lectures on school hygiene were printed in the first year and also articles on school gardens and the educational value of Arithmetic. Johnson wrote a lengthy article on New Education, articles appeared on Froebel and Pestalozzi, apperception, American correspondence schools, the individuality of the child, moral education, physical culture, the Herbartian steps, the art of questioning and the training of the imagination. The publication also contained the Inspectors' and Directors' Reports, Courses of Study and techniques and methods to be used in the teaching of particular subjects. Neale and his successor William McCoy were very active in holding meetings with teachers, especially teachers at small schools, and discussing a variety of problems with them. These meetings were often well attended and most teachers 'returned home heartened for their work', although McCoy found it depressing that 'a few of the weaker brethren stayed away from the meetings [with] monotonous regularity'.

399 Educational Record. Elkington's printed lectures began with volume 1, number 1 1905; the other two articles are in volume 1, number 6, 1905.

400 Educational Record 2,6,1906.

401 These articles appeared in Educational Record in this order - vol 3, number 8, 1907; 3,7,1907; 4,5,1908; 4,6, 1908; 4,7, 1908; 5,2, 1909; 5,3, 1909; 5,6, 1909; 7,3, 1911; 8,1,1912.

402 Director's Report for 1910, p.5.
Further efforts were made, in 1911, to increase the number of trained infant teachers by the designing of a special twelve month course for them and the engaging of 'a specially-qualified kindergartener' from the New South Wales Education Department.\footnote{403} Summer schools were well attended, but McCoy noted that it was still impossible to persuade the 'less skilful brethren' to attend.\footnote{404} Many teachers, however, were keen to learn and he wrote that the three month course offered at the East Launceston Practising School had:

In many cases, changed the timid, diffident, inexperienced girl into a teacher with confidence and resource. In no single instance within my knowledge has the probation failed to greatly improve the power of control and teaching.\footnote{405}

By 1913, a developed and varied system of training candidates and practising teachers had been brought into being, after 60 years of dependence on monitors and the pupil-teacher system.

\footnote{403} Director's Report for 1911, p.3.  
\footnote{404} Director's Report for 1912, p.9.  
\footnote{405} Inspector's Report for 1912, p.22.