

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN TASMANIA
1803 - 1900.

by

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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no copy or paraphrase of material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

John C. Brown.
Signature.

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SUMMARY.

In the early days of the Colony, the Lieutenant-Governors inevitably took a paternal role, providing for the needs not only of the convicts who were their prime responsibility, but also for settlers in difficulty. Under Arthur this continued and Van Diemen's Land did not follow the example of New South Wales in subsidising voluntary agencies to enable them to take the lead in providing social services. Arthur expanded the services providing hospitals for the sick and the mentally ill, depots for the aged and infirm, orphan schools for the orphan and destitute child and made separate arrangements for boy convicts. Some voluntary activity was evident principally in the relief field, but it received no assistance from the government and inadequate support from the colonists and so made little headway.

The three succeeding Lieutenant-Governors, Franklin, Eardley-Willmot and Denison faced with serious budgetary problems, endeavoured to cut back services for the free poor and resorted to a number of expedients both major and petty to reduce overall costs and to limit the expansion of the services. Voluntary agencies were encouraged verbally but given no subsidy and though more was achieved in this period than under Arthur, the agencies' financial difficulties and lack of public support severely limited the scope of operations. As transportation ended and independence drew near the Imperial Government allowed the services to run down so that at the point of

handover to the Colonial government, all were in poor shape.

The newly independent government began with enthusiasm to refurbish the social services but before long complaints of excessive expenditure on the poor forced a halt and for the remainder of the century the policy was economy at all costs. The pressure of demand for services and public criticism forced the continued expansion and improvement of the services and in spite of government apathy and reluctance to provide adequate finance, much was achieved. A significant part was played by a small group of public servants in securing changes in policy to meet changing needs. Every encouragement was given to voluntary agencies to establish themselves, including regular subsidies, the use of old Imperial buildings and grants for special purposes. The agencies began to assume responsibility for some sectors of the social services but lack of adequate local support limited their work to a comparatively subordinate role. A marked increase in voluntary activity in the last ten years of the century while strengthening and widening their sphere of work nevertheless left the state in the dominant position which it had occupied in the social services throughout the century.

The study considers the reasons for this pattern of development and also traces through the century the influence of ideas about poverty, of attitudes to the poor and of the impact of the penal system and its aftermath on the social services in Tasmania.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

In collecting material for this thesis I have also acquired a debt of gratitude to a number of people which is not easily repaid. I can at least record my thanks to some of them. To the staff of the Tasmanian State Archives and the Reference Library who went to endless trouble on my behalf; to the many voluntary agencies who gave me access to their papers on most generous terms; to the Clerk of the Papers in Parliament House, to the Mather family, Mrs. R. Pearce, Miss Nancy Hewitt, the Church of England Office, the Standard Office and the Archbishop of Hobart, Dr. G. Young, the Hobart Synagogue, all of whom gave me the use of material in their possession, and finally to the Mitchell Library in Sydney, the Public Library of Victoria and the Library of the University of Tasmania.

In preparing the thesis I have received much help and advice from Professor W. G. Rimmer, late of the University of Tasmania and from Dr. Michael Roe of that University who has been most tolerant of my many deficiencies.

ABBREVIATIONS.

H.R.A. 111/-/-	Historical Records of Australia Series III (followed by the volume and page number)
C.S.O & C.S.D.	Colonial Secretaries Office (or Department) Papers (followed by the series, volume and file numbers)
G.O.1 & G.O.33	Governors Inward and Outward dispatches (followed by volume and dispatch number)

G.O. 46

Reports to the Governors by the Convict
Department
(followed by the volume number)

S.W.D.

Social Welfare Department
(followed by the accession number)

H.A.P.

House of Assembly Papers
(followed by the paper number and the year
of the volume).

INTRODUCTION.

The object of this study was to discover what social services were provided by government and voluntary agencies in Tasmania in the nineteenth century, to consider some of the reasons they developed in the way that they did and to look at the quality of the services which resulted.

Opening with a brief definition of the term 'social services' presents some difficulty. Much of the literature devoted to the subject has either avoided definition altogether (an understandable temptation) or has produced elaborate definitions and then expended many paragraphs in justification and in discussing which services should be included within them. For the purposes of this study it can be defined very broadly as that part of government and voluntary activity which seeks to aid the individual who, for various reasons, cannot function effectively in the community without outside assistance. The provision may be minimal in that it seeks only to avoid premature death or exposure to the elements, or it may aim to enhance the welfare of the individual to enable him to function as a normal citizen or allow him to live and die in tolerable comfort. This aim is not necessarily linked with social reform which seeks to attack the problem at its roots by changing the economic and social structure of the community. On the contrary such services may tend to bolster the existing structure and aim only to ameliorate the lot of those excluded from its benefits.

Delimiting a period in this type of study in Tasmania is not easy. There are no outstanding landmarks to mark the end of an era, no great Royal Commissions which produce turning points, no reformist governments which stand out above the rest and notable changes in one area were not necessarily accompanied by similar changes in another. Assuming one wants to go back to the beginning of our present day services, the starting date is comparatively simple. There was no colony before 1803, only an aboriginal society about which comparatively little is known, and whose social structure had no influence on subsequent developments. The arrival of Lieutenant Bowen in 1803, or more importantly of Colonel Collins in 1804 and the founding of Van Diemen's Land, then, is the starting point. The end of the century has been chosen as the finishing point primarily because the coming of Federation brought a new dimension to the social services. What had until then been a sphere divided between state government and voluntary agencies, now was shared with the Federal Government and although the first Federal acts - establishing Old Age and Invalid Pensions - were not passed until 1908, the power to do so had been allotted to the Federal Parliament in the Constitution and Tasmania, it would seem, was content to accept the situation and await Federal action.

In considering what services should be included in the study, a number of negative decisions were made. The treatment of the Tasmanian aboriginals, including the services set up for the remnants of this race, have been the subject of previous studies

and was excluded for this reason. Infant Schools, Ragged Schools and Day Schools of Industry, though provided for poor children, seem more properly to belong to the history of education and were not therefore included. On the other hand provision for the education and training of the blind and deaf is included, perhaps a little illogically, but because this was aimed at saving them from permanent dependence on charitable aid and because the cost of the government service was included under the head of provision for paupers. Adult correctional services were excluded with some reluctance. The development of the reformatory and rehabilitative aspects of the penal services is of importance to the history of the Probation, Parole and Prison Services, and although many thousands of words have been written about the early penal services in Tasmania, little or nothing has been written on what developed after Transportation ended and there is no overview of the whole period. The subject is well worthy of study, but the sheer weight of the available material is a cogent argument for making it a separate undertaking. Services for the young delinquent have been included, since although from one point of view they form part of the general correctional services, their development in Tasmania became so closely interwoven with the children's services that they fit more logically into the present study.

This study then will concentrate on the services provided for the destitute, the aged and the chronic sick, the sick poor, the orphan, neglected and delinquent child, the mentally ill and

the mentally and physically handicapped and on rescue work with unmarried mothers and young prostitutes. To speak of these as social services is of course to use modern parlance. For the period, the more correct usages would be Charitable Agencies and Institutions or Pauper Provision and all of the services mentioned come under these classifications during the nineteenth century.

For the period 1803-1856, the main sources used were the relevant material in the Historical Records of Australia Series III and Bigge's reports, the Colonial Secretaries' correspondence and the Governors' inward and outward dispatches. Those few voluntary agency records still available (in effect only the Dorcas Society and the Hebrew Benevolent Society) were also studied. The newspapers of the period provided some comment and other miscellaneous items (Almanacks, diaries etc.) helped to fill in some of the gaps. For this period there has been little selection. Material is fairly thin on the ground and it has been necessary to read almost everything to obtain a reasonable picture.

For the period 1856-1900, I have relied principally on annual reports and other reports (Royal Commissions, Select Committees, etc.) and published correspondence in Parliamentary papers for both the government services and for those voluntary services with few extant papers. I have made every effort to locate the voluntary agency material still available in the state and gave particular attention to agencies playing an important role from 1856-1900. The comparatively obscure part played by the Dorcas Society in the second half of the century made their papers of lesser importance. I have used the Colonial (later Chief) Secretary's correspondence only to fill in obvious gaps and the newspapers for comment on particular issues. Other miscellaneous

✓ items include registers
of government departments and some private papers. The full list for both periods will be found in the bibliography. The only major omissions as far as I know are the hospitals' own records and the records of self help organisations. These have been deliberate since neither were chosen for detailed study and the records available elsewhere gave a sufficiently clear picture for my purpose. The two areas to which more detailed attention will be given are the relief services - both indoor and outdoor and the children's services. The two are closely related for much of the century.

CHAPTER I. PATERNALISM IN ACTION 1803 - 1836.

Beginnings 1803 - 1824.

The early Lieutenant-Governors (Collins, Davey and Sorell)⁽¹⁾ and the early settlers did not indulge much in theorising about the causes of poverty or about the wisdom or otherwise of helping those in need. Whatever ideas on the subject they may have imbibed from the England of the period, must have seemed largely irrelevant on the other side of the world. There was reason enough for periods of temporary distress and the need to assist those who required special care, in the hardships attached to carving a living out of a new country, in the uncertainty of a new economy and in the severing of family ties inevitable in the process of emigration. The ideal was of course for each man and his family to become self supporting as early as possible, but more tolerance was extended to those who fell by the wayside than was evident in later periods. In this small community 'the poor' were not some abstract notion, but families and individuals well known to you and whose circumstances today might well be yours tomorrow.

Nor was there much serious discussion about whose responsibility it was to provide for the sick, the aged and handicapped and the poor. The duty fell almost automatically to the government. To begin with there were no alternative resources available

(1) David Collins 1804-1810
 Thomas Davey 1813-1817
 William Sorell 1817-1824.

The churches, traditional providers for the needy, barely existed. By 1824 there were still only six clergymen in the whole of Van Diemen's Land. Robert Knopwood of the Church of England was the sole Chaplain from 1804, when he arrived with Collins, until his colleague Youl arrived to serve in the north in 1819. The Methodist church acquired its first resident minister in 1821, the first Catholic Priest, Father Conolly, came the same year, and the first Presbyterian minister in 1822. William Bedford, joining his Church of England colleagues in 1823, brought the total complement to six. For these men the labour of providing their widely spread communities both convict and free with religious services, baptising, marrying and burying them and establishing churches and schools was more than a full time occupation and they could play little part in establishing social services beyond performing or encouraging individual acts of charity.

The general body of settlers were in no better position to sponsor charitable agencies. Of the population of 14,992 in 1825 46% were convicts ⁽²⁾ and a considerable number of the remainder would have been ex-convicts. Wealthy emancipees were still a comparative rarity in 1825 and the bulk of the free settlers were still struggling to establish themselves. Few were in a position to contribute largely to the aid of the less fortunate. Sorell in 1820 expressing his hope to Bigge, the Parliamentary Commissioner (out from England to report on the state of the Colonies) that the example of the New South Wales colonists in founding a

(2) R. M. Hartwell. Economic Development of Van Diemen's Land 1820-1850. (Melbourne 1954) p. 68.

Benevolent Society might soon be followed in Van Diemen's Land reported,

The disadvantages under which this Settlement for many years laboured, more particularly the interruptions to Agriculture, the losses by plunder, and the Contributions made to encourage the apprehension of the Banditti, which so long infested this Settlement have necessarily retarded such a measure. (3)

Bigge found no reason to disagree with this assessment and contented himself with the comment "No public fund having yet been established for the support of persons in indigence, the expense has necessarily fallen to the Government." (4)

This was by no means the only field which necessarily fell to the government. It was a natural result of founding a settlement in a hostile environment, at least six months voyage from England and where the only reliable funds were in the hands of the government, that the early Lieutenant-Governors should find themselves allotted a paternalistic role. The convicts were in any case government responsibility but if free settlement was to be encouraged, then the settlers must be assisted in their early days with land, stock, and food and protected against undue dangers and while the services provided were primarily for the convicts, it was the practice from the beginning to extend their availability to settlers who were in need. For the settlers to turn to the Lieutenant-Governor when in distress and for him to act as father to his people was accepted as a normal state of affairs.

(3) H.E.A. 111/3/676.

(4) J.T. Bigge. Report on Agriculture & Trade in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. (Facsimile reproductions by the Libraries Board of South Australia, Adelaide, 1966) p. 82.

The pattern for the type of services which developed was already set by the example of New South Wales, whose Governor was also Governor-in-Chief for Van Diemen's Land. The Lieutenant-Governors of Van Diemen's Land required prior approval from the Governor-in-Chief for any work which required public funds and the labour of convicts. (5) Macquarie on his visits in 1811 and 1821 gave instructions for such buildings as he thought were needed and otherwise approved or disapproved by correspondence. On the whole this was not a retarding influence on the social services. Indeed under Davey, the pressure to improve the hospital services came from Macquarie who thought progress too slow. (6) The Home Government in the main did not intervene, except on the subject of relief rations. It had already accepted the need for various services in New South Wales and was prepared to concede that Van Diemen's Land would need the same in proportion to the size of its population.

Within these boundaries and accepting that the need of a population of under 15,000 for social services was in any case very small, the main limiting factors were relatively low priority of the services in the queue for buildings and the quality of the staff available. Roads, houses, quarters for the troops, stores, a gaol and barracks for the convicts all had precedence over hospitals for the sick and accommodation for the aged, invalid and orphan. Improvised arrangements such as the renting of houses,

(5) H.R.A. 111/4/694.

(6) H.R.A. 111/2/112-3.

or the erection of a temporary wooden building sufficed in the meantime. Apart from the medical services, no separate staff was required prior to 1825. The quality of the hospital medical staff was poor. A.G.L. Shaw ⁽⁷⁾ ascribes this to the difficulty of inducing competent men to serve in the new colony and to the unsuitable appointments made through the influence of patrons at home and goes on to describe the doctors, Hopley, I'Anson, Bowden, St. Young, Mountgarret and Luttrell in very uncomplimentary terms which appear to be well justified. Hopley was suspended for misconduct, Mountgarret suspected of misappropriating medicines, St. Young was exceedingly ignorant as a medical man, Luttrell was neglectful of his duties and so on. The resultant medical service will be described below.

Almost the earliest need to make itself felt was for hospital services. A hospital is first mentioned in Hobart in 1804 ⁽⁸⁾ and in Launceston in 1808. ⁽⁹⁾ A small hospital in Georgetown was opened sometime prior to 1820 when Bigge saw it. He found it to be "a small wooden hut (which) has been converted into a hospital and was capable of containing five patients. This hut was ill-constructed and without any floor, but was only intended for the temporary reception of the sick until a more suitable place could be provided." ⁽¹⁰⁾ The evidence of Assistant Surgeon

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- (7) A.G.L. Shaw "Some Officials of Early Van Diemen's Land." Papers & Proceedings of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association Vol. XIV No. 4. April, 1967. p.p. 134-136.
- (8) H.E.A. 111/1/287.
- (9) Ibid p. 682.
- (10) J.T. Bigge - op. cit. p. 108.

Owen before Bigge the same year showed the hospital to have few medicines, no surgical instruments and no nursing staff. (11)

At Launceston the Surgeon reported the hospital could contain about 12 patients and since he had no means of separating the sexes, he hired rooms in the town for women patients. He too said he was short of medicines and at times of bedding. (12)

The Hobart hospital by 1818 had expanded from what was presumably a hut in the early settlement to a house with two wards and two skillings - a sort of lean-to at the rear. This proved inadequate for the demands on its resources and a house in the town was hired, described as "larger and more commodious." (13) Dr. Luttrell told Bigge in 1820 that the ordinary number of patients in the hospital was "from 20 to 30 in the Hospital and about 10 or from that to 20 out patients." (14) The foundations of the new hospital first ordered by Macquarie in 1812 had at last been laid.

Though the impulse to establish hospitals came mainly from the need to provide care for sick convicts, it appears to have been accepted from the beginning that their services were available on a wider basis. Macquarie in 1812 regards hospitals as "Highly necessary for the reception of sick convicts and other persons in the settlement who cannot otherwise procure Medical aid." (15) Bigge, discussing admissions to the hospitals in 1820 says "a denial has been rarely given to the poorer class of

(11) H.R.A. 111/8/405-7.

(12) Ibid p.p. 418-420.

(13) H.R.A. 111/2/728.

(14) H.R.A. 111/3/501.

(15) H.R.A. 111/1/459.

settlers..., whenever it was made to appear to the Governor, on memorials presented to him and certified by medical officers, that they were not in a condition to bear the expenses of their own cure." (16)

Not that the privilege of being admitted to one of the hospitals was an unalloyed blessing. The only attendants were convicts, usually those unable to do heavy labour and the surgeons do not seem to have been the finer examples of their profession. Luttrell's administration of the Hobart hospital was the subject of severe strictures from Lieutenant-Governor Sorell. He wrote in 1818 -

I am under the necessity of calling your attention to the present situation of the Hospital, and some of the Patients, which altogether appears to require very great alteration and reform.

One of the patients "Jones", who I understand to be in the last stage of debility, has absented himself from the Hospital and represents himself to have been without sustenance; upon learning which circumstance, and the very miserable condition of the man, I sent for the Superintendent; and certainly from his answer to my enquiries, there appears to me to be a total want of that system and arrangement in an Hospital, which ought and must be established.

From the Superintendent's answers as to the mode in which the man Jones and other patients are dieted, it appears that no soup is made, that the meat is cooked as chance allows without any general arrangement and that the tea is weighed out individually to the people. (17)

Sorell also complained that if tea, sugar and wine were given to the patients on a weekly basis, which appeared to be the practice, it was almost inevitable that it should be stolen, bartered or at the least consumed (in the case of wine) all at one time. (18)

(16) J.T. Bigge - op.cit. p. 104.

(17) H.R.A./111/2/664-5.

(18) Ibid p. 666.

A year later the Lieutenant-Governor was complaining that he had found the hospital short of bedding because of Luttrell's failure to order supplies from the store. (19)

Complaints about his medical abilities were aired before Bigge in 1820 when Dr. Scott R.N. (later to take over the running of the hospital and to prove more efficient than his predecessor) reported being called into the hospital in the absence of the usual staff to see a patient with a compound fracture. He said "I found him complaining of considerable uneasiness apparently proceeding from the neglected state of his leg and I saw several nests of maggots behind the skin and the bandages and dressing around the leg. I think that it had not been dressed for 5 or 6 days." Taxed with this Luttrell apparently replied "that he did not think dressing was necessary as amputation would be required." (20)

No such detailed information is available about the other two hospitals, but it would probably be optimistic to think they were a great deal better. Even given the normal medical standards of the day, the quality of the service offered does not appear to have been high.

Apart from hospital care there were few other facilities available. In 1819 a room was hired for the aged and chronic sick to ease pressure on hospital accommodation, but Sorell ordered that "It is to be understood that the Invalids must do without any attendance and Mr. Luttrell will direct such arrange-

(19) Ibid. p. 748.

(20) H.R.A. 111/3/502.

ments as he judges best for their issue of provisions, bedding etc." (21) Later on Sorell tried to make some arrangements for medical attendance in the interior. He told Arthur in 1824, "In order to provide medical aid in the Districts, I authorised an allowance of three shillings per day to some Medical Persons who were induced to fix their residence in situations which were before destitute of Professional aid and who are bound to take charge of all Prisoners of the Crown in their Districts." (22) These "supernumary colonial surgeons" were also issued with medicines from the hospital and served the local settlers as well as the convicts. No provision at all was made for the mentally ill. If they could not be managed at home the only other course was to send them to Sydney where a Lunatic Asylum was established. Davey sent a 'poor lunatic' over in 1813 (23) and Bigge pursuing his enquiries in 1820 was told by A.W.H. Humphrey, the Magistrate in Hobart that "lunatics are sent to the Asylum in New South Wales." (24)

Another early priority was feeding the destitute, and for this the principal instrument was the government store. During the early years of the colony the distinction between the destitute and the settlers was hardly noticeable. Periods of famine, the influx of the Norfolk Island settlers who were entitled to extra concessions, the need to feed the convicts, the military and the public functionaries all combined to produce a situation where

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- (21) H.R.A. 111/2/754.
(22) H.R.A. 111/4/153.
(23) H.R.A. 111/2/39.
(24) H.R.A. 111/3/287.

more people were on than off the stores. In 1814 of 1898 persons in the colony (including 1399 free persons) only 761 were off the store. (25) As the colony became more stable a separate category of 'objects of charity' became defined and the period of rationing for new settlers was progressively reduced. Sorell in 1820 still saw it as a necessary service and one for which he took personal responsibility. (26) Of the 153 persons on charitable rations and occasional supplies of clothing in 1820, 60 were free and the remainder convicts or ticket of leave men. They included the aged, the infirm and incapacitated and others who could not work for their own support. Among the free were persons described as "either superannuated functionaries or settlers of the lower class, who have been in the Colonies from the earliest period, many of them having been removed from Norfolk Island at its evacuation." (27)

Free applicants had to be certified as in need and recommended by a magistrate and convicts certified by a doctor as unfit to work. Bigge who scrutinised the list in 1820 because the Home Government was concerned at the numbers dependant on rations, conceded that Sorell was justified in most cases, but that in a few instances the grant "had exceeded the grounds of positive necessity." Future claims were to be scrutinised closely so that the system should not be "converted into a resource against the consequences of idleness and dissipation." (28) As a system of

(25) H.R.A. 111/2/75.

(26) H.R.A. 111/3/148.

(27) Ibid p. 676.

(28) J. T. Bigge - op.cit. p.82-3.

outdoor relief it seems to have been flexible and within the context of the period, satisfactory and enabled the community to carry its poor without isolating or shaming them.

Finally, what happened to the young in this period? Bateson, in his study The Convict Ships (29) says that from 1812 - 1817, 349 convicts of 17 years or under were transported to Australia including 5 boys aged 11, 6 boys and 1 girl aged 12 and 19 boys and 1 girl aged 13. Unfortunately he does not give separate figures for Van Diemen's Land, but a proportion of the boys at least reached that colony. If there were any girls they were almost certainly assigned to domestic service since at the age of 12 and upwards they would have been regarded in England as old enough for employment. Bigge asked in 1820 what means there was of disposing of boys when they arrived and was told by Major Bell in charge of government works "None in particular. When a settler applies for three good farming men, a boy is usually given to take care of his stock. This is considered as a favour done to Government, as they are generally of a bad class of trained thieves. I have some few learning trades such as stone-cutting and brick-laying but I am not sanguine of success and I have frequent complaints of their idleness and misconduct." (30) Bigge in Sydney recommended separate accommodation for boy convicts but made no specific suggestions for Van Diemen's Land, possibly because the number involved was too small at that time for special provision.

(29) C. Bateson. The Convict Ships 1787 - 1868 (Glasgow 1959) .

p. 65.
(30) H.R.A. 111/3/237.

It is difficult to find any evidence of what happened to orphan and destitute children. In the early days of the colony when the population was so small that a village-like atmosphere could still obtain, it is possible that orphaned children were taken in by friends, as Robert Knopwood took the illegitimate child of a dead convict woman in 1808 and brought her up. The system of charitable rations possibly helped some families without a breadwinner and there may have been a special fund for orphans. Knopwood in his diary mentions as the penalty for breaches of the 1815 licencing regulations "Forfeit of licence and recognisance, the latter to informer and £5 to orphans." (31) There was certainly no specific building to house them until 1828. Macquarie visiting the colony in 1811 and 1821 makes no mention of provision for orphans and it was left to Sorell to raise the matter in 1823 when he wrote to the Colonial Office in England saying "The circumstances of the Colony with respect to its Youth render it necessary at the earliest possible moment to arrange an Establishment capable of receiving orphan children and children of such as from their remoteness of residence from the District Schools cannot provide for their instruction." (32) Clearly by now the problem had become a pressing one and Sorell hoped to open his orphan school in 15 months time. By that time he was gone from Van Diemen's Land and his successor Arthur in the throes of reviewing his new charge.

(31) M. Hookey. Bobby Knopwood and his Times. (Hobart 1929)
p. 82.

(32) H.R.A. 111/4/75.

So far the pattern of services resembled closely the development in the New South Wales Colony of which Van Diemen's Land was a dependency, partly because Van Diemen's Land took its directions from the senior colony and partly because the same type of conditions prevailed in the early days of both colonies. In 1825 Van Diemen's Land was separated from New South Wales and from this time on the development of the two colonies' social services begins to diverge, slightly at first but more markedly as the century progressed.

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS, 1824 - 1836.

Arthur took office as Lieutenant-Governor in 1824. Towards the end of the following year, Van Diemen's Land attained its independence from New South Wales and its Lieutenant-Governor hence forward was responsible direct to the Secretary of State in London. Developments in New South Wales did not cease to have their influence on Van Diemen's Land, since the Home Government's decisions on policy, expenditure or staffing levels for the smaller colony were often based on rulings already made for New South Wales but there was now room for a more individual policy based on the particular needs of Van Diemen's Land. The period of Arthur's rule ⁽³³⁾ has been the subject of varied judgements from denunciation to apologia, but whatever his faults or strengths in other spheres, there can be no doubt of his importance in the history of the social services. In his time, the basic pattern of Tasmanian services was set and not only remained in force

(33) George Arthur 1824 - 1836.

(except for changes in detail) for the rest of the Imperial period, but exercised a considerable influence in the remainder of the century.

Arthur began his period of office with an accumulation of problems left by his predecessor. The lack of provision for orphans and deserted children had been a matter for concern for some time and the state of the hospitals left little cause for satisfaction, and now housed also the mentally ill who could no longer be sent to New South Wales. Such services as existed while tolerable (though barely so) for a population of 15,000, could not stand up to the strain of the rapid population increase of the next twelve years. By 1836, the population had reached over 45,000, trebling potential demand on the services. Some of the increase represented greater numbers (and size) of normal family units who might ordinarily be expected to require only medical and hospital services, but a considerable proportion of the population were likely to present problems at some time or another in their lives. Over 15,000 convicts, male and female were added to the population during the Arthur period ⁽³⁴⁾ and Hartwell calculates that in 1835 convicts still made up 42% of the population. ⁽³⁵⁾ Of these over 2,000 were women, many of whom either brought children with them or subsequently bore children for whom they could not care while they were in servitude. The number of boy convicts also increased markedly. At the

(34) L.L. Robson. The Convict Settlers of Australia (Melbourne 1965) P. 171.

(35) Hartwell - op. cit. p.68.

other end of the age scale, many of the early convicts were now aged and infirm and among the newly arrived convicts were older men and women who could not stand up to the heavy labour and harsh conditions which were so often part of the convict's life. We can add to these the unwise importation of commuted pensioners, old soldiers who exchanged their pensions for land in Van Diemen's Land and finding themselves without the strength or ability to bring it into use, rapidly became dependent on charitable aid. Finally the influx of poor immigrants, many shipped overseas by poor law authorities in England trying to relieve the burden on the rates, and arriving without means of support or savings to fall back on in time of difficulty and of a mixed bag of single female immigrants, the decent girl mixed in with the amateur and professional prostitute, went to complete the tally of a potential problem population.

The whole population was likely to suffer from the typical problems of the emigrant, a sense of rootlessness, of the loss of old standards and values, feelings of insecurity and the lack of an extended family network to assist in old age, in times of temporary difficulty or on the loss of the breadwinner so that there would be a greater tendency towards dependence on outside assistance than might be expected in a more settled country. The island's economy too was in a shaky condition and though large scale unemployment was never a problem, periodic pockets of unemployment were inevitable and fluctuations in the prices of staple items of diet not accompanied by comparable wage increases

inevitably created distress among the poor.

Theories about the causes of poverty and need and the correct way of dealing with the result, did not develop much in Van Diemen's Land during these years. The bulk of the population was either indifferent or too busy struggling to establish themselves to concern themselves with more than their immediate neighbour at most. Those few who were concerned, and they were very few, were for the period surprisingly tolerant. The existence of distress among the free population was generally attributed to prevailing economic difficulties rather than to the natural unworthiness of the sufferer. True, they said, there were imposters and others who wasted their means on drink, but in the main the poor were genuinely in need and should be aided. Now and then some expressed a fear that too much assistance might create dependence but they were given little credence. Only the vexed subject of pauper immigration roused hostility to the poor. The fear was expressed by an Immigration Committee in 1831 that approval of a plan to allow poor law authorities to send out poor labourers and their families would lead to the selection of habitual paupers "the most profligate, idle and worthless men and women too, who have every species of vice coupled with vagrancy inherent in their dispositions." (36) In spite of this the scheme proceeded and in 1834 the Colonial Times referred to the colony as "all at once inundated with the refuse of work houses

(36) C.S.O/1/11502.

and the sweepings of St. Giles and Whitechapel" (37) an exaggerated statement but indicative of the feelings aroused by this policy. But sometimes by implication and sometimes by direct statement, the colony's poor, particularly those who had been in the colony since the early days and had helped to build it up to its present stage, were regarded as a different and superior group not tarred with the same brush or worthlessness. Even the poor ex-convict came in for little criticism, possibly because he too had served the colony in his own way. In contrast to the general indifference, concern was expressed for children in need as part of "the rising generation" (a commonly used phrase in both colonies in Australia) who must be educated and cared for as the future hope of the colony and newspapers which paid little attention to other needs of the poor pressed for the opening of orphan schools on this basis. "Surely", says the Colonial Times 1827 "our young Tasmanians are worth cherishing in their early days, when in helpless infancy they are bereaved of their parents." (38)

Attitudes towards the poor then were not yet characterised by the harshness and the moralistic approach of later years, but the result of this was rather a negative lack of objection to assistance being given, than a positive activity to aid the sufferers. This passive indifference was one of several reasons for the failure of the voluntary movement to thrive. In New

(37) Colonial Times, 14 October, 1834.

(38) Ibid, 12 January, 1827.

South Wales, it was already developing quite a strong hold on the social services. The Sydney Benevolent Society not only took a leading role in outdoor relief but in 1820 opened a Benevolent Asylum which catered for the aged and infirm, deserted wives and children, pregnant girls and old prostitutes. From then until 1862 when the state took over, the society was the principle provider of indoor relief for the aged and infirm and it remained the main providers of outdoor relief until almost the end of the century. In the hospital services also the voluntary agencies took a leading role, running not only many small country units but also the major city hospital. In 1826 the south wing of the government hospital was handed over to a voluntary committee and by 1848 the government had almost moved out of the hospital services leaving the voluntary run Sydney Infirmary to dominate the field. Only in child care did the New South Wales government retain a strong hold and even then gave considerable power to the voluntary committees of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Asylums. It was probably expected that Van Diemen's Land, with its similar background, would develop a similar pattern of services. On the contrary, during the next 30 odd years, the principal social services were wholly government provided and the voluntary movement never really got off the ground.

The differences in population and wealth between the two states would partly account for the deviation. In Van Diemen's Land far less money and far fewer people were available to back voluntary agencies and the churches were still struggling and to a

very great extent dependent on government finance. But this does not seem sufficient explanation in itself. The two important factors seem to have been Arthur himself and public indifference.

Arthur was no great social reformer nor was he a passionate advocate of the rights of the underprivileged. As far as he has expressed himself on these points he seems to have accepted the outlook of his times. Two aspects of his character seem to have led him into this field, first his strong views on the central role of a governor in a penal colony which led him to assume government responsibility not only for the convicts services which were his special function, but for free colonists as well and second his compassion for the young and the needy which is often expressed in his minutes and his dispatches. There were a number of serious problems to be dealt with and both as an administrator and as a basically humane man (probably stemming from his christian principles) he saw them as his responsibility. There is little or nothing to show he seriously considered any other alternative to government action. He saw a problem, or had it brought to his attention, he set up a board to study it or took the nearest available expert advice and then acted on the recommendations he received. Whether, had he not taken government action, some other agency would have felt compelled to do so, is a matter for speculation, but in view of the failure of non-government agencies to fill successfully such gaps as were left, it seems unlikely. The colonists were prepared to accept Arthur's decision to provide for the convict sick, aged and infirm from Imperial funds and extend

the services to the free colonist where necessary. They were equally prepared to leave the care of orphan and deserted children to government action, though this time from Colonial funds. As far as can be ascertained no-one in the community suggested any alternative form of provision was desirable.

This is not to say there was no voluntary activity. Attempts were made to fill the one serious gap in Arthur's services, outdoor relief in times of temporary distress. Very little information is available on the early voluntary agencies. The Almanacks tell us they existed in certain years and occasional newspaper comments and reports add a little information. Leaving aside the Van Diemen's Land St. Andrews Club established in 1826 which blended social activities, scottish nationalism and charitable aid, probably to Scots in need, the four main agencies of the period were the Benevolent and Strangers Friend Society established in Hobart by the Weslyans in 1829 to relieve "the distressed of all denominations" (39) the Maternal and Dorcas Society (established in 1835) who primarily assisted poor married women at the time of their confinements, and the Hobart and the Launceston Benevolent Societies. The cause of the demise of the Benevolent and Strangers Friend Society is not known, possibly it decided to amalgamate with the Benevolent Society in Hobart, but the latter society and its Launceston equivalent almost certainly perished for want of funds.

The Benevolent Society of Hobart founded in 1832 had all the

(39) Van Diemen's Land Annual 1831. Tasmanian State Archives
T.C. 919.46

components of a potentially successful organisation. It was multi-denominational and could therefore hope to draw on a good deal of personal and financial support from the various congregations. Among its 12 vice presidents it included a number of the leading citizens of the town. The Patron and Patroness were Governor and Mrs. Arthur, thus adding that social caché which was considered an important factor elsewhere. Yet it survived at the most seven years, two years longer than the Launceston Society founded in 1834, with much the same make up. Throughout those years both societies were in constant financial difficulties having completely failed to break down public indifference. In spite of frequent newspaper statements about the well known generosity of the colonists, appeals for funds brought little response.

The following advertisement headed "Launceston Benevolent Society" which appeared three times on the Launceston Advertiser in September 1836, illustrates the troubles of that society.

The Committee of the Launceston Benevolent Society in consequence of the increase of necessitous cases requiring assistance, and the impoverished state of the society's finances, are compelled to appeal to the charitable feelings of the community.

The Society first commenced its operations in October 1834, ably assisted by the medical gentlemen of the town, who proffered their gratuitous services to the society, and has received, during a period of nearly two years, subscriptions amounting only to about £30. The expenses of relief afforded having been defrayed, for the most part, by extraordinary resources not likely again to exist, namely donations from individuals amounting to about £50 and £30 remaining unappropriated of the funds collected for the relief of sufferers by the loss of the 'Hibernia.'

In the promotion of the objects of the society, the Treasurer is already considerably in advance; and unless liberal assistance be rendered by the public, it will be impossible to carry out any further the great and useful objects which the society was founded to accomplish. The Committee therefore respectfully invite subscriptions and donations. (40)

Two months later at the annual meeting the society reported it was in debt to the tune of £163.11.6 and for some time after it was endeavouring to raise this sum. (41) A group of determined men, the Committee staggered on another 12 months and in December 1837 it was again in debt for £90. (42) Early the following year the committee gave it best and the society faded out. The Hobart Benevolent Society suffered similar difficulties.

In New South Wales the gap between expenditure and voluntary income was met by government subsidy. Elizabeth Govan estimates that from 1836 onwards over 78% of the Sydney Benevolent Society's income came from government subsidies with a lower figure for the earlier period (43) in what was a deliberate attempt by the government to encourage private philanthropy. Arthur on the other hand, while taking an interest in local societies and subscribing from his personal income, declined to subsidise the Benevolent Society of Hobart except when they were acting as government agents in assisting pauper immigrants.

In reply to a request for government assistance in 1836 he stated: "Except under circumstances of peculiar emergency, or

(40) Launceston Advertiser 1 September, 1836.

(41) Ibid. 17 November, 1836.

(42) Ibid. 28 December, 1837.

(43) Elizabeth S.L. Govan. Public & Private Responsibility in Child Welfare in New South Wales, 1788-1887. Ph.D. Thesis (unpublished) University of Chicago 1954 available in Fisher Library, University of Sydney.

otherwise of a specific nature, it is, I conceive better that such an Institution should be supported by private benevolence or at least that these should be clearly shown to be insufficient before the aid of the government is required." (44) He agreed to pay £60 to meet the outstanding debts but no more.

Without government aid and dependent for their funds on the generosity of a comparatively small group, the voluntary societies had little chance of succeeding. Only the Dorcas Society survived the 30's and proved to be the grandmother of them all. Possibly the gentlemen running the other societies thought it beneath their dignity to solicit subscriptions personally. The ladies had no such qualms and while the results of their badgering did not provide a large income, by limiting the scope of their operations, they kept going for over 100 years.

The societies concentrated mainly on the field of temporary relief, never having sufficient funds to consider any expansion. The Launceston Benevolent Society in its few years of operation did run a small refuge for the sick poor (for up to 16 patients) but nothing more ambitious was attempted. One private individual, Dr. W. Crowther, attempted in 1832 to set up an organisation known as "The Hobart Town General Dispensary and Sick Poor Friends Society." In an advertisement in the Colonial Times in November 1832, he said he had been "impressed from his own observation with the very great difficulty the sick poor experienced in obtaining advice and medicine during their illness", and having observed the great antipathy the working classes had to the colonial

(44) C.S.O/1/18278.

hospital he invited them instead to support his Dispensary. For 3/- each month, the working man could secure medicines and medical attention for himself and his family and for one guinea each year the richer citizen could have the privilege of recommending three poor patients a year for treatment. It was designed, it was claimed, to enable the industrious poor to be independent during sickness and to allow the rich to assist their poorer fellow colonists. (45) Neither the poor nor the rich gave the venture adequate support and the project languished for want of funds and finally closed down in 1837.

One role successfully played by voluntary groups was as assistants in government functions. A voluntary committee of gentlemen ran the King's Orphan Schools from 1828 onwards and several temporary Ladies' Committees functioned in both the orphan schools and in aiding the settlement of shiploads of female immigrants. Arthur also used the Hobart Benevolent Society as an agent to disburse funds to pauper immigrants on first arrival. This blending of government and voluntary functions was to become very common practice later in the century and worked quite well in the Arthur period.

Arthur's own attempt to establish effective services were handicapped in a number of ways. Financial problems did not yet play a dominant role except that the Imperial government always stressed the need for minimum expenditure, rather than sufficient to do the job properly. The position was eased in one way by

(45) Colonial Times, 13 November, 1832.

the use of convict labour which markedly reduced costs, but the penalty of this was dependence on a group of men who had no personal incentive to see the job well or quickly done and on the availability at any one time among the government gangs of men with the required skills. Work was frequently held up due to shortages of a particular type of skilled worker (masons or carpenters and the like) and one project at least was subject to a 'go slow' campaign by the convicts who resented having their rations cut. The end result was that buildings progressed at a painfully slow pace. The King's Orphan Schools, from the decision to build to the date of occupation took almost four years to complete in spite of periodic descents on the site by Arthur and a series of irascible memoranda to Lee Archer who was in charge. The New Norfolk Hospital works went rather faster the hospital being ready for operation, though not completed, in 12 - 18 months. The extensions to the Colonial Hospital, Hobart were so slow that Arthur was moved to a memorandum in 1829 saying, "Be so good as to inform the Engineer that the additions to the Hospital which have been so tediously carrying on for so many months are most urgently required." (46)

Since a decision to build was not usually taken until the situation was desperate and since the demand continued to grow while the building was being erected, few of the buildings were adequate by the time they were finished and problems remained as pressing as ever. A board on the Colonial Hospital Hobart in

1831 commenting on the state of the hospital then in comparison with 1827 said "some paltry [additions] have since been made, but they have not been by any means in proportion to the increased population and number of convicts in the Colony," and further additions were imperative. (47) This was the experience of most of the services so that run as they might they barely succeeded in keeping in the same place.

Staffing continued to be a problem in the medical services and also in the orphan schools. Dr. Scott at the Colonial Hospital, Hobart and Dr. Officer at New Norfolk both did a reasonably competent job as far as the facilities allowed them to do so but for lesser staff they were principally dependent on convicts whose competence was patchy to say the least and cleanliness was never a notable characteristic of any of the hospitals. On convict attendants the 1831 board wrote "When convicts have been employed in this situation at Launceston and New Norfolk, (48) irregularity and peculation have been the invariable consequences." The Port Arthur hospital had no doctor, but only a convict orderly who was described as "quite incompetent." (49) The staff difficulties at the King's orphan schools will be described later.

In spite of all the problems, the services moved forward in the Arthur period. Hospital services were developed, special provision was made for the mentally ill, indoor and outdoor relief services of a sort provided for the aged and infirm and for

(47) C.S.O/1/13172.

(48) Ibid.

(49) Ibid.

fatherless families and an institution opened for orphan and destitute children.

The new hospital begun at Hobart by Sorell in 1820 was already inadequate by 1826 and a board that year urged extensions, separate accommodation for the mentally ill and the removal of the disabled and the chronic sick elsewhere since they tended to clog up the hospital. (50) The extensions made and the removal of some of the invalids, as well as the development of other centres eased the problem for a time but demand still outran supply.

The situation was surveyed more thoroughly in 1831 when a board reported there were hospitals at Hobart, New Norfolk, Launceston, Port Arthur, Bothwell, Jericho, Georgetown, Richmond, Campbell Town, Norfolk Plains, Waterloo Point, Macquarie Harbour and Maria Island. With the exception of the first four, these hospitals were usually small huts, or single rooms attached to the gaol and intended to serve the local convicts to save transporting them to the larger centres. Georgetown Hospital was still "a miserable little building in bad repair, containing about eight patients" and was only maintained because of the remoteness of the Station." (51) At Port Arthur, a growing penal station, there was still only a small unit but it was already clear that more accommodation would be needed.

Of the principal hospitals, only New Norfolk stood up to scrutiny. The Colonial Hospital, Hobart though on a good site, was far too small. The board reported "On entering the Hospital,

(50) C.S.O/1/1273.

(51) C.S.O/1/13172.

it has a crowded and dirty appearance, the beds are too close together and there is no attention to classification of disease." There was an average daily number of 92 patients and room only for 67 "the overplus of 25 have slept on the floor, or in fact wherever they could find room to lie down." (52) The lunatics' quarters were "small, confined and insecure" and they were ill cared for. The board commented "these ... unfortunate creatures have now become a public nuisance from the manner in which they are allowed to roam at large, in many instances indecently exposing themselves in the streets - an occurrence of this kind took place lately in the presence of one of the Members of the Board." (53) The board recommended additions to bring the available accommodation up to 100 beds and suggested the removal of the lunatics to New Norfolk to ease the pressure further. Some additions were made following this bringing the accommodation up to 80 beds which was of course still inadequate.

The hospital at Launceston was "a small weather boarded building capable of holding 20 male patients and only 2 female patients ... the hospital is totally inadequate for the purpose, is much too small and its situation highly objectionable" (54) the last referring to its position in the yard of the military barracks. A new hospital was recommended for 40 male and 20 female patients. Five years later a hotel was rented by the government and fitted up as a hospital to hold 110 patients and

(52) Ibid.
(53) Ibid.
(54) Ibid.

for the time being this satisfied demand.

The New Norfolk Hospital was primarily an Invalid depot, but had a hospital section which was to serve the invalids during periods of acute sickness and to provide for the needs of the surrounding district. A wing for lunatics was completed in 1833 capable of accommodating 40 patients of each sex. The whole hospital was crowded within a few years and in 1836 Dr. Officer wrote in a worried fashion about the lunatics. "These unfortunate people are all crowded and mixed together without the least regard to the nature of their malady, or their varied constitution of mind and I need not say that under such circumstances, the chances of recovery is greatly lessened." (55) Already long term patients were beginning to accumulate and while treatment was kindly enough, the hospital offered little more than custodial care.

Overall the quality of the hospital service offered was probably a little better than in the earlier period. The doctors seem to have been fairly conscientious but between overcrowding, no classification of illness, few facilities for isolation of infections and the low quality of the nursing, the patients were probably lucky to survive if there was anything seriously wrong with them. Still the hospitals escaped major scandals and in view of problems experienced elsewhere this must have been a relief to the authorities.

The hospitals were of course principally intended for convicts in government service. Assigned convicts were intended to be the responsibility of their masters and they were to pay an overall

rate of 5/- per year for in-patient and out-patient treatment for their servants, or alternatively 1/- per day for actual treatment. This was all too rarely paid and difficult to enforce. Until 1831 free patients were treated for 3/- per day and these too paid irregularly so that many hundreds of pounds of arrears accrued over the whole colony. The charge was reduced to 2/- per day in 1831 with instructions that it was to be rigidly enforced. The latter proved to be wishful thinking and debts continued to accumulate. Free paupers were to be admitted without charge, if the doctor certified their admission was essential and if a clergyman or magistrate certified they were objects of charity. A certificate of destitution was also required for free medicines in the out-patient department. In 1836 this was tightened up further and the Colonial Secretary's approval was required for free admission and he was to require proof of "extreme poverty" (56) but always the doors were to remain open to the poor and immediate admission could be authorised by the doctor in cases of accident or critical illness.

Arthur gave his attention in 1827 to the condition of the aged and the chronic sick. In a memo to the Colonial Secretary in April of that year he writes, "I have reason to think that the Invalids supported by the Crown have very little care taken of them and it is necessary that the establishment should be put on a better footing." (57) Later he instructed that the "miserable house" hired by the Crown at Hobart Town was to be given up and the invalids transferred to the Barracks at New Norfolk under the

(56) C.S.O/1/7838.

(57) C.S.O/1/7838.

charge of Dr. Robert Officer. In fact they went from one miserable situation to another. Dr. Officer wrote to the government in November 1828 complaining of their housing.

The prevailing diseases in this establishment consist of rheumatism, paralysis, affections of the eyes and joints and I need not say how absolutely necessary a comfortable habitation is for such cases. Many of them have been greatly aggravated by the wretched condition of the hovels they inhabit ... The Barrack as you know consists of two apartments, which during rain are inundated both from above and below, in which cooking, washing and all other necessary operations are performed in which the patients are huddled together. (58)

The new hospital was begun in 1830 and occupied during 1831. By 1833 the hospital was finished and capable of holding 110 male and 20 female sick and invalid as well as some mentally ill patients.

Physically the new arrangement was a great improvement on the old rather haphazard methods. Old people who were without a family and unable to work due to age and general infirmity, as well as some younger handicapped people, were now assured of reasonable accommodation, regular food and basic medical care. An early problem was the effect on the inmates of the lack of any occupation, for persons who were decrepit rather than totally helpless. Some of the men hired themselves out for odd jobs around the township and unfortunately used the proceeds to get drunk and attract notice to themselves. There were of course some jobs to do around the hospital, but in general the invalids loafed the day away and in the process probably brought on an

(58) Ibid.

earlier onset of senility. Discharges to other forms of care were not frequent and the numbers requiring admission tended to grow so that as a custodial institution with death as the principle creator of vacancies, the hospital was soon full and by 1836 was quite seriously overcrowded.

Comparatively little in the way of alternatives to institutional care was offered. The practice of issuing rations from the store as a form of outdoor relief was not stopped completely, but there seems to have been a strong move towards indoor care as the principle form of government relief with rations being used mainly as a temporary measure pending admission to the hospital. Many of the men were convicts undergoing their period of servitude for whom some form of custody had to be provided, others were friendless and without relatives in the Colony and for these the security offered by the hospital was the appropriate form of care, but doubtless there were cases of men and women who could have managed longer in the community if outdoor relief had been offered. How far this move towards indoor relief as the major form of assistance was influenced by developments in the poor law field in England is difficult to say. Certainly the Home Government discouraged the extension of the ration system but otherwise Arthur seems to have acted on his own initiative. One suspects that having been forced by the penal system to provide custodial care for convicts, Arthur's tidy mind found it simpler to use one centralised system for all. Later this administrative convenience was to become a fixed policy. The same move towards

indoor relief was to be found in the provision for the fatherless family. This time relief took the form of offering admission to the King's Orphan Schools to some of the children of a large family to enable the mother to work and support the remainder of the children. With the general shortage of women in the Colony, work as domestic servants, laundresses, and needlewomen was usually available and though not sufficiently well paid to support a large family, a woman with one or two children could probably get by.

There were of course those who preferred not to part with their children, or their personal independence by accepting indoor relief and there were others in temporary trouble due to unemployment or short term sickness. For these there was no government provision and it was this gap that the voluntary agencies attempted to fill. That the need was there was undoubted. The Launceston Benevolent Society told the public in 1836,

Your Committee cannot but congratulate themselves on the existence of a Society, the want of which they are confident would have left fifty individuals to the prospect of starvation and lingering death. The majority of the number assisted by your Committee were objects in the last stage of destitution and disease, such as individuals who have not been eye witnesses could hardly reconcile with appearance of surrounding prosperity and industry among the lower orders. (59)

The Hobart Benevolent Society also spoke of those who were "literally starving" and of the daily increase of beggars in the street. (60) Starvation too faced the pauper emigrants on their first arrival in the colony. After six months or more at sea, even those families which had left England with a little in hand were penniless and unless work and money could be found immediately,

(59) Annual Report for 1835, Tasmanian State Archives T.C.p.361.06
(60) Colonial Times, 14 October, 1834.

they were in a very unhappy situation. The "Strathfieldsaye", the "Thomas" and the "Eliza" all arrived in 1833 with destitute families on board. About the "Eliza" families Arthur wrote, "Many I am distressed to learn are in the most distressing condition being actually without the means of providing food for their large families." (61)

The scale of operation of the voluntary agencies was small and restricted in the main to the two large towns Hobart and Launceston. The usual practice was to appoint a committee and divide the town into districts each of which was to have one or two visitors, an idea probably inherited from similar societies in England. The Benevolent and Strangers Friend Society invited citizens to refer cases of distress to Mr. Mather, Mr. Barrett, Mr. Watchorn or Mr. Dunn who would forward the names to the appropriate visitor. Relief was to be given only at the dwellings of the applicants presumably to enable the visitors to check on the truth of their story.⁽⁶²⁾ The Dorcas Society seems to have used similar methods. The Hobart and Launceston Benevolent Societies did not specify their way of working but almost certainly attempted some sort of investigation to separate the sheep from the goats, though on what basis is not known. Early forms of relief seem to have been the distribution of small sums of money but there was some move towards relief in the form of food in the middle 30's. The Hobart Benevolent Society accounting for its

(61) C.S.O/1/14814.

(62) Colonial Times, 20 November, 1829.

year's expenditure in 1834 lists the disbursement of £86.1.6 in 201 small sums and £30 worth of food distributed. (63) In the same year the Launceston Benevolent Society spent £80 on 46 cases, apparently giving relief on a more generous scale. (64) The following year they spent £163.11.6 on 50 cases but this included the expense of their house for the destitute sick. (65) The government supplied money to the Benevolent Society to help the newly arrived pauper immigrants with food and small sums of money. About £100 was distributed in this way during 1833. (66) The Dorcas Society besides helping married women in confinements, contributed its mite to general relief - 2/- per week for three months to Widow Smith, 2/- worth of bread per week for two families for one month, £1 to William Parrish to bury his child, are typical entries for 1836. (67)

How far this limited assistance both in scope and in amount met the needs of the poor of Hobart and Launceston between 1829 and 1836, (when it was available), is difficult to say. It seems that mere hardship was not sufficient to qualify for assistance, only the direst poverty, and many of the poor must have been forced to sell what little they had and so struggle through hard times without outside assistance and without even the workhouse to fall back on.

For many children too this was a time of hardship. Prior to the opening of the King's Orphan Schools numbers of children

(63) Ibid. 14 October, 1834.

(64) Launceston Advertiser, 8 October, 1835.

(65) Annual Report for 1835 op. cit.

(66) C.S.O/1/14814.

(67) Dorcas Society Minutes for 1836 (Royal Society of Tasmania).

were in dire straits. Following advice from Archdeacon Scott on his visit to Van Diemen's Land in 1826 on the need for assistance for destitute and orphan children,⁽⁶⁸⁾ Arthur undertook a survey of the probable demands on an orphan school. Circularising ministers of religion and local magistrates he asked for particulars of children in their area under three heads -

- (1) Children entirely destitute,
- (2) Those living in danger of vice from the example of their parents, and
- (3) Those requiring aid from distress or from being of large families and their parents unable to support them.⁽⁶⁹⁾

He received in return a list of over 100 children most of them in immediate need. Among them were three children "entirely destitute, their Father and Mother being in Hobart Town Jail"; two illegitimate children whose stepfather treated them with great cruelty; two children whose father was under sentence of death and who were "in danger of vice from their mother's bad example"; and three children nearly destitute "from the idleness and bad habits of their father."⁽⁷⁰⁾ Some of the children were put on rations as a temporary measure but most had to wait two more years before any help could be offered.

Another group of children in the Female Factory with their mothers were living in 4 small rooms attached to the gaol in sight of the execution yard which was in all too regular use.

(68) H.R.A. 111/4/162.

(69) C.S.O/1/3073.

(70) Ibid.

109 women and children were crowded into these rooms "old and young, the totally incorrigible and the less hardened convicts."⁽⁷¹⁾ A Committee investigating the conditions in 1826 at Arthur's request expressed concern for the children who were in danger "Apparent and unavoidable of becoming morally destroyed through the force of their parents bad example or associations with other less virtuous children or young girls of rootedly depraved habits." ⁽⁷²⁾ Another 31 women and 8 children were in the Georgetown female factory in 1829 in a cold damp building of which all the windows were broken.⁽⁷³⁾

The boy convicts aged 9 - 16 housed in the convict barracks in Hobart with men who were frequently those too hardened in crime to be considered for assignment, were also regarded as in danger of contamination and others sent out on assignment faced a dubious future if they were given to a bad master.

Arthur tackled all these problems between 1827 and 1834 with a good deal of energy but with varying success. In 1827 Lowe's Distillery at Cascades was purchased and converted into a female factory with a hospital unit and nursery. In the light of the next 70 years experience it was an unfortunate purchase, the site and building being wholly unsuitable for the many and varied uses to which it was put. For the time being it was an improvement on the old premises but as the numbers built up, so did the problems. In August, 1829 one of the first complaints

(71) C.S.O/1/6.

(72) Ibid,

(73) C.S.O/1/340.

about the site appeared in a letter to the Colonial Times describing it as "always cold and damp, in fact the sun seldom shines on it." (74) Concern was already being expressed about the number of deaths among the children. The worst years were 1833 when 40 died out of 108 children who passed through that year and in 1834 when 38 died out of 90. The best year was 1836 when a mere 13 out of 90 died. The deaths were attributed to bad feeding, bad nursing and confinement to one spot. (75) If the children survived long enough they were transferred to the Orphan Schools at the age of 3 years (76) after which their chances of living were greatly improved, away from the damp depressing Cascades building and the dubious care of the convict nurses.

Other older children were also part of the penal system. Boy convicts, ranging in age from 9 - 17 were being sent in increasing numbers to Van Diemen's Land during the Arthur period. Forty boys arrived in the "Asia" in December 1827 among 198 convicts on board. They were described by Arthur in a despatch to Goderich as mostly "entirely useless, and generally so mischievous are these corrupt little rogues that they are the dread of every family." (77) For a time Arthur followed Sorell's policy of assigning the boys, in some cases holding them at Ross pending placement, but by 1833 the increased numbers had defeated the Assignment Board's efforts to find places for them. In a

(74) Colonial Times, 7 August, 1829.

(75) C.S.O/5/2605.

(76) C.S.O/1/19161.

(77) H.R.A./111/6/370.

Report to Arthur which was presented to the Executive Council on 25th November, 1833 the Board drew attention to 60 boys in the Prisoners Barracks at Hobart who could not be assigned and whose labour could not be turned to the advantage of the government.

The Minute goes on,

They begged also to bring under his Excellency's notice, the evils resulting from allowing these boys to congregate in the Barracks with so great a number of men without classification and the means of taking any steps towards their instruction or reformation.

They therefore suggested the propriety and advantage of sending these boys and any others who might arrive to that part of the Tasman Peninsula called Slopem Main, where the government already possessed some buildings, more particularly a barn which might at very little expense converted into a Barrack. (78)

The suggestion was not greeted with any great enthusiasm by the Executive Council, but for want of any reasonable alternative they adopted it and Point Puer was opened early the following year, the fait accompli being reported to the Home Government for approval in February, 1834.

You are aware that by the last two or three vessels a most unusual number of boys were sent out; it is utterly impossible to imagine a more corrupt fraternity of little depraved Felons - on their landing I examined them personally - some, it appeared had been trained to a vicious course from having been thrown upon the world entirely destitute, others have become so, from the tutorage of dissolute parents - and others have been the agents of dexterous old thieves about London - but all are objects of compassion - to assign them is impossible, and I therefore caused about one hundred to be removed to Tasman's Peninsula but to be there kept apart and quite distinct from the convicts under sentence - to have formed altogether another Establishment would have been attended with additional expense and I hope therefore the Secretary of State will be disposed to approve of the measure. (79)

(78) Minutes of Executive Council, Tasmanian Government Archives, 4607.

(79) G.O. 33/16/277 Arthur to Hay.

Arthur once having accepted the Assignment Board's plan of a separate establishment for the boys went further than the Board possibly intended and set up a system of training intended to discipline and reform the boys and prepare them for later assignment. Captain Charles O'Hara Booth, the Commandant of Port Arthur was given responsibility for Point Puer also. Arthur thought him "A most admirable person for such a situation. He is kind and humane, active and most determined." (80)

The assumption that the boys needed kind and humane treatment, that they were "objects of compassion" or in Booth's term, "misguided little creatures" formed the basic spirit of the establishment but it operated within the context of the penal practice of the time which laid stress on constant hard work and strict discipline enforced by heavy penalties as a punishment for the original offence and as a deterrent to others. Hope of reformation lay in religious instruction, education and trade training to fit them for an honest living and in the prospect of a less severe existence to be won by good behaviour. It was a system that easily lent itself to tyranny and cruelty. The assumption that humanity was desirable helped to save it from this but the boys still lived under a harsh and unrelenting system of discipline which took note even of the most trivial offences.

By 1836 there were about 280 boys in Point Puer and with this comparatively small number (in relation to the numbers housed in the following decade) some degree of success was achieved.

(80) Ibid.

In the early years the boys were principally occupied in clearing the ground and building the establishment and while specific trade training was limited, presumably they learned a good deal in the process of the building. Religious instruction was supplied by Wesleyan catechists and limited schooling by selected convicts. Some time off for games and relaxation served to lighten an otherwise long and arduous day.

Arthur was pleased with Point Puer and the transported boys certainly had a better chance there than herded with the older convicts. No similar system was provided for girls who in the main were not transported under the age of 15 years ⁽⁸¹⁾ and were left to take their chance in the Female Factory and under the assignment system. Nor was there any thought given to colonially convicted boys and girls who found themselves in the local gaols along with the general run of offenders. The King's Orphan School committee in 1828 endeavoured to secure the release of one such girl under the age of 14 years who had been arrested and put in gaol on suspicion of having committed a felony. ⁽⁸²⁾

The Orphan Schools opened in temporary accommodation in April 1828, in another converted distillery, this time in New Town. The building was never satisfactory and was soon full and plans were made to erect a new building on government land in New Town. The plans were submitted and approved early in 1829 but building did not start until the following year and was not completed until

(81) L.L. Robson, Convict Settlers of Australia op.cit. p.207.

(82) Minutes of King's Orphan School Committee 5 July, 1828, S.W.D.4 Tasmanian State Archives.

late 1833, the children moving in in October of that year. The buildings thus completed were to remain in occupation well into the 20th century, first for orphans and later as a depot for the aged and infirm. Lee Archer who was principally responsible, also designed the various penal units around the colony and in later years men were to complain that the orphan school buildings bore the stamp of a penal establishment, rather than a home for children. Convict terminology was also to be found in the school regime. The children were "mustered" at sundry times during the day and "inspected" by the staff for various purposes. The buildings were large, difficult to heat and bare of any homely comforts. Nevertheless the public generally thought they had provided well for the children. Melville, that inveterate critic of Arthur considered it the best thing ever undertaken by the colony and thought the children were taken care of with praiseworthy attention. (83)

The schools were governed by a Committee of Management who were "to meet every week for the purpose of deciding upon applications for admission into the schools and of inspecting the accounts and they will also arrange that some members visit the schools, so as to be satisfied that all the regulations are punctually observed." (84) A doctor was appointed to visit the school regularly and, be generally responsible for the children's health and treat them in times of sickness. The early regulations were adapted from those in force at the New South Wales Orphan

(83) Henry Melville, History of Van Diemen's Land, 1824-1835. (reissued Sydney 1959) p.68 - 9.

(84) K.O.S. Minutes. op. cit.

Schools and as time went on altered as experience suggested. The all male committee consisting of Archdeacon Scott (who only attended the first few meetings) Major Kirkwood, Joseph Hone, Affleck Moodie and the Rev. William Bedford, were assisted by a Ladies Committee who had a special responsibility for the girls. The male and female school each had its own Master and Matron who were responsible to the Committee and a number of servants, mainly convicts. Some free servants were later appointed to reduce the contaminating influence of convicts.

The members of the Committee of Management were an energetic and conscientious group of men. Attendance at meetings was usually good and Hone and Bedford undertook a good deal of extra work in investigating applications for admissions and discharges, including home visits where they thought it necessary. Twenty children were admitted in the first week, by the end of 1828 numbers had reached 133 and 235 by October 1833.

Children in all three of the stipulated categories were admitted, a large number being children of female convicts, some admitted direct from the convict ships. Others were transferred from the female factory, including 41 sent in 4 carts late one afternoon without any prior notice in 1833, though usual transfers were in smaller groups and arranged in a more regular fashion. Many children were rescued from "profligate" and "worthless" mothers, terms usually used to describe heavy drinkers and promiscuous women. Children of fatherless families were admitted as a form of relief. These categories were usually admitted "on the

foundation" that is free of charge and during Arthur's time supported by colonial funds. Motherless children and children who lived too far away from established schools were admitted on the undertaking of the father to pay an agreed sum up to £12 per year. At times of pressure on accommodation these last were the first to be refused admission as being in the least need.

Some examples of the children admitted will illustrate the basis of the Committee's decisions, which were later endorsed by the Lieutenant-Governor.

"12. 6.28 Two boys brought in by the Police from New Norfolk by the order of the Police Magistrate. The mother was dead and their father had gone to England.

13.11.28 A boy aged 12, son of an unmarried woman with 5 children. She was said to be living "in a very immoral manner."

7. 3.29 Anne P-. Father on trial for murdering her mother, and R- C- whose father had left the colony leaving him "with a most profligate mother", now in gaol.

28. 3.29 Edwin B-. 9 years, "found wandering about in a state of total destitution and had been in the bush for several years among the worst characters - his father is dead and his mother, if any exists, has wholly deserted him."

30. 5.33 James R-. whose mother "is greatly distressed and much afflicted from having been speared by natives and thereby deprived of the power of working for her living." (85)

(85) Ibid.

26. 3.36 Two boys whose mother had deserted and whose father was a drunkard. The boys aged 8 and 12 were found sleeping in Liverpool Street, starving and with no fixed place of abode." (86)

Some of these examples are of course the more dramatic cases, but the deserted or orphan child left in charge of a drunkard and neglected or ill treated was fairly commonplace and this type of case recurs again and again. How many other children continued undetected in this situation is a matter for speculation, but one would guess that many were retained for their usefulness as drudges.

For a time the Committee resisted applications to discharge children except where the father had made arrangements to pay and therefore had the right to remove the child at will. Sometimes the Committee felt that the parents were unsatisfactory, or in the case of an older girl, that discharge would lead to "her ruin." Often it took the view that the training and education offered by the schools could not be bettered elsewhere and therefore it was in the interests of the child to remain. In 1831 after a number of such refusals, Arthur intervened and insisted on the children's discharge.^(86A) This instruction, combined with increasing pressure on the accommodation of the schools ensured a more liberal discharge policy. The normal time for leaving the schools was between 14 and 15 years of age when the children were placed in some form of service employment. The Committee did try to select good

(86) C.S.O/1/17152.

(86A) K.O.S. Minutes op.cit.

employers but there seems to have been no provision for supervising the children after discharge and no information is available on how they fared. The lower age limit after trial and error was set at about 3 years, though this to a certain extent was dependent on pressure at the Female Factory. The Committee took the view that they did not have sufficient staff to care for very young children, whereas there was an ample number of convicts to act as nurses at the Factory. The level of the infant death rate at the Factory does not seem to have affected this thinking.

Arthur took a close interest in the schools. The Committee Minute Book was to be submitted to him weekly and comments are recorded on admissions and discharges, staff appointments, the practice of sending boys into the bush to collect wood, clothing for female convict servants and even the payment of 7/- for treacle for medicinal purposes.

In spite of an active Committee of Management and Ladies Committee and an interested Governor, the orphanage had a somewhat Dickensian start. The first Master and Mistress of the Female Orphan School, Mr. and Mrs. Chorley, appointed on the recommendation of the Ecclesiastical Board in England, were dismissed in July 1828 for fraud. Evidence was given to the Committee of Management that they had been making over the children's food to their own profit by selling it or by feeding it to their own poultry. Instead of feeding the children thick porridge made from oatmeal, the Chorleys had given them only very thin gruel. The tea was made in a boiler of about 6 gallons of water with only a handful

of tea and some sugar and milk thrown in, all boiled together, and then served to the children in pannikins, leaves and all. Bread which should have been served at every meal was only given at breakfast and tea, unless it happened that the Ladies Committee was seen coming up the path at dinner time when bread was hastily brought to the table. The convict servants, who reported all this to the Committee said the children often complained of hunger and were seen scavenging in the dustbins for leftovers from the kitchen.

The Committee descended on the School and examined the stores and account books, discovering large discrepancies. Taxed with this the Chorleys first denied all allegations then blamed each other and finally Mr. Chorley "admitted that the accounts in the Books were wholly fabricated and that he considered that what he saved from the children were his own perquisites." (87)

On 9th August after a number of meetings and visits to the Female School, the Committee recorded its views for the benefit of the Lt. Governor.

The Committee having considered the case in every possible way, and examined the Books and Acts and made such calculations and allowances as the most charitable inclinations would admit are decidedly of the opinion that the children, at all events, have been deprived of their proper quantity of provisions and that an attempt has been made to defraud the government, and that under the domestic management of persons wanting common honesty so much as the present Master and Matron appear to do, there is no safety either for the government or the children and that neither a Ladies Committee nor a Committee of Management can effectually protect the one or the other.

The Committee of Management under these circumstances therefore recommend that the Master and Matron be dismissed. (88)

(87) K.O.S. Minutes op.cit. p.p 59-71.

(88) Ibid.

Rather surprisingly Arthur, following a personal appeal to him by the Chorleys, asked the Committee to reconsider their decision and coupled this with urging the Committee to rigid economy in the issue of food which should be "sufficient and no more than sufficient", but the Committee stood their ground and the Chorleys departed. (89)

The Committee's confidence in their ability to control the schools was further shaken three years later when the next major scandal (passing over a beadle and his wife dismissed for drunkenness and other minor problems) occurred in the Male Orphan School in January 1831. This time the Master, Mr. Giblin was accused of ill treating the boys. One of the boys David Welsh, braver than the rest complained to the Committee on one of its visits that Mr. Giblin had beaten a boy named John Burgess who had been ill for some time and who died about 10 days after the incident. He also said that John's brother Andrew and another boy had been punched and kicked by Mr. Giblin. A few days later the school beadle called to see the Committee to report that David himself had been beaten.

"Yesterday," he said, "I saw Mr. Giblin strike David Welsh six times right and left with his doubled fists. He then took the boy by the neck and pushed him along before him into the School Room where he was kept all the evening and not allowed to sup with the other children. The boy's mouth was cut and bleeding." He went on to say that "the boy was a very respectful lad and made

use of no bad or irritating language to the Master. I believe the boy was punished in consequence of his having complained to the Committee of ill treatment." (90)

This time the Committee did not delay. After satisfying themselves of the truth of the allegations, the facts were placed before Arthur who ordered the dismissal of Mr. Giblin. He was superseded within 24 hours of the beadle's visit, by a temporary appointee, Mr. Shone. The Committee would have been content to accept Mr. Shone as a permanent appointment but Arthur thought him inadequately qualified and considered that "A person of superior attainments is required for such a responsible position." (91)

For a time the orphan schools settled down to a less drama laden existence, but early in 1834 the Committee were again expressing concern about the difficulty of governing the school adequately under the present arrangements. All internal matters had to be referred to them at their weekly meetings and in cases of indiscipline among the servants, six days could elapse before it was checked. Neither Mr. Shone, the Master of the Male School, nor Mr. Garrard, the Master of the Female School were thought sufficiently responsible to be given greater authority and the Committee suggested the appointment of a clergyman to superintend the whole establishment and bring about an improvement in the "moral and religious training" of the children. (92) Arthur approved of the idea and considered too that more direct control

(90) Ibid p.p 281-292.

(91) Ibid.

(92) G.O. 33/19/213. Arthur to Spring- Rice.

might also bring about a reduction in the steadily rising costs of the schools. The post of Superintendent was offered to the Rev. J. B. Naylor early in 1835. He was also to carry out parochial duties in the New Town Church of England parish, but it was stressed that these duties were subordinate to the demands of his post at the Orphan Schools. The Committee was not to be disbanded. At Naylor's request they were to retain responsibility for the annual estimates and the general expenditure of the Schools, leaving daily spending to the Superintendent within the budget set down. They were to appoint and dismiss the more senior staff, approve admissions and discharges of children and arrange for the apprenticing of older children. The Superintendent was to report to them periodically on the state of the establishment and they were each to visit the schools quarterly to inspect progress. Naylor was to be responsible for the daily control of the schools for the religious instruction and for their moral conduct, education, clothing and food and was to "attend to their general comfort." He was to improve the education standards of the school and increase trade training. (93)

In spite of this general measure of agreement about the appointment and about the future roles of Committee and Superintendent, the new system was not successful. Within a few months clashes between Mr. Naylor and the Committee were frequent. The latter claimed that Naylor had declined when first appointed to meet and confer with them upon the interests of the Institution

and that he was continually unco-operative. Naylor counter-claimed that the Committee resented his appointment and constantly interfered in the daily running of the schools. There seems to have been fault on both sides. The Committee members when visiting the schools doubtless forgot their now more restricted role and issued instructions to the staff. Mr. Naylor had difficulty in controlling the staff who disliked him and went over his head to the Committee. (94) He seems to have lacked the tact and diplomacy to handle either the Committee or his subordinates successfully. The dispute was still raging when Arthur was recalled.

How the children fared in all this is not recorded. They were fed, clothed and housed, educated after a fashion in the basic subjects and given minimal training in housework (of the institutional variety) sewing and shoemaking. Life was regimented, hard working and dull with few opportunities for play and as numbers grew, less and less attention given to their individual needs. At 14 or 15 they were left to face the world with little personal or educational equipment, in a society all too ready to deal harshly with the failure who turned to crime as a means of survival. To those in authority who seem to have been honestly striving to give the children a decent life, the situation was disturbing and yet no easy solutions presented themselves.

Arthur inherited a number of problems from his predecessor. He tackled them with energy, but he left an even larger legacy of

(94) C.S.O./1/16735.

problems for his successor, defeated by circumstances largely beyond his control. His concern for the under-privileged in a callous age was to be admired and the system he set up was in its time context, better than that available in most places in England and as good as that in New South Wales. His successors were largely content to accept the system he established and many years were to pass before the assumptions on which it was based were questioned in any way.

CHAPTER II. THE RELUCTANT PROVIDERS 1837 - 1855.

The next eighteen years were characterised by increasingly grudging government provision for the destitute of all ages. No new services were added and little new building was undertaken. Existing institutions were strained beyond capacity and the response was rather to limit eligibility for admission than to expand to meet the need. Since the convicts had of necessity to be provided for, the axe in every case fell upon the free poor. Decisions were made on financial expediency and afterwards rationalised into principles. The benevolent humanity of Arthur who saw a need and attempted to meet it was gone. Instead the government saw the need and attempted to avoid it.

Population and with it potential need continued to grow though at a slower rate than in the early years of the colony. Standing at 45,679 in 1836, it grew to 69,187 in 1851, then dropped for a few years and rose again in 1855 to 69,962. (1) Over 40,000 convicts were transported to Van Diemen's Land between 1835 and 1853 and of these about 9,000 were women convicts whose children were to be the focus of much publicity. (2) According to R.M. Hartwell's figures the percentage of actual convicts in the population dropped from 42% in 1835 to 29% in 1851 (3) but the residue of ex-convicts formed a significant part of the problem area in the population. On the brighter

(1) H.A.P. 71/1866.

(2) Robson. op.cit. p. 171.

(3) Hartwell. op.cit. p. 68.

side, the gradual extension of family networks among the longer term colonists could be expected to produce a more independent core in the population and the beginnings of a self help movement as a means of meeting family crises of sickness or death can be seen in this period. The Almanacks show a steady increase in such organisations as Masonic Lodges, Rechabite Tents and various tradesmen's benefit societies. The trend was encouraging but the numbers involved were few and in the main the proportion of potential dependency problems in the population was as high as in the Arthur period and for similar reasons.

These problems were exacerbated by the continuing economic instability of the colony. 1839 and 1840 brought a short lived boom during which prices of bread, meat, tea, potatoes and other staple foods of the poor were abnormally high with little matching increase in wages. For the following five years the economy was more or less depressed. Food prices dropped but unemployment rose and increased numbers of poor immigrants worsened the position. From 1845 the economy improved. Prices rose, but wages and re-employment lagged behind so that the first impact on the poor was greater distress. The entry into the labour market of large numbers of Probation Pass holders did not ease the position. The late 40's and early 50's were in comparison relatively prosperous. (4) Government policy during the depression tended to worsen the situation for the poor. In efforts to balance the budget, public works were cut and govern-

(4) Ibid. This account is taken from Chapters 12 & 13.

ment expenditure on pauper provision limited, measures which inevitably fell most heavily on the poorer sections of the community who were least able to bear it and whose voice was least heard in policy decisions.

The government saw the problem as principally a moral one. They were concerned not with the distress among the poor but with the "growing evil" of pauperism.⁽⁵⁾ Eardley-Willmot⁽⁶⁾ referring to the numbers of ex-convicts needing assistance says of the group as a whole "although many of these have acquired property, yet by far the greater number are persons of thoughtless, and negligent not to say dissolute habits, which incapacitate them from mending their condition or bearing any part of the burdens of taxation."⁽⁷⁾ Denison⁽⁸⁾ later extends this type of moral judgement to the whole of the poor. In a Finance Minute of 16 August, 1850 on the support of Free Paupers in Hospitals and Depots he said, "The charge under this head is, I am afraid, likely to increase; partly of course from the natural effects of age and infirmity upon the working classes of the population and from the absence on their part of such habits of forethought as would induce them to lay by a portion of their earnings to secure the means of maintenance when either sickness or old age may have rendered them incapable of supporting themselves by labour."⁽⁹⁾ The solution of the problem in this view lay in the hands of the poor if they would only exert themselves to work and to plan ahead.

(5) Minutes of Legislative Council, 15 January, 1845. Tasmanian State Archives.

(6) Lieutenant-Governor 1843-1846.

(7) G.O. 33 46/827.

(8) Lieutenant-Governor 1847-1855.

(9) Minutes of Legislative Council. op. cit.

The more benevolent colonists and the press were converted to this view rather more slowly. The distress of 1839-40 was put down to economic factors and not to the fecklessness of the poor. The Hobart Town Society for the Relief of the Distressed appealed for funds for "the helpless and suffering and hungry poor" whose distress was "consequent upon the present high price of provisions." (10) The Launceston Strangers Friend Society in the same year specifically rejected moral judgements as a basis for decision. They announced in 1839 that they would not be influenced "by the former causes of the present distresses of the parties requiring relief." (11) The Launceston Advertiser reporting this rejoiced at the attitude which it called a "spirit of pure and holy charity ... like the good Samaritan, finding in the present distresses of the sick, the destitute and it may be the erring poor, such call upon its bounty as leaves no room, nor opportunity for a reference to former improvidence or guilt." (12)

The same newspaper seven years later expressed a greater spirit of caution. In an article on the Launceston Benevolent Society the Editor wrote,

In a population like our own, largely mixed with persons of thriftless habits and destitute of all the ordinary resources of social life, without friends or relatives to succour them in affection, the casualties of disease and want press with peculiar rigour, while the facilities for imposition awaken suspicion when relief is perhaps deserved. The benevolent are not infrequently exposed to the deception of trading beggars. This society supplies the means of ascertaining the reality and extent of the necessities of the poor and has tended greatly to check the practice of

(10) Colonial Times, 27 August, 3 & 17 September, 1839.

(11) Launceston Advertiser, 19 September, 1839.

(12) Ibid.

mendicity" - but need is still the prime factor - "for who could sleep in quiet in the apprehension that a fellow creature, however worthless his general character was without sustenance or medical aid. (13)

This stress on avoiding imposition steadily grew. The Dorcas Society of Hobart reported in 1846 "They have at the same time to regret the increasing demands of pauperism and the growing difficulty of repelling the impositions of the undeserving poor." (14) The Hobart Strangers Friend Society in 1849, claiming that there were many cases where "an innate feeling of delicacy induces to agonising endurance of suffering rather than an appeal to charity," hastened to add that "systematic beggars are not relieved and imposition is strictly guarded against." (15)

The Launceston Examiner in 1851 took the argument a stage further in stressing the usefulness of the Evandale Benevolent Society as an agent of investigation.

Unfortunately the Penal character of this Colony has increased to an unnatural extent the objects calling for the sympathy of the community. Nearly every corner of our principle streets is obstructed by the halt or blind, upon many of whom pecuniary relief is thrown away. It is in these cases that the Benevolent Society is especially useful. Private individuals may be imposed upon by the base - whilst a public institution - whose officers are bound to make inquiry before rendering assistance is scarcely liable to similar deception. (16)

At the same time attention was being focussed more and more on the ex-convict who required aid. The propaganda of the anti-transportation agitation placed much stress on the pauper ex-convict and the dispute between the Colonial and the Home

(13) Launceston Advertiser, 4 June, 1846.

(14) Annual Report for 1846 (Royal Society of Tasmania).

(15) Colonial Times, 17 October, 1849.

(16) Quoted Colonial Times, 24 January, 1851.

Government on the division of responsibility in providing for the destitute ex-convict helped to create resentment against them. The Launceston Examiner in 1847 writing of the cost of poor relief declared it was "levied upon the Colonists to sustain the feeble, decrepid and diseased sent out as probationers to this island." (17) The Imperial Government's refusal to lighten this burden was the cause of much bitter feeling. Commenting on the published correspondence between Denison and the Home Government on Paupers, the Colonial Times wrote on 10 August, 1849,

The views of His Excellency upon the subject are both just and reasonable, but from the answer of the Secretary of State, it is evident that neither justice nor reason has anything to do with the proceedings of the Home Government in reference to the Colonies. The taunt of the great benefit which V.D.L. generally has derived and continues to derive from the labour of the convict population might well have been spared us, when forcing upon us those England is too happy to be rid of, and insisting upon the Colonists supporting those who may become unable to support themselves.

It was this issue, the maintenance of the ex-convict pauper, which did much to poison the atmosphere in which charitable relief was discussed. In the Imperial period the poor were only just beginning to feel the results of this. The full weight of the displeasure of the Colonists was to be felt once independence had been attained.

The division of responsibility in the services for the destitute had been fairly clear cut up to the end of the Arthur period. Thereafter the situation became more confused as the

(17) Launceston Examiner, 19 May, 1847.

Home Government attempted to put more financial responsibility on the Colonial Government and the latter retaliated by disclaiming responsibility for areas it had once accepted freely. Some services remained clearly Imperial Government responsibility. As long as a man or woman was a convict in servitude, then he or she had to be provided for whether young or old, healthy or sick. Thus there was no dispute about maintaining hospitals for sick and mentally ill convicts or invalid depots for aged and physically handicapped convicts. The Home Government's first move to ensure its responsibility began and ended there came in 1836. Emigrants and in particular pauper emigrants who had required hospital care had been provided for from the Land Fund and these were now to be a Colonial Government responsibility. (18) Not long after the cost of convicts who were free by servitude and who subsequently became unable to support themselves was transferred to Colonial funds. (19)

Not surprisingly the Colonial Government which was undergoing severe financial difficulties looked around for some means of retrenchment and found it in the cost of providing for the children of convicts at the Orphan Schools. A board, considering the financing of the schools recommended that the Imperial Government be charged £10 per child per annum of the total cost of £13 per annum, the balance being paid by the Colony as the cost of their education "bearing in mind the great advantage the

(18) C.S.0/5/1428.

(19) G.O.1 42/111 & 112.

Colony derives from the moral and religious improvement of the rising generation." (20) Franklin (21) not content with accepting this recommendation from 1837 onwards, stunned the Home Government by presenting it with a bill for arrears to 1828. This (needless to say) was not accepted lightly. Arguing that the children themselves were free, the Home Government asserted they should be supported by colonial funds. Franklin responded by insisting that the children had only been transferred from the Female Factory, an Imperial Government responsibility, because of their failure to thrive and that had they remained the Imperial Government would have not only had to maintain them but provide education and training also. He suggested the choice was for the Home Government to set up a separate establishment for the children of convicts, or to pay as requested. The ultimatum was reluctantly accepted. (22) In 1844 as a further economy measure the Orphan Schools were given over to the Convict Department to administer and the Colonial Government agreed to pay the Home Government for non-convict children housed there. Eardley-Willmot justified it on the grounds of the changed character of the schools.

The objects originally contemplated in founding the Orphan Schools were the protection, maintenance and education of the children of poor persons who died in the Colony leaving their offspring without means of support in a strange country. In the course of time however, the character of the Institution has been wholly changed; and instead of being a refuge for destitute orphans, it has become an asylum or workhouse for lodging, clothing, maintaining and educating the children of convicts.

(20) C.S.O/5/1885.

(21) Lieutenant-Governor 1837-1843.

(22) G.O.33/32/346.

He added that its advantage "as a Colonial object" had been almost wholly lost while it was at the same time increasing in size and expense. (23) The responsibility for the care of children was thus established. Boy convicts at Point Puer, children of convicts at the Female Factory and the Orphan Schools were Imperial charges and the children of the free were colonial responsibility.

The argument on the costs of care for the sick and aged ex-convict was less easily settled. Denison took the matter up again in 1848 trying once more to induce the Imperial Government to accept a wider group on its funds. Writing home in 1848 he distinguishes four groups of paupers among those free by servitude.

- 1) Men sent out from England at an age so advanced as to afford but little prospect of their being able at the expiration of their sentences to procure employment.
- 2) Men who arrived labouring under some disease or infirmity and were capable of light duties only while under sentence, but not of supporting themselves.
- 3) Those who became ill while convicts and
- 4) Those who after discharge became ill or incapacitated.

Denison proposed that ex-convicts should remain chargeable to Imperial funds if they became dependent on government aid up to 10 years after the expiry of their sentences. (24) This was refused but two concessions were wrung out of the Home Government. Those who were 60 years and over on landing were to be Imperial Government responsibility and so too were those "who either at

(23) Hobart Town Gazette, 24 November, 1843.

(24) C.S.O/24/254/101 29.

the time of their arrival in the colony or when they ceased to be employed in compulsory labour in public works, were incapacitated from age or organic disease or mentally or bodily infirmity, from supporting themselves by labour." (25)

This was as far as the Imperial Government would go and faced with this and with inadequate revenue to meet all the demands on it, the Colonial Government concentrated on reducing costs and tightening up eligibility requirements. It withdrew almost completely from the provision of outdoor relief, required proof of total destitution before admitting the aged and handicapped to an institution and declined to care for children of one parent families. Any gaps it felt should be filled by private benevolence

Very little practical encouragement was given to voluntary agencies. The governors were prepared to act as patrons to give a moral and social boost to the society concerned, and they subscribed from their own incomes, but government subsidies were not forthcoming. Franklin granted the Hobart Benevolent Society £80 in 1839 (26) to meet the special difficulties of that year, but thereafter no help was given to any of the relief agencies. Grants of land were given to St. Mary's Hospital and to New Town parish (to build an Almshouse) and some financial assistance was given to the former and to the Cornwall Hospital in the 50's but this was the extent of the help given. From time to time the attention of the government was drawn to the large subsidies given by the government of New South Wales but without effect.

(25) Ibid.

(26) C.S.0/5/5062.

In spite of this the charitably inclined felt unable to stand back and see the poor abandoned to near starvation without making some attempt to assist and as the government withdrew more and more from the relief of the poor, so the efforts to establish voluntary relief agencies were re-doubled in an attempt to fill the gap. But while the needs of the poor strengthened the determination of the benevolent, no solution was found to the problems of financing the societies.

The years 1839-40 saw the strange phenomenon of the second of the two main Benevolent Societies being driven out of business by lack of funds, while large sums of money were being raised by public appeal for the poor. The rise in price of basic foods in 1839 led a group of men to appeal, not to the government but direct to the public. In Hobart the "Society for the relief of the Distressed Poor" raised £779 in a matter of weeks⁽²⁷⁾ and in Launceston the Tradesman's Benevolent Society over £300,⁽²⁸⁾ figures which must have been gall and wormwood to the battling committees of the Benevolent Societies. This type of emotional appeal, with its published lists of subscribers and its maximum publicity, was always the best money raiser. It produced a temporary stirring of usually indifferent hearts and for a time in fashionable circles it was a la mode to be a subscriber. The mass distribution of food (17,000 lbs. of bread, 8,000 lbs. of meat in Hobart) the setting up of the soup kitchen to serve

(27) Colonial Times, 27 August, 1839, and Courier, 28 February, 1840.

(28) Launceston Advertiser 3 & 7 November, 1839.

hot food three times a week, the daily sittings of the committee to receive applicants for relief, (29) all formed a sort of spurious excitement which made subscribers feel warm inside with the sense of their own virtue. But once the drama died down, Van Diemen's Land was back to normal. The new societies closed down and in the next years few gave and fewer were prepared to work for the poor.

The Wesleyans tried to meet some of the need. A Strangers Friend Society was formed in Launceston in 1839, beginning well in that year of giving. By 1842 the Launceston Advertiser was reporting "The receipts have been £128 and the expenditure £126, the funds of the Society are consequently exhausted." (30) The Society appears to have become defunct not long after but on 6 December, 1844 and weekly thereafter during the following five months an advertisement appeared in the Launceston Advertiser saying "In consequence of the prevailing distress, and there being no society in operation for the relief of the sick and destitute it is deemed desirable to revive the above society." (30) It seems likely that this also was unsuccessful and that the society amalgamated with the Launceston Benevolent Society which re-formed in May, 1845. At all events the Strangers Friend Society advertisements ceased and its committee members were to be found on the new Benevolent Society Committee.

In Hobart, only the Dorcas Society soldiered on in the early

(29) Courier, 28 February, 1840.

(30) Launceston Advertiser, 13 January, 1842.

40's often in severe financial difficulties. The Wesleyans again tried to assist by forming a Strangers Friend Society in 1847 for the south. In 1849 it reported that it had had funds that year of only £38 ⁽³¹⁾ and in 1850 that its funds were exhausted. ⁽³²⁾ In spite of much distress among the Hobart poor in the 50's it does not seem to have been able to secure further funds. The Wesleyan Churches continued to assist their own poor, the Tasmanian Hebrew Benevolent Society ^(32A) helped poor Jewish applicants and various other church poor funds continued to function, but in Hobart at least a steady income for a general relief agency was not forthcoming.

Launceston made a slightly better showing. The Launceston Benevolent Society was re-established in 1845 and has remained in being until the present day and is thus the oldest and longest running voluntary Society in Tasmania. Its early years were not without difficulty. In 1846 the society was appealing for funds saying that many claims on its resources "exposed the managing committee to very frequent difficulty and embarrassment and they await with deep anxiety the result of that appeal." ⁽³³⁾ In 1851 they ran out of funds altogether and had to stop relief for a period, ⁽³⁴⁾ but somehow they survived. Why should Launceston have succeeded where Hobart failed? Perhaps the greater distance from the seat of government and from government institutions forced upon the people of Launceston the need for greater

(31) Colonial Times, 17 October, 1849.

(32) Ibid. 23 & 28 August, 1849.

(32A) In being from 1836 under various names and using normal Congregation funds, re-constituted in 1847 as a separate fund.

(33) Launceston Advertiser, 4 June, 1846.

(34) Launceston Examiner, 8 February, 1851.

independence and perhaps too in the small community, people were more aware of their neighbours whereas in Hobart the poor were more easily lost in the larger population. In view of the size of the society's income it would be hard to claim that the Launceston populace were more generous in their giving but the benevolent men and women of Launceston showed more tenacity or sheer stubbornness than those of the south, in their will to survive.

One other interesting development of the period was the attempt of two country districts to form charitable agencies. Both were again in the north and both were short lived. A Longford Benevolent Society was in existence from about 1838 to the mid 40's. Its income for 1838 was £99.4.7 ⁽³⁵⁾ and for 1839 £190.9.4 ⁽³⁶⁾ a better record than some of the city societies. In 1842 they were actually running a small asylum for "Bedridden and helpless females". ⁽³⁷⁾ Evandale too had a Benevolent Society in 1850 - 1851 ⁽³⁸⁾ and the work of these country societies must have helped to ease pressure on the Launceston Benevolent Society since otherwise the poor tended to move into the cities where help was available.

It will be noted that all these societies were relief agencies. No attempt was made to enter the field of child care, apart from the Longford Asylum and a small Alms house at New

(35) Launceston Advertiser, 14 February, 1839.

(36) Ibid. 9 April, 1840.

(37) C.S.O./8/1163.

(38) Quoted Colonial Times, 24 January, 1851.

Town (39) no indoor care for the aged or destitute was provided. Some voluntary effort was to be found in the medical services which will be described later, efforts which ran into similar financial difficulties. In view of the impossibility of raising adequate funds, it is understandable that the field of operations was thus limited and the remainder left to the Imperial and Colonial Governments to provide.

HOSPITAL SERVICES.

There were few major developments in the hospital services during this period. The country hospitals remained temporary structures attached to convict stations, and moving when the station moved. The main hospital centres continued to be Hobart, Launceston, New Norfolk and Port Arthur. A new hospital was erected at Port Arthur in the middle 40's to meet the needs of the penal settlement and Point Puer. Limited provision was also made there for convict invalids and some of the mentally ill. New Norfolk continued to serve partly as a hospital for the sick of the local district until 1848 when it was made over entirely as a mental hospital. In the meantime improved transport facilities had enabled more patients to travel to Hobart for treatment and the need was therefore not so great.

The Hobart and Launceston Hospitals for most of Franklin's period of rule were bedevilled by quarrels between the staff and anyone else available. This collection of prima donnas remorselessly recorded all their grievances against one another however

petty, and wearisome reading it makes. The period opened with the dispute that had the greatest repercussions, that between Dr. Arthur and Dr. Bedford and concurrently between Dr. Arthur and Franklin and his Colonial Secretary. Dr. Arthur had been appointed in the time of his namesake with the duty of re-organising the convict hospitals and bringing their administration into line with the Imperial Military Hospitals. An impulsive man and one lacking the tact to manage his colleagues many of his commonsense recommendations and reasonable attempts to produce better order in the hospitals were lost in a welter of accusation and counter-accusation that took place in 1837 and 1838. The principle dispute lay between Dr. Bedford who claimed to be in sole charge of the Colonial Hospital, Hobart, and Dr. Arthur who maintained as head of the whole medical services that he was entitled to intervene in what he regarded as the mismanagement of the hospital. The two quarrelled daily, loudly and publicly in the wards and corridors of the hospital, which may have entertained the patients but did nothing to add to their comfort. The Executive Council who investigated the trouble and suspended Dr. Arthur found that the hospital was "in a state of complete disorganisation."⁽⁴⁰⁾

In the north of the state there was a similar running battle in 1839 at the Launceston Hospital between Dr. Seccombe and Dr. Drurie ending only with the removal of the latter. ⁽⁴¹⁾ He was

(40) G.O. 33. Vol. 30 (The whole of this is devoted to the dispute over Arthur).

(41) C.S.O/5/5031.

replaced by Dr. How who also quarrelled bitterly with Dr. Seccombe and in turn departed. Dr. Robert Officer, temporarily acting in Dr. Arthur's stead, reporting on the various disputes in 1839 said, "The frequent occurrence of misunderstandings and quarrels amongst the medical officers themselves and the singular frequency of coroners inquests in which their conduct has been censured have certainly brought the Medical Department at Launceston into great public disrepute." Dr. Seccombe, he went on, was a satisfactory doctor but his lack of "judgement, temper and dignity of character" had led to frequent clashes with his subordinates. (42)

Dr. John Clarke was appointed Principle Medical Officer in 1840 to replace Dr. Arthur and apart from minor disputes the hospital services thereafter settled down to their proper task, the care of the patients.

Conditions in the Hobart Colonial Hospital were poor. Dr. Officer reporting as temporary principle medical officer in 1838 found it "unequal to the wants of this populous town." (43) It had room for 80 patients and usually housed at least 90. It came in for criticism from the Colonial Times on 22 October, 1839 and demands were made for the erection of a new hospital. A typhoid epidemic in early 1840 found the hospital quite inadequate to meet the demand. Solomon's Temple was hired to serve as a temporary hospital for the overflow and still both

(42) C.S.O/5/5063.

(43) C.S.O/5/3511.

were crowded. The Colonial Times taking the matter up again in March 1840 called the hospital "the very focus of fever" and "nest of uncleanness" and blamed the state of the hospital not on the doctors who were tending the sick conscientiously but on the government for "a rigid, stingy, starving, miserable system of parsimony." (44) A board on the hospital later the same month proposed a new hospital to hold 150 patients to be built in front of the present one (45) and Dr. Clarke adding his comments in September said "The old hospital is decaying every day and before long must fall into a heap of ruins. Humanity and even economy requires a new one." (46) The new hospital was commenced in 1842 and it was reported in August, 1843 that it was nearly finished. (47)

The enlarged hospital met the needs of the southern half of the state for the next decade. The decision to use it for female invalids (and their children) in 1846 (48) and the closure of New Norfolk as a male invalid station in 1848 both led to the clogging up of the wards with chronic patients. The increased demand due to natural population increase created further strains in the 50's. The Imperial Government by this time was limiting its expenditure as far as possible pending the handing over of responsibility to the Colonial Government and little was done in the hospital. The report of the Board of Management which took

(44) Colonial Times, 3 & 10 March, 1840.

(45) C.S.O/5/5979.

(46) Ibid.

(47) C.S.O/22/67/1460.

(48) C.S.O/20/39/1059.

over the hospital for the Colonial Government in 1859 with its complaints of overcrowding, inadequate facilities and its stress on the urgent need of repairs and extensions would have had a familiar ring to Dr. Arthur and Dr. Clarke had they still been in the Colony.

Launceston in the meantime was suffering worse troubles. The hotel hired by Arthur was still in use at the end of the Imperial period, the lease having been renewed several times at a steadily increasing rent. Plans were made for a new hospital but were never carried out, although the old building was by now grossly unsuitable and overcrowded by both humans and bugs.

Both hospitals were still primarily convict establishments but were available also to paying and pauper patients. Fees for paying patients were set at 2/- per day and were supposed to be guaranteed by respectable neighbours. Agreements to pay were still more honoured in the breach than the observance and there were frequent inquiries into accumulating arrears, none of which found any solution to the problem. For pauper patients which after 1838 included the many ex-convicts whose costs had previously been borne by the Imperial Government, the Colonial Government repaid the Home Government 1/4d per day. The cost of pauper patients formed a significant part of the total provision for paupers and there were periodic attempts to restrict eligibility to reduce the numbers.

Replying in 1839 to an inquiry into increased numbers of pauper patients, Dr. Officer put the increase down to the

numbers of convicts now free by servitude in the colony who tended to form the bulk of the pauper patients and to "the increasing age and infirmities of those who were transported or who emigrated in the early period of the colony." (49) He proposed three possible ways of reducing costs.

- 1) Reducing the maintenance charges paid to the Home Government from 1/4d per day to 1/- per day which was nearer the actual cost.
- 2) Providing for non acute cases by out-patient treatment and outdoor relief, and
- 3) Encouraging private benevolence. (50)

The first proposal was taken up by the government but they were not satisfied with Dr. Officer's further statement that he thought false statements were rare and that it was often hard to persuade pauper patients to stay in the hospital "from feelings of pride and fear and dislike of the wholesome restraint to which they are necessarily subjected." (51) The admission of pauper patients was to be made the responsibility of the medical department acting on a certificate of destitution from a magistrate or clergyman. Monthly returns of pauper patients were to be made and the doctor was to certify both continued need of treatment and lack of ability to pay. (52) The same practice was to be applied to out-patients. In fact the new system made for little change. Occasionally cases might be found where free patients

(49) C.S.O/5/4615.

(50) Ibid.

(51) Ibid.

(52) C.S.O/5/1428.

had money and could have paid but in general since few went into hospital unless they were forced to there was little room for reduction in numbers. In Launceston there were fewer non-convict patients, not due to any less demand but to lack of space in the Launceston Hospital. Convict patients were given priority and others often had to be turned away.

Private benevolence did make some effort to provide hospital services. The original intention was to provide not in the main for the pauper patients, but for the fee payers, though subscriptions were also solicited to support destitute patients. Dr. Bedford, leaving the Hobart Colonial Hospital in 1840 after being superseded as head of the hospital by a more senior doctor, began canvassing funds to start a private hospital that year. St. Mary's Hospital was to be for private patients of a better class and for the industrious poor who were to subscribe weekly to obtain in-patient and out-patient treatment and to enable the rich to be charitable towards the destitute by paying for their treatment through subscriptions to the hospital. A similar appeal was made in Launceston by Dr. Pugh in 1845 to establish St. John's Hospital, Launceston. Dr. Bedford claimed he started the hospital because free patients disliked the convict hospital.⁽⁵³⁾ Dr. Pugh gave as his reason the difficulty of free patients gaining admission, saying "It was a fact too notorious to be questioned, or easily forgotten, that the free community of the northern portion of this island, in cases of sickness and distress,

(53) H.A.P. 34/1861.

was altogether unprovided for. Every appeal made by the free for admission into the General Hospital of this town was either met by a positive refusal or referred to a date too distant to be advantageous to the patients, whose lives were perilled." (54)

The standard charge for both hospitals was 2/- per day, but both had hoped for liberal donations and subscriptions to meet overheads. In fact the "industrious poor" gave the hospital little support and donations were inadequate. Aid was requested from the government who were invited to endow beds which could be used for pauper patients. The government declined but agreed to pay for pauper patients in the private hospitals at the same rate as in the Colonial Hospitals, now 1/- per day. The Launceston Benevolent Society also supported a number of patients in St. John's at the same rate. The lack of adequate income forced the closure of St, John's in 1851. (55)

St. Mary's Hospital fared a little better. Opening in 1841 in a rented house, it moved to the corner of Davey Street and Salamanca Place in 1849 on land granted by the government at a moderate rental and a grant of £2,000 towards the cost of the building in return for equity in the building. This was a 60 bed hospital and fees were increased first to 3/- and then 4/- per day for ordinary patients and 5/- and then 6/- per day for special patients. (56) Even at this rate without adequate subscriptions the hospital could not pay its way and it closed in 1860.

(54) C.S.O 8/2097.

(55) C.S.O/24/284/6177.

(56) Annual Report, St. Mary's Hospital. Tasmanian State Archives T.C/P 362.11

Two other voluntary efforts in the medical field were also short lived. St. Paul's Hospital was started in Stanley in 1846 and seems to have lasted about 12 years and perhaps being better supported because of the remoteness from any other hospital. (57) The Hobart Town General Dispensary and Humane Society established in 1847 to provide out-patient treatment for the poor also functioned for only 4 or 5 years. (58) It seems likely that both suffered from lack of funds to keep them going, since this was the experience of every other voluntary agency.

Conditions in the private hospitals were probably slightly better, if only to attract paying patients. The Colonial Times of 25 April, 1841 praises St. Mary's for "the order, cleanliness and in truth comfort which were visible in every department" and St. John's Hospital seems to have been generally well thought of. The first use of ether for an operation was in St. John's in the late 1840's and in this the hospital was ahead of the convict medical services. Treatment in the convict hospitals remained rather rough and ready with few facilities for isolation of infections and poor nursing by the largely male convict staff.

As the Imperial establishment was running down, moves were made to close the Launceston Hospital in 1853. The Launceston Benevolent Society, which had always interested itself in the sick poor wrote to Denison and asked if the building could be handed over to them to run as a free hospital, with government aid.

(57) T. Wood. Tasmanian Almanack, 1848. Tasmanian State Archives. T.C. 919.46

(58) Ibid.

Denison was interested in the proposal. The closure of St. John's Hospital had left the free patients with no alternative centre of treatment and it was probably cheaper for the government to subsidise a voluntary hospital than itself to provide a hospital for the free.

In correspondence between the Governor and the Launceston Benevolent Society during 1853, an agreement was reached that the existing building should be taken over by a board of trustees half nominated by subscribers and half by the government. A government subsidy was to be paid and in return pauper patients treated free. The remainder of the funds were to be raised by subscriptions. (59) In the course of the negotiations the hospital was transferred from the Convict Medical Department to the Colonial Government who endorsed the agreement. The Cornwall Hospital and Infirmary as it was now called, officially opened in July, 1854. Its tribulations will be described in the next chapter.

Care of the mentally ill remained largely centralised at New Norfolk during this period. Some were housed temporarily at the Colonial Hospital, Hobart or St. Mary's prior to admission. Northern and country patients were more likely to find themselves in a gaol or watchhouse. Delays in transfers often created great problems for the gaol and watchhouse keepers. One man held in Georgetown Watchhouse for 4 weeks after being found wandering naked and attacking the constable with a knife was said to be incontinent

violent and given to singing all night. (60)

The established method of admission for free patients was examination by a medical board to certify lunacy. Successive governors were adamant in refusing to accept the views of justices, magistrates, police or relatives as adequate and the system did provide safeguards against over hasty or malicious admissions. Free patients or their relatives were expected to pay where possible. Destitute patients were admitted free. Convict patients were also held at New Norfolk except the most violent who were kept in separate accommodation at Port Arthur. Periodically free patients on recovery threatened action for unlawful detention. An Act was passed to meet this problem in 1846 but not brought into force until 1853. Under this two justices, one of whom must be a Police Magistrate, acting on a doctor's evidence might commit a patient to the Lunatic Asylum. (61)

The rate of cure was not high and patients gradually accumulated in the New Norfolk Hospital. Dr. Clarke found 55 insane patients in the hospital in 1842. (62) In 1848 there were 186 patients (63) and in that year the invalids for whom the hospital had primarily been provided were moved out and the hospital given over entirely to mentally ill patients. Conditions in the hospital were often a subject of criticism sometimes for ill treating the patients, at other times for treating them too leniently. During one of the many quarrels in which the medical

(60) C.S.O 24/249/9814.

(61) 10 Vic. 9 C.Y.

(62) C.S.O/22/61/308.

(63) G.O. 33/65/786.

department were involved in 1839, Thomas Mason, local magistrate accused the Doctors Casey and McDowell of neglect. A board who sat to investigate found the patients "as compassionately and considerately attended to as the nature of such an institution admits." They thought the relationship between patients and doctors could only have arisen "from kindness and attention", but the building was overcrowded and sane and insane could not be kept apart. (64) A new wing was recommended. The following year Dr. Casey was criticised for allowing a "dangerous lunatic" to wander around the work on the new wing. Dr. Casey asserted that though the patient had been violent, he had responded to kind and mild treatment and that he deprecated too frequent use of solitary confinement for violent patients. (65) During Dr. Casey's time the Colonial Times reported that the practice of allowing sightseers to visit the hospital was discontinued, so that the patients were no longer "made sport of to amuse the visitors." (66) This was one of the few favourable comments made by the Colonial Times from late 1844 to 1855 there was frequent press criticism of the hospital and in particular of Dr. Meyer who took over the care of the insane patients in 1845. In a Leader on 17 April, 1844 the Colonial Times complained of the lack of treatment given. "At the hospital at New Norfolk there are men that have been confined for years and years and years; indeed there appears to be no attempt made at cure, but merely the keeping the patient in safe custody." The newspaper

(64) C.S.O/5/5272.

(65) C.S.O/5/6706.

(66) Colonial Times, 17 December, 1844.

demanded the appointment of visiting magistrates to inspect the hospital periodically. On 4 January, 1845 the Colonial Times took the matter up again and declared the care of the insane was left to wardsmen and invalids and that little attention was given by the doctors. Further accusations were made on 10 December, 1847 when the hospital was said to be "shamefully mismanaged" and that the patients were ill treated. "No man can imagine" the article went on, "the tyranny and oppression carried on in the building. Wardsmen when drunk have been known to torture inmates." In 1855 John Morgan, who campaigned for many years about the hospital, again alleged cruelty to insane patients. Both the staff and the Convict Department denied this indignantly. Patients, they said, were well cared for and well fed. Restraint was rarely used and staff who ill treated the patients were dismissed. (67).

How true any of these allegations were it is difficult to say. Denison thought Dr. Meyer was a man of "high talents and peculiar fitness for charge of a lunatic asylum" and he was not slow to criticise where he found failings. (68) Meyer certainly extended the employment of the patients within the hospital in gardening, repairs and other occupations which he thought beneficial to them, (69) but the natural conservatism of a penal department would tend to militate against any more drastic changes, especially those which involved more freedom for the patients

(67) C.S.D/1/20/1094.

(68) G.O. 33/65/780.

(69) Colonial Times, 12 June, 1846.

outside the hospital. The comparative isolation of the hospital and the lack of any supervision from outside the Convict Medical Service lent itself to petty tyranny and lax standards. Dr. Arthur in 1838 had criticised the site of the hospital as ill chosen and too far from Hobart for a lunatic asylum. He recommended the appointment of official visitors from the neighbourhood who would report direct to the government. (70) Like most of Arthur's proposals this was rejected. Newspapers raised the issue from time to time but little notice was taken. Denison considered the question again in 1853, but decided that as the establishment was a convict one and subject to the Home Government, outside commissioners would have no power and commissioners from within the department would serve little purpose. (71) On 1 October, 1855 the hospital was handed over to the Colonial Government and a new medical officer, Dr. Huston and a body of commissioners were appointed to take over the hospital with the task of converting what was essentially a penal establishment with stress on control and security, into a civil hospital.

In the annual report for 1864 the commissioners of that year reviewed progress since 1855. Their description of the state of the hospital when they took over must be slightly suspect since there was a natural temptation to paint a gloomy picture in order to highlight their own achievements, but their statements were not disputed and it is probably a fair enough picture and is worth quoting at length.

(70) C.S.O/22/61/308.

(71) C.S.O/24/211/7968.

They wrote,

The Hospital was placed in charge of Commissioners in October 1855, when they found its condition very far behind that of similar institutions in the Mother country. The internal accommodations of the several buildings were small, badly constructed, ill ventilated, dark and dismal, while the day rooms, so called, afforded very inadequate convenience for the purposes intended. The yards and grounds were subdivided by high walls and the spaces allotted for exercise and out-door recreation were of the most limited character... There was absolutely no provision for the separate accommodation and treatment of the Patients from the better classes of Society; and in the Male Division, persons of respectable station, the unhappy subjects of mental disease, perhaps only temporary and partial in character, found themselves herded with Convicts of the most degraded class, and were thus irritated and injured by contact with men from whose habitual coarse propensities of speech, gesture and behaviour, lunacy had withdrawn every decent restraint. In the Female Division the same indiscriminate association prevailed, aggravated by the too notorious antecedent character of the larger number of the Patients, and the acuter sensibility of the sex of those who had led a virtuous life.

Amusements of any kind as features in a curative system of treating the Insane appeared never to have been thought of, or at any rate the means (of) carrying it out were wholly unprovided... And while there was an utter want of cheerful and mollifying influences inside the Hospital's walls, the Patients were never taken outside them, unless it might be in the exceptional cases of men belonging to a working party going out to some kind of labour. The principle of treatment of the Patients generally was one of coercion, which in the case of the excited or refractory, was carried out by the familiar to the strait jacket.⁽⁷²⁾

Even with due allowance for exaggeration the picture thus painted is not an attractive one. It is clear the hospital was overdue for a change.

THE AGED AND INFIRM.

With the exception of two small and short lived voluntary projects (the Longford Asylum for the aged and the New Town Alms

(72) H.A.P. 7/1865.

houses) in the late 40's and early 50's, the institutional care of the aged and the infirm was entirely a government responsibility. At the end of the Arthur period, most were being cared for at New Norfolk with a scattered few on charity rations in the community. The Hospital and Invalid Depot was already overcrowded in 1837, with many of the inmates sleeping on the floor and the sick, invalid and insane mixed indiscriminately. Built for 150 by 1838 it had 279 inmates of whom a group of almost a hundred were capable of some work though not able to support themselves entirely. Dr. Arthur suggested they should be encouraged to live in the community and given rations or money in proportion to their ability to work. (73) Dr. Officer made a similar suggestion in 1839 proposing that such patients be allowed 6d. to 8d. per day instead of the cost of 1/4d per day in the Depot, and that public officers should be appointed to supervise the payments and report on continued need. (74) Both suggestions were rejected. The system of charity rations or any other form of out-door relief was instead to be abolished. In April 1839 Franklin instructed that no further rations were to be issued to single persons and anyone requiring assistance was to be sent to an Invalid Depot. (75) Occasional temporary rations were given while patients were awaiting admission but otherwise a rigid policy of in-door relief only for the aged and infirm was followed thereafter. The policy was reaffirmed by Eardley-Willmot in 1845 in his finance minute. "It has been

(73) C.S.O. 22/61/308.

(74) C.S.O/5/4615.

(75) C.S.O/5/1208.

found necessary to abolish the distribution of out-door rations as a mode of relief, which is liable to much abuse and instead to send the applicants to the New Norfolk Asylum, as a preferable means of relieving their destitution." (76) Denison in his turn was later to maintain this policy.

Meanwhile the problem of the overcrowded depot remained. Eligibility for admission was to be restricted to the "really destitute" and each case was to be carefully investigated and the successful applicant provided by a magistrate with a "certificate of destitution." (77) At the same time various expedients were tried to reduce the numbers in the Depot. First a group were transferred to an invalid station at Sorrell Creek, a site described by Dr. Arthur as unsuitable and uncomfortable and overrun with fleas from the thatched roof of the huts. (78) They remained there for a year and were then transferred to Jerusalem Station. Dr. Arthur suggested they should be employed in mat and basket making, growing vegetables and other light tasks both to occupy themselves and to contribute to their own maintenance, which he thought preferable to idleness, a state disliked by many of the invalids. Franklin agreed on the question of idleness but insisted their occupation should be stone breaking. (79) Another group were sent to a road party at St. Peters Pass. Eighteen of this party were crippled or aged and very infirm and

(76) Hobart Town Gazette, 24 November, 1843.
(77) C.S.O/22/45/5.
(78) C.S.O/22/61/308.
(79) Ibid.

had to be taken to work on carts where on arrival "their united efforts amounted almost to nothing." (80) These shortly after this complaint, were also transferred to Jerusalem.

Dr. Officer in his temporary position as Principle Medical Officer visited the station in 1839. He found that though the old men were fed and clothed quite well the place was "ill conducted." There was no discipline and no regular system of labour and only a few cart loads of stones had been broken in the previous six months. Instead the invalids were roaming the countryside to hunt kangaroo and "with still more culpable objects." The staff, he said were negligent and incompetent and the site too far away from a large centre for adequate supervision. Dr. Officer recommended the return of the invalids to New Norfolk where they could be adequately cared for and kept in proper order and with the acceptance of this proposal the men had come full circle. (81)

A board looked at the problem in 1841. There were then 105 free paupers in the Depot and 32 convicts capable of some work. Some of the free paupers were able to work a little but refused to do so in the institution. The board reported that they "think they possess the right of relief coupled with the privilege of idleness." Others were on a "suspension list." This seems to have been an eminently sensible system introduced by Dr. Officer which allowed invalids to leave the Depot for a few weeks or months at a time and earn their living in seasonal

(80) C.S.O/5/2474.

(81) C.S.O/5/4664.

work and then be re-admitted on the basis of the original certificate. Dr. Officer said he had encouraged them to do this so that they supported themselves whenever they could and thus saved the cost of their maintenance. Others the board said who had been admitted for medical treatment found the hospital so comfortable that they malingered in order to remain.⁽⁸²⁾ Again some of the fitter were transferred to penal stations to light work but doubts were expressed of the legality of placing free paupers in penal stations and before long New Norfolk was again the main centre.

Eardley-Willmot queried the system in 1845 and considered the possibility of establishing an English type work house to deal with those who needed no special care but nothing came of the idea.⁽⁸³⁾ The old people stayed in the New Norfolk Depot with little to do and leading a very dull and restricted life, but in spite of this were not too unhappy.

By 1846, numbers were again becoming a problem, principally because the number of insane patients were steadily accumulating and that section of the hospital needed to expand. First the female patients were excluded and housed instead in the Colonial Hospital, Hobart.⁽⁸⁴⁾ Then in 1848 Denison decided that the New Norfolk Hospital must be re-organised and given over to the insane patients entirely. The invalids were to be transferred to the convict invalid station at Impression Bay. The majority went meekly enough but 26 old men refused to go. They did not want

(82) C.S.O/22/44/28.

(83) C.S.O 20/6/174.

(84) C.S.O 20/39/1059.

to go to a penal settlement they said and they were happy at New Norfolk. Denison ruled that the choice did not lie with them, and that "The men who have thrown themselves upon the charity of the government must be content with the conditions annexed to the grant of each charitable assistance." (85) Thirteen of the men gave in and were moved. The rest held out and Denison instructed that they must be told to leave the hospital and if they refused they were to be "ejected with as little violence as possible." The men left the institution quietly though they had no alternative means of supporting themselves. (86)

The Impression Bay Depot, an old convict station, was extended by bringing the old soldiers barracks into use and sleeping the men in bunks. There were 450 invalids there in May, 1848. They were described as "in a most wretched physical condition, blind, maimed, infirm and debilitated from age, accident and disease." (87) The figures dropped gradually after transportation ceased and were 238 in 1857. (88)

The three lieutenant-governors who succeeded Arthur had done nothing to improve services for the aged. They had grudgingly provided the minimum number with the minimum facilities. They would not stand by and see them starve to death but equally there was no thought of offering them a comfortable old age. Those in charge of the institutions were not unkind but financial limitations and restrictive rules prevented them from doing much

(85) C.S.O/24/14/1615.

(86) Ibid.

(87) G.O. 46/1.

(88) G.O. 46/3.

to ease the life of the inmates. It was not a creditable story. The policy towards the rest of the destitute in the community was even more discreditable.

GENERAL RELIEF SERVICES.

Poor as the quality of the service was for the aged and invalid, some responsibility was at least accepted for providing food and shelter when the situation became desperate. For destitute families in the community, the service was reduced almost to the point of non-existence, by the government's determination to economise. The first casualty in the campaign was the system of charity rations. Moves had been made in 1839 to abolish rations for the aged but for the time being women with children were allowed to remain on the store. Comparatively few were involved - only 15 adults and 5 children in January 1839 - and these were to be regularly scrutinised to prove "actual indigence." (89)

In spite of a firm policy statement by Franklin in 1841 that all rations were to cease (90) the system lingered on until 1844. During 1842 and 1843, Franklin approved rations to sick men with wives and children to support and to wives of men in prison who were "in a state of absolute want" because the wife herself was sick and unable to work. (91) Most of the issues were for short term family crises only so that numbers of families on rations did not accumulate, only 7 families were on

(89) C.S.0/5/1208.

(90) C.S.0/22/45/5.

(91) Ibid and C.S.0/22/65/1896.

rations in May, 1843. (92)

Unlike Franklin, Eardley-Willmot who took office in 1843 not only made firm policy statements but carried them out. Having himself made the stern sacrifice of postponing the rebuilding of Government House, he presumably felt the poor should be prepared to be equally willing to contribute to the task of balancing the budget. In May, 1843 he laid down that all charity rations were to cease. The seven families on regular rations were to be given one month more and then be cut off. All appealed against this judgement but were rejected. With the exception of 5 adults and 4 children who apparently by accident were left on rations until April, 1844 when the axe fell on them also, all further applications for rations were refused. (93)

The old people, married or single, were offered admission to New Norfolk, but no help was given to families with children, for whom no accommodation was available. The policy towards the poor was apparently based on English practice. A finance committee in 1845 said, "The Government has adopted, as far as applicable, the rules enforced by the Poor Law Commissioners in England, to relieve nobody that is not wholly destitute, and to give them no relief in money, but in the necessities of life in the house of the Invalid Establishment." (94)

In fact the administration was both stricter and harsher than the English Poor Law in that outdoor relief there was never wholly abolished and that if it was refused, there was an alternative to offer destitute families, if

(92) C.S.O 22/107/2277.

(93) Ibid.

(94) Minutes of Legislative Council, 17 January, 1845. op. cit.

only the workhouse. No such alternative existed in Van Diemen's Land.

The position worsened by changes in the eligibility requirements for admission to the orphan schools. In Arthur's time, the placement of children of destitute families in the asylum acted as a form of in-door relief. This largely ceased in 1838 when Franklin decreed that only children of convicts in servitude and orphan children were to be admitted. (95) Occasional exceptions were made during the next few years. Two fatherless children whose mother was "almost an idiot" were admitted in 1841 on the grounds that the mother's condition made the children virtual orphans. (96) A few other similar cases which simply could not be ignored were helped but the numbers were very limited.

In 1844 the admission rules were further restricted. With the handing over of the orphan schools to the management of the Convict Department, only children of convict parents were to be admitted. The government faced with the problem of housing orphan and deserted children resorted to the expedient of putting them in the care of willing families and paying for them at the rate of £10 per annum. Some difficulty was experienced in finding suitable people to maintain children for such a small sum, but enough were found to meet the needs of those for whom the government were forced to provide. Three children aged 3, 5 and 6 who were found in an uninhabited house in Brisbane Street,

(95) C.S.0/5/2074.

(96) C.S.0/8/41/883.

Hobart and whose father was already in gaol and whose mother had been committed for trial (97) and a child of an immigrant family whose mother had died on the voyage out and whose father had left the colony (98) were typical examples of children dealt with in this way. The local police magistrate administered the money and was supposed to ensure the children were properly cared for. It would be pleasant to look on this as an early experiment in boarding-out, but no child welfare principles were involved here. That the scheme was pure expediency is amply proved by the story of its termination. In 1846, it was discovered that with the fall in the price of essential food, the cost of maintaining a child in the Queen's Orphan School had dropped from £10 per year to £8. 9. 0 per year and that the Convict Department would accept colonial children at this cost. Thus by using this form of care in preference to placing the children with private families the government would be saved £1.11.0 per child per year. Arrangements were promptly made to transfer the children over 3 years to the Queen's Orphanage. Ten children were involved. Only one of the foster parents protested and the children's views are not known and indeed at that time were of no possible interest. (99) The arrangement that orphan and deserted children were to be admitted on colonial funds to the orphan schools continued until the end of the Imperial period.

(97) C.S.O/22/134/2863.

(98) C.S.O/22/190/2334.

(99) C.S.O/20/21/439.

The position for some one parent families was slightly eased in late 1845 and during 1846 when a few allowances were paid to families in desperate circumstances where no voluntary assistance was available. Allowances were small (4/- to 6/- per week) strictly temporary and to be supervised by the local police magistrate. (100) In January 1846, 5 women and 27 children were benefitting from these allowances. (101) At the end of 1846 the Legislative Council reached the high peak of its disregard for the needs of the poor by refusing to vote the £3,000 estimated for the care of free paupers in hospitals, invalid depots and at home. The allowances were stopped in January, 1847. (102)

The Lieutenant-Governor acting on his own authority, authorised continued care of the aged and sick and wrote in a memo on 10 January, 1847 "Whilst His Excellency feels that it is impossible to throw so great a number of infirm, aged and insane persons upon the charity of private individuals in so small and dispersed a population, he nevertheless feels it incumbent upon him to take care that relief be granted only in those circumstances in which humanity requires that it shall not be withheld." (103) The out-door relief allowances may have been continued but there is no record of this and no mention of them in pauper estimates and it is more likely that January, 1847 saw the end of the system which was against stated policy.

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- (100) C.S.O/20/14/284.
(101) C.S.O/20/29/638.
(102) C.S.O/20/19/364.
(103) C.S.O/20/41/114.

During 1846 also the occasional child from a destitute one parent family had been admitted to the Queen's Orphan Schools but this too ceased in 1847. Denison not only pursued a firm policy of refusing admission to the child of a one parent family, but rejected neglected children also. Notes by the Colonial Secretary and Denison on various applications illustrate their thinking. On a deserted wife given to drink asked for the admission of one of her two children, the Colonial Secretary wrote,

"The Government ... cannot undertake to provide for the children of dissolute parents, but only for orphans, or those who may be deemed such." Denison refused the application saying, "I am sorry for the child, but the schools would soon be overflowing did we take in the children of drunken parents." (104)

On a neglected child aged 7 years the Colonial Secretary's memo was "No doubt this poor wretched child is an object of great commiseration, but can a government undertake to provide for all those who may be neglected by their parents. If they are entirely deserted, then we are bound to give protection, but otherwise the charitable people should assist them." The Governor thought "The Government have no right or power to interfere. They are not the legal guardians of the child." (105) On a free man in St. Mary's Hospital deserted in his absence by his wife leaving the children alone, Denison wrote, "I cannot admit these children. If I established a precedent of this kind, hundreds would avail themselves of the opportunity of keeping and educating their children at the cost of the Government." (106)

(104) C.S.O/20/43/1234.

(105) C.S.O/24/48/1652.

(106) C.S.O/24/124/3696.

This thinking is an extension of the disclaimer of government responsibility. Not only is there no acceptance of the duty to ensure that families unable to support themselves do not starve, but there is a withdrawal from the earlier government assumption of some responsibility to protect children from ill treatment, neglect and moral contamination.

Denison seems to have hoped that private charitable agencies would step into the breach. There are frequent references in his memos to cases being more suited to private charity, and in 1848 the Colonial Secretary wrote, "Sir William Denison desires me to impress upon you most strongly that the most rigid scrutiny should be had into every case of pauperism before it is submitted, and as there may be many cases in which private benevolence might be exercised, to suggest that none such should be recommended to be charged upon the public purse." (107) No account seems to have been taken of the struggles of the voluntary agencies to raise the necessary finances and no positive programme was initiated to assist them to take over this area of responsibility. The government simply turned its back on the problem and chose to ignore the extent of the resultant human misery.

When they existed and within the limitations of their budget, the voluntary agencies did their best to meet the need. They were unhappily aware of the inadequacy of their resources to do so. The early Launceston Benevolent Society wrote in 1836 of the danger of the society having to close unless more funds were contributed, "If it exists, it will be but in name; for the

present amount of its resources, with the increased and increasing cases of distress in the town of Launceston, will bear so small a proportion to the claims certain to be made upon them, that the great majority of real objects of distress must remain in all the wretchedness of destitution." (108)

After 1845 more help was available but still very limited in scope. The Dorcas Society in Hobart relieved 71 cases weekly and dealt with 37 casual cases from funds of £145 and the following year from £130 aided 53 regular cases and 50 casual cases. (109) During 1846/7 in Launceston the Benevolent Society was able to offer wider help. A total of 644 persons (not cases) including 302 children were aided. (110) The Hobart Strangers Friend Society relieved nearly 100 cases in its first year, spending £51.6.5 in 1848. (111) In 1851 the Launceston Benevolent Society spent £230.4.0 on 380 persons including 189 children. (112)

It is doubtful that these sort of figures covered existing need. A state of severe destitution was the main eligibility requirement and lesser periods of distress had to be suffered. A report from the Launceston Strangers Friend Society spoke of "some cases literally saved from starvation." (113) The equivalent Hobart society in 1848 gave a few examples of cases relieved and assured the readers that they were selected from many of a similar character.

(108) Annual Report 1835 op.cit.

(109) Annual Report for 1845 & 1846 (Royal Society of Tasmania)

(110) Launceston Examiner 17 July, 1847.

(111) Wood Tasmanian Almanack op.cit. 1849 & Colonial Times, 17 October, 1849.

(112) Launceston Advertiser, 31 March, 1852.

(113) Ibid. 13 January, 1842.

A poor woman in Melville Street - in a deplorable condition - she had lain three days on a bag with only her husband's coat to cover her - her husband had no work during the winter - she had supported the family including two children by taking in washing until she was seized with a severe cold - nearly all the furniture had been taken for rent.

A woman in Molle Street, her husband died suddenly and left her with three small children - she was not only without the means to bury her husband but also destitute of food for herself and her children.

A family in Liverpool Street, the husband seriously afflicted with dropsy - his wife also for some time to do anything for sickness. They have been to a great extent dependent on this society for the payment of their rent and means of subsistence. (114)

With the limited funds available it is reasonable that the committee would reserve them for the most desperate cases and that others would be expected to get through temporary troubles by selling or pawning anything they owned.

Relief when given was mainly in the form of food and this is symptomatic of the increasing distrust of the poor and the fear of drink. It is not without significance that many of those on the societies committee were also leaders in the Total Abstinence Movement. Sherwin and Tevelein in Launceston and T.J. Crouch and George Washington Walker are typical of those who served on both types of committee. The Hobart Strangers Friend Society stated in 1848 that "By a fixed rule of the society, relief is applied by an order for articles either of food or clothing and money is only given when absolutely required, and only in such cases as afford satisfactory ground to believe that it will not be wasted." (115) The Launceston Benevolent Society put out tenders for its supplies, "mutton, beef, fine bread,

(114) Colonial Times, 25 August, 1848.

(115) Ibid.

second bread, fine flour, second flour, tea, sugar, soap, rice, sage and arrowroot and salt." (116) The Longford Benevolent Society applied much of its funds "in the form of cheap and wholesome bread" according to the Launceston Advertiser in 1840. (117) The Hobart Dorcas Society too moved over to food giving, (the amount dependent on the state of the funds) for larger families though they still gave small sums of money to old people and to families well known to them.

Each Society worked on a small executive committee with visitors who were expected to visit the poor regularly and keep in touch with the needs of their district checking imposition and seeking out cases too proud to apply for aid. The Launceston Benevolent Society also had a larger general committee who were supposed to represent various sections of the community and provide support for the society, but in fact did not do a great deal. The active workers were few and gave many hours each week to their self imposed task. All had strong religious affiliation and the Bible's injunctions to feed the poor and the widowed and the fatherless was their main inspiration. Though they were only relieving a part of the sufferings of the poor their efforts, together with church poor funds and private direct giving went some way to soften the harshness of those years.

THE CARE OF CHILDREN.

The number of convict boys coming to Van Diemen's Land steadily increased in the late 30's and early 40's until Point Puer reached a peak of 800 in 1842. The "Frances Charlotte"

(116) Launceston Advertiser, 2 July, 1846.

(117) Ibid. 2 April, 1840.

brought 140 boys in 1837 and 200 arrived on the "Royal Sovereign" in 1838 as well as smaller numbers on other ships. An additional wing for 150 boys was found necessary in 1837 to house the more difficult boys and release space for the new arrivals. (118)

Captain Booth reported to Franklin on the programme of the establishment in July, 1837. The boys rose at 5 a.m. stowed hammocks, assembled for morning prayers and then were allowed to play until breakfast. They worked from 8 a.m. to noon and then had $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours for lunch and play. They worked again from 1.30 to 5 p.m., had supper at 5.30 p.m. followed by one hour's school and then bed. There was no work on Saturday, except for boys on punishment and Sunday was mainly given over to church and religious instruction.

On admission the boys were placed in labouring gangs. If their behaviour was good, in time they were placed in trade classes and learnt to be boot and shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors, nailers, coopers, kitchen gardeners, sawyers, book binders or turners. In time if they qualified by good behaviour they would be assigned. The moves from labouring class to trade class and from either to assignment were the only rewards for good behaviour. Booth also insisted they should be proficient in the three Rs, the limit of Point Puer education, before assignment, thus providing a spur to studies. In playtime the boys were allowed to amuse themselves "in any innocent and rational manner within the prescribed bounds."

The rules were strictly enforced and even the most trivial offences punished. Punishments were graded. The boys might be deprived of their playtime and made scavengers for trivial offences. The next stage was to move them from dormitory to cell to sleep and to be made to return to the cell at the end of work. For more serious offences or for persistent breaches they were placed in cells on bread and water and as a last resort corporal punishment on the breach was inflicted. (119) The boys were frequently punished for one reason or another but serious offences were comparatively rare, one startling exception being the murder of an overseer in 1843. (120)

During 1843 the station received a visit of inspection from Benjamin Horne, sent out by the Home Government to report and to suggest ways of bringing the station into line with the English scheme for boys at Parkhurst and Millbank Prisons. Horne, who must have had rather a joyless streak, thought the boys had too much time for play and too little for work and schooling. He was critical of the amount of time the boys had to associate with each other and with the convicts from Port Arthur. Like most other penal institutions past and present, the boys developed their own sub-culture. There was, said Horne "a sort of tyranny of public opinion amongst themselves to which every boy in the place must submit as a slave at the peril of his life." (121)

(119) C.S.O/5/728

(120) C.S.O/22/79/1739.

(121) Quoted F.C. Hooper., Point Puer Experiment (N.A. Thesis, Melbourne, 1957) to which I am indebted for much of this section on Horne.

This hindered discipline because no boy would complain of another to an officer and they would lie for each other when questioned, but they would also help each other in trouble and unite against a tyrannous overseer. Horne recommended an extension of solitary confinement and a reduction of contact between the boys and the convicts of Port Arthur. He was particularly critical of the use of convict teachers in the school. "Moral influence convict overseers naturally cannot possess. Reasoning with the boys would only produce ridicule and insult and of course they must bring up for punishment under the head of insubordination every trifling case arising from petulance or ill humour." (122)

The schooling itself was inadequate with classes of 300 where most of the time was spent in keeping order and depending largely on the monitorial system. Religious instruction was described as meagre and unsatisfactory, given in large classes and placing the main emphasis on learning by heart. Trade training he thought fairly satisfactory but the hours of work were inadequate.

The Home Government took Horne's report seriously and in 1845 were inquiring what progress had been made in carrying out its recommendations. (123) Eardley-Willmot reported that convict overseers were being progressively replaced by free men and that daily school had been increased to 2½ hours daily and work to 7 hours daily, both at the expense of the boys' free time. He was hoping to secure a resident clergyman to improve religious instruction. (124)

(122) Ibid.
(123) G.O.33/20/53.
(124) Ibid.

Horne had wanted the institution moved to Maria Island to separate the boys entirely from adult convicts but Eardley-Willmot wisely rejected this because the station would lack adequate supervision due to its isolation. He proposed instead a move to Safety Cove, still on the Tasman Peninsula but further away from Port Arthur. (125) He forwarded at the same time the report of the new Commandant of Port Arthur, W.C.N. Champ (Booth having been transferred to the Queen's Orphan Schools in 1844) on the state of Point Puer.

The present site, Champ said "is a wretched bleak barren spot, without water, wood or fuel, or an inch of soil that is not for agricultural purposes, utterly valueless." The present buildings were decaying and their position, scattered over half a mile of land made them very difficult to supervise. He suggested building at Safety Cove where good land, good water, clay for bricks and a good anchorage was available. The boys he thought could build their own establishment, which would both occupy them and reduce costs. (126)

Work on Safety Cove progressed very slowly and while it was building, there was a sharp drop in admissions to Point Puer. Fewer boys were being sent out as convicts. Instead boys from Parkhurst and Millbank who had completed their punishment were sent to Van Diemen's Land as apprentices to go straight into employment. At the same time the older boys were being placed

(125) Ibid.

(126) Ibid.

direct into Probation Stations, since the length of the Point Puer training system otherwise put them at a disadvantage against the adult convicts passing more rapidly through the Probation System. Numbers dropped from 800 boys in Point Puer in 1843 to 162 in 1849. The institution was closed in May, 1849 and Safety Cove never in fact occupied by the boys.

Boys on assignment from Point Puer had in the first instance been sent to the Prisoners Barracks, Hobart to await employment but concern was expressed that this mixing with adult convicts was undoing the value of training at Point Puer. In 1842 a Hiring Depot for boys was established at New Town Farm, near the orphan schools and several hundred boys passed through in the next few years. On the closure of Point Puer, the remaining boys were transferred to Cascades station, though not it appears to the Cascades Female Factory (where a unit for delinquent boys was established in the 60's) and eventually with the end of transportation, the whole system faded out. It left a tradition of separate provision for the young delinquent which was to be revived in the 60's.

Point Puer was a harsh place for boys particularly the 9 - 16 year old group, but within the context of the whole penal system, it was a worthwhile experiment. An effort was made to equip the boys for life in the colony and to separate them off from the adult convict. No such efforts were made for the colonially convicted boy or girl and they and the children of

female short sentenced prisoners lived in the squalor of the city gaols with no provision for their education and no attempt to save them from contamination. Few protests were registered about these children. Bishop Willson complained in 1846 about the women's gaol where he said in one room was crowded those awaiting trial, those serving time, a woman awaiting execution for murder and a 15 year old ex-orphan school girl who had stolen a trinket of small value. (127) Earlier in 1841, the Female Factory in Launceston drew attention to a 12 year old servant girl who had been impertinent to her mistress and had been sentenced to 28 days labour at the Female Factory. (128) For the most part the system of sentencing children to gaol was accepted as normal and reasonable and in spite of the example of Point Puer, no special arrangements were considered necessary for them.

The state of the children in the Female Factory did arouse comment, not in terms of whether it was right or wrong for children to be part of the penal system but only on whether they were being given adequate care within it. The high mortality rate at the factory nursery continued and during 1838 the Press began to show an interest in the situation. During the first three months of 1838, 20 children died at the Factory. Inquests were held on some of these children and one which included more sensational elements received the notice of the press in March, 1838. The jury on baby Thomas Vowles found he had died of

(127) C.S.O 20/31/744.

(128) C.S.O 5/7492.

diarrhoea and added the rider "that the confined state of the nurseries and the want of proper precautions at the time of receiving the child Thomas Vowles at the House of Correction and in the nursery induced the same. (129)

Within a week another child died and the jury this time insisted on inspecting the nursery accommodation at the Factory. They found two small rooms 28 x 12 feet held between them 105 adults and children. They went on "There is no place where the children can take exercise of any sort except a wet flagged yard to which ... for four months of the year the sun's rays never penetrate and during which period it is never otherwise than in a wet state. (130)

The women complained that the diet they were given did not enable them to produce adequate milk for their babies and so they were weakened and succumbed easily to infection. The authorities suggested that the women deliberately kept the children weak so that they would not be transferred to the crime class when weaning was complete, or encouraged the convict nurses to neglect them to enable them to return to the easier life in the nursery. (131) Though the medical staff were ready to blame the women convicts, none felt able to defend the suitability of Cascades as a place for children. The adverse newspaper publicity which ran for several months forced the government's hand though not before more children had died. In June, 1838

(129) True Colonist, 23 March, 1838.

(130) Ibid. 30 March, 1838.

(131) C.S.O/5/2608.

a house in Liverpool Street was hired for a nursery and the mothers and children moved there. It was never a very satisfactory premises. Franklin found it crowded "to an unwholesome extent" in October, 1839 set up a board to consider extensions.⁽¹³²⁾ The board reported that the building was unsuitable for a nursery and could not easily be adapted and suggested a move to better premises. ⁽¹³³⁾

Nothing was done and in 1842 another report was submitted on the Liverpool Street house. "In a small ill-ventilated old house, no fewer than 57 women and 96 children are crowded together. That no more disease exists among them is surprising." ⁽¹³⁴⁾ The nursery was transferred to Dynnyrne House that year and children from the Female Factory at Launceston moved there also. ⁽¹³⁵⁾ Both at Liverpool Street and Dynnyrne a high mortality rate continued among the children. Dr. Dermer in 1843 asserted that usually half of transported children admitted to the nursery died and ascribed it to the sickly state in which they arrived following the long sea voyage with their mothers.⁽¹³⁶⁾ The children born in the nursery had a slightly better chance of survival. The children were cared for by their mothers until weaned. Thereafter they were allocated to one of the other nursing mothers who the matron claimed was usually good to them. At two to three years they were moved to the orphan schools.

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- (132) C.S.O/5/5423.
(133) Ibid.
(134) C.S.O/22/63/943.
(135) C.S.O/22/50/169 & 208.
(136) C.S.O/16/11/388.

The continued pressure for space on all the female convict accommodation, the crowding of the nursery and the high mortality rate continued to give concern. In 1848 a new station for women was opened in Ross and used by lying-in cases and in 1849, 37 women and 65 children were moved to the Brickfields Hiring Depot and for a time the death rate dropped. (137) In 1851, a new wing having been built at the Female Factory at Cascades, all the mothers and children were concentrated there. (138) There in 1851 and '52 there was another outbreak of disease so that 47 children died in 1851 and 55 in 1852. Once more the children were moved, to New Town Farm in March 1852, to Brickfields in September, 1852 and back to Cascades in 1854. The following year at the inquiry into the Convict Department, Dr. E.S. Hall made a series of allegations about the care of the children at the Cascades claiming the high death rate was due to mismanagement and neglect. He assessed the death rate at 50% of the child population. Dr. Benson replying claimed it was only 31.95%, less than the death rate of the same age group among the free population. (139) Once more the children were moved, back to Brickfields where the mortality rate dropped fairly markedly. (140)

The whole story from the first opening of the factory, involving the deaths of hundreds of children, is a sad reflection on the medical and administrative conscience of the period. The

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- (137) G.O.33/66/435.
(138) G.O.33/73/259.
(139) G.O.33 83/842.
(140) Ibid.

children had got caught up as innocent victims of the penal system and while the system itself lasted, they must survive as best they might.

In the previous chapter we left the orphan schools in the middle of a dispute between the committee and the Superintendent. Franklin on his arrival was forced to take early note of this since it was disrupting the running of the schools. Early in 1837 a Committee of Inquiry was appointed and as a result of its report and that of a subsequent board on the costs of the schools, a number of changes were instituted. The Committee of Inquiry decided strong central control was needed to run the orphan schools effectively and that since the Committee of Management and the Superintendent could not and possibly would never agree, one of them had to go. The choice fell on the Committee of Management and its attendant Ladies Committee, both of whom were disbanded that year. Naylor was offered the position of Headmaster of the schools and Chaplain to New Town Parish. It was laid down that "he will have the entire and undivided control over every officer of the Institution and will receive the utmost support from the government in conducting its affairs."⁽¹⁴¹⁾ The Lieutenant-Governor kept the right to appoint and dismiss senior staff and to admit and discharge children but the Headmaster had full responsibility for internal management. He was to have an overall responsibility for the children's education and to teach in the boys school. Four teachers, two for each

(141) C.S.0/5/1387.

school, were to assist him to improve formal education and in addition greater stress was to be placed on trade training. To provide for inspection, official visitors were to be appointed and the public invited to visit the schools when they wished. (142) Two years later, guardians were appointed for the institution for the purpose of apprenticing children under the act of that year. (143)

The Board on Costs not only recommended charging the Imperial Government the cost of maintaining (but not educating) the children of convicts, but inquired into the maintenance of the 181 free children also. The parents of 124 were found to be incapable of paying anything towards their maintenance, 12 were children of servants of the school and maintained as part of the employment agreement. 20 parents were paying for their children and 25 could pay but were not doing so. (144) These were to be followed up, but it appeared the bulk of the costs for free children would have to be borne by the Colonial Government.

Following this the criteria for admission were re-examined. Arthur had admitted children of convicts, orphaned and abandoned children, children of poor families and those in moral danger, and a small group of children on the promise of the parents to pay in full or in part. In May, 1838 these categories were drastically reduced. Only children of convicts and full orphans or wholly abandoned children were to be admitted and a ceiling of

(142) Ibid.

(143) C.S.O./5/4314. & 2 Vic. 27.

(144) C.S.O./5/2074.

500 was put on the numbers. (145)

After this reorganisation it was doubtless hoped that the Orphanage would settle down, but the government had reckoned without Mr. Naylor's propensity for quarrelling with his staff. Late in 1838 a fresh round of disputes flared up between him and the senior master, Mr. Offer, resulting in a very wordy correspondence between Naylor, Offer and the Colonial Secretary's Office in which Offer alleged mismanagement of the schools. The children's schooling he said was inadequate, there were not enough books for the school and the building itself was unsuitable, particularly the washing facilities which, for 220 boys consisted of two small "horse troughs" sited in a cold damp building. (146) The dispute ran for about six months until Franklin, expressing concern at the "lack of cordiality" existing between the Headmaster and the Senior Master ordered a board of inquiry. The board found Mr. Offer much at fault and he was rebuked for his insubordinate behaviour, but Mr. Naylor was so offended that he had not automatically been supported by the government against his staff, that he resigned in July, 1839. (147) No efforts were made to persuade him not to go and in fact one suspects Franklin was relieved to be rid of him, especially in view of press criticism of the institution.

The Colonial Times in April, 1839 reported on the Boys Orphan School,

(145) Ibid.
(146) C.S.O/5/4324.
(147) Ibid.

The majority of the apartments allotted to the use of the children are cold, comfortless and ill arranged and upon a most mistaken system of parsimonious economy. The washing places or lavatories ... are highly objectionable; they consist of cell-like rooms, paved with flags, with a stone trough at the centre, open at both ends and consequently extremely cold and comfortless. Indeed the prevalence of stone pavement, throughout the lower apartments of the building is, in our humble opinion, highly detrimental to the health of the inmates. In one room, we saw five little fellows blue and shivering with cold; there was, it is true, a fireplace in the room, but no fire. In short there seems to be no attempt at comfort for the boys whose general appearance bespeaks abjectness and squalor." The government was urged "to abandon the too rigid economy at present used at the Orphan School and to pay rather more attention to the comfort of the poor, helpless, friendless beings thereby supported. (148)

Naylor was replaced by the Rev. T. Ewing in 1839 and for the next five years the orphan schools were relatively quiet. Staffing troubles died down and convict staff were progressively replaced by free staff the changeover being completed by 1842 when the last assigned convict on the staff gained his ticket of leave. (149) Apart from a sectarian controversy which will be described below, the only major upheaval of this period was in 1841 when Ewing himself was accused of immorality with one of the older girls. A board of inquiry into this found that nothing criminal had taken place but that Mr. Ewing's behaviour had been "injudicious" and over familiar. He was reprimanded and warned to keep the older girls at a distance and not to allow them in his house. (150)

Ewing was a good public relations man on his own behalf and he wrote frequently to the Colonial Secretary drawing attention

(148) Colonial Times, 23 April, 1839.

(149) C.S.O/8/59/1325.

(150) C.S.O/8/2/470.

to his virtues. In his report for 1841 he claimed the children were "more orderly and industrious" than before. The boys over 10 years were learning to be bakers, carpenters, messengers, cooks, farmers, gardeners, shoe makers and tailors while the girls were being trained as housemaids, kitchen maids, laundresses and nursery maids. (151) So good an impression did he give that Murray's Review in 1841 declared "it is utterly impossible for any public establishment whatever, to be conducted with more attention to the health, education, comfort and general well doing of the unfortunate children placed there by public bounty in those generous asylums for the forlorn." (152)

But there were others who suggested that all was not quite so well. There were periodic newspaper allegations of boys receiving severe floggings, always swiftly denied by Ewing but leaving an unpleasant taste in the mouth of the public. An outbreak of scarlet fever in 1843 created more public concern, for 56 children died that year. (153) Dr. Bedford, Medical Officer for the schools writing in early 1843 complained that the schools were grossly overcrowded. They were built for 300 and were actually housing 500. The nursery was far too small and was understaffed. Only one woman and two young girls were caring for 30 children under 3 years of age and another had charge of 50 children between 3 and 5 years. (154)

At the same time religious controversy was raging. The orphanage had always had a strong protestant bias and as long

(151) C.S.O/5/954.

(152) Murrays Review, 2 June, 1841.

(153) S.W.D. 28/2.

(154) C.S.O 22/78/1792.

as the Catholic community was small and under-represented by its number of clergy, few protests were entered. The appointment of Father J. Therry as Vicar General in 1838 brought in a new factor, at the same time as the appointment of a Church of England clergyman to head the institution. Ewing, in particular took the view that the children of convicts were "children of the state" and therefore should be educated in the religion of the state. (155) Fr. Therry was refused admission to the schools and the Catholic children were given protestant religious instruction.

In late 1839 and early 1840 the Catholics were agitating for a separate home for Roman Catholic children on the lines of the government orphanage in New South Wales. In April, 1840 Franklin forwarded a petition from them to the Secretary of State at home. Unfortunately Fr. Therry was not able to back his application with figures of the number of likely admissions and in any case neither Franklin nor the Home Government would agree to the proposal on the grounds that if this were granted to the Catholics, every other sect would demand separate provision. (156)

Father Therry then offered to establish an orphanage of his own if the government would allow him the equivalent cost per head of each child who would otherwise have been admitted to the orphan schools, but this also was refused. (157) Concurrently many minor engagements kept the battle alive. In May, 1841 Father Therry called at the orphan schools at the request of a Catholic convict woman to see her son who was dying. Ewing

(155) G.O./1/79/462.

(156) G.O.33/34/843.

(157) C.S.O./5/4973.

refused him admission. (158) The following year, Father Therry travelling south after a visit to his flock in the north, found himself in company with a Catholic boy who was being sent to the orphan schools. Rather than lose another Catholic soul to the protestant orphanage, he simply took the boy home and cared for him himself. Ewing protested vigorously but no action was taken. (159)

This then was the state of affairs when Franklin left the Colony. The arrival of Eardley-Willmot in his place heralded another change in the management of the schools. The principle motivation was economy. The colony was in the throes of one of its budgetary crises, expenditure having exceeded revenue for the previous years and the Queen's Orphan Schools came under review. The present method of financing the schools was to support it from colonial funds while charging the Imperial Government for the convict children. Eardley-Willmot noted that of 499 children in the home in November, 1843, 376 were children of convicts and thus the orphan schools had become a largely Imperial establishment while the costs were steadily increasing. His decision was to hand the orphanage over to the Convict Department and to pay the Imperial Government for colonial children. This reduced costs from £5,927.15.0, the estimate for 1845 to £1,700 the difference being running costs, salaries, maintenance and other overheads. (160)

(158) C.S.O/8/12/1.

(159) C.S.O/22/65/1492.

(160) Hobart Town Gazette, 24 November, 1843.

The changeover involved also a change of head. Ewing was retired and the post given instead to Charles O'Hara Booth who was leaving Point Puer. Ewing remained as chaplain to the protestant children and Eardley-Willmot took the opportunity to establish the right of access of the Catholic clergy to the Roman Catholic children. Father Cotham was appointed their chaplain, religious instruction and services for Protestant and Catholic were henceforward to be separated and Catholic staff were appointed to the school. Thereafter agitation for a separate Roman Catholic orphanage ceased and was not seriously considered for another 30 years.

Ewing afterwards claimed that he had been dismissed to create a place for Booth who had become incapacitated at Point Puer and because Eardley-Willmot had given way to pressure from the Catholic community. The orphan schools, he claimed, which were once "the greatest ornament of the colony" was now being run by a man used only to boy convicts and totally unfitted to look after orphan children and what was worse had given in to Catholic encroachment so far as to allow a statue of the Virgin in the playroom. (161)

Denison in replying to these claims in 1849 said the fact was the schools had always been badly run and that under Ewing, in spite of the powers given him as Headmaster "there is nothing to show that the character of the instruction was in any way improved upon or that greater attention was paid to the moral conduct of

the children than before." (162) Denison theorised that one of the reasons for Ewing's dismissal was the earlier charge of misconduct with an older girl which had been very mildly dealt with by Franklin. "In fact" he goes on, "I can quite understand that after the expose¹ which had been made relative to his conduct as before alluded to, the government would be anxious to take the first opportunity of getting rid of him in a manner that would convey no slur upon his character." (163)

The orphan schools settled into their new routine. Booth was given very limited funds but within that framework tried to improve the school in small ways. With Denison's arrival in 1846, a fresh mind was turned upon the state of the orphanage and he was not particularly impressed by what he observed. It was not until 1848 that he took the matter up seriously. His first move was to arrange for a visit by the Inspector of Education who supplied him with a lengthy report on the school. The report showed the quality of the education given to the children was very poor. The majority of the teachers were untrained and the monitors too young and selected haphazardly. There were very few books, the classrooms were small and crowded and the desks too low for comfortable working. Industrial training too was limited, some little instruction was given in tailoring, shoe making and baking for the boys and in domestic work, plain knitting and needlework for the girls. There was no system of rewards to encourage the children, no holidays except the Queen's birthday

(162) G.O. 33 68/316.

(163) Ibid.

and very few amusements for the children. For punishment of both boys and girls the cane and solitary confinement was most common. For more serious offences the boys were birched and the girls had their front hair cut off, this last being much dreaded by the girls.

The Inspector recommended that the schools should become part of the normal educational system so that better teachers would be supplied, that industrial training should be extended and the children paid for their work, not outright but by banking the money and paying it to them on discharge. He suggested the appointment of an industrial master separate from the school master and the inclusion of farming, gardening, blacksmithing, building, mat making and basket making in the curriculum. The girls should be taught waiting at table, fine needlework and laundry, milking and butter making. (164)

Captain Booth asked for his comments expressed hurt feelings that he was not first asked to report before an inspector was sent in, but in the main agreed with the need for changes. He doubted whether the children could do extended industrial training. They were undersized and easily tired and some of the suggested training was too heavy for them. He said his staff were kind and hard working but the whole institution was "much blighted for want of means." (165)

Denison put into effect most of the inspector's recommendations, leaving Booth in charge and expressing confidence in his

(164) C.S.O/24/153/1401.

(165) Ibid.

willingness to co-operate for the children's good. (166) But for the first time, in its 20 years of existence, doubts were expressed about the basic principles of this form of child care. Until then, if the subject had been thought of at all, it was apparently assumed that given proper administration, the orphanage could be a success. Denison is not so sure and senses an important lack. In late 1848 he wrote,

I was most painfully struck with the apparent dullness and apathy of the children, especially the boys, who appeared to have lost all the elastic spirit of youth and to be careless and indifferent how they performed any duty which might be imposed upon them and to be negligent even in their amusements ... They are cut off from the indulgence of all those feelings and sympathies which are connected with the relations between parents and children. There is nothing, or next to nothing upon which their affections can rest. This is a most fearful evil and one which can be remedied only by the unremitting care and attention on the part of all those who have any share in the instruction and training of these children. The relation between the Master and the children should assume a very different form from that which is requisite in an ordinary school. It should partake more of a parental character. (167)

This was a new way of looking at the needs of the children but Denison did not feel able to carry it to any logical conclusion. There were 500 convict and orphan children to be cared for and the institution had to be. He could only suggest that praise and reward should be bestowed freely, that efforts should be made to develop the children's affections and that the idea of the love of God should be inculcated in place of the love of parents. Staff should be appointed, who had a "kind and affectionate disposition" and who could draw out and develop the affections of the children. They should be shown that "the government which stands to a certain extent in the place of their

(166) G.O. 33/68/495.

(167) Ibid.

parents is anxious for their welfare and is willing to assist them and help them forward in any way." Failure to do this would mean a "hard and selfish character will result, devoid of all human sympathies." (168)

Denison's assessment was sound but his remedies inadequate. As long as the children were massed together with no opportunity for individual attention and affection, they would not thrive, nor would good staff be attracted because the care of these dull, apathetic, affectionless children would be so unrewarding.

Booth died in 1851 and was replaced by Mr. A.B. Jones. During 1852 and 1853 there was further difficulty. The matron was accused of treating the children harshly particularly those with "dirty habits" who were frequently beaten for bed wetting. She also was found to have been taking the children's food for her own use. A board investigating this merely reprimanded her. (169) Jones left shortly after and Dr. Bedford, medical officer to the school took over as superintendent and he carried the orphanage through until 1860 when it was handed over to the Colonial Government. It was to prove just as big a headache to them as to the several governors over the previous 32 years.

The years between 1837 and 1855 had shown little development in the social services. Demand had increased but instead of expanding to meet the need, the Colonial Government had striven to maintain the status quo by limiting eligibility to exclude as many as possible from the benefits of the service. Growth in

(168) \ Ibid.

(169) H.A.P. 84/1857 & 72/1859.

ideas and methods of care had been largely stifled by this over-weening desire for economy at all costs, and the equal determination of the Imperial Government not to extend its responsibilities had created resentment against the aged, sick and destitute convict which was gradually being extended to the poor in general. Finally the running down of all Imperial services after the end of transportation was to leave them at a very low ebb when handed over to the newly independent colony.

CHAPTER III. UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT (1) 1856-1890

BUILDING ON INSECURE FOUNDATIONS.

"That Tasmania has to maintain a much larger number of destitute persons, in proportion to its size than any other of the Australian Colonies is patent to everyone." (1) In these words Bishop Willson, in a letter to the Advertiser in 1863 expressed the general feeling that the newly independent colony had been left with more than its fair share of social problems.

Public discussion of these problems was a far more common practice in the second half of the century than in the Imperial period and it is worth considering at some length the ideas put forward. Many of them had been current for the previous decade at least, but now that the colony was self-governing, there was more opportunity to enshrine these ideas in policy and we can observe the part current theories played in determining the way the social services developed.

Tasmania (as it was now known) produced very little in the way of original thinking in this area. The views expressed were a compound of the colonists English background, of the ideal of what a colonist should be like, and of local prejudices. A good deal of the English influence on their thinking was derived not from the ideals or practice of the benevolent paternalism of the more responsible aristocracy but rather from the industrial middle class view that the exercise of the virtues of diligence, prudence, sobriety, thrift and initiative was the pathway to

(1) Advertiser, 24 October, 1863.

wealth and that the comfort this acquired was the reward of virtue which did not necessarily carry with it any social obligation to assist the less successful. On the contrary, in this view, poverty was caused by idleness, improvidence and intemperance, defects of character rather than of the economic and social system and the remedy was therefore in the hands of the poor themselves. To assist them was to encourage vice and perpetuate poverty. Thus the Tasmanian relief agencies were criticised for assisting the unemployed and thereby turning able but lazy men into beggars instead of allowing the sting of poverty to force them to work. Provision for the aged also came under fire because it was supposed to encourage improvidence and deter the industrious poor from saving for an independent old age.

Current developments in England had their influence but often it was what was thought to be happening, rather than what was actually happening that carried weight. Newspaper reports for example cited the English poor law system as based entirely on in-door relief and used this as an argument against out-door relief in Tasmania and while modern studies have shown the extent of out-door relief in England it was the fiction rather than the fact that was current in Tasmania. In the same way new immigrants and returning visitors to England, brought over their own prejudices and misconceptions about the poor law and the use of the poor rates.

Much stress was placed on the ideal colonist who was to be inspired by a spirit of independence, self reliance and initiative

which was regarded as essential to the development of a healthy colonial community and to the opening up of a virgin country. In contrast to the pauper who was prepared to rely on the charity of others, the ideal man among the industrious poor relied only on self help, making his contributions to the ever growing number of Friendly Societies to provide for himself and his family in times of sickness and death, and laying aside weekly amounts in the savings banks to meet their needs in unemployment and old age. Such ideas were abroad in the old countries too, but they received even greater stress among those who had adventured across the world to make a better life and who had agitated for and won their freedom to govern themselves as they thought fit. The earlier acceptance of the view that poverty and distress might be caused by economic crises, now gave way almost entirely to the view that poverty was caused by weakness, improvidence and vice. The idea that hard work and drive were not the automatic road to security had become too threatening a notion to the colonists peace of mind to be entertained and in spite of evidence to the contrary in recurrent economic crises, the more comfortable theory died hard.

In Tasmania its life span was lengthened by the presences of large numbers of ex-convicts who offered a classic illustration of the theory.

Turn to the scenes that so frequently closes upon the career of the convict. Consider the helpless pauperism of improvidence, constitutions ruined by vice and profligacy asylums and hospitals overflowing with degraded and wretched outcasts, descending to the grave without respect or sympathy, quitting a world which they had only dishonoured and abused. (2)

(2) Quoted John West History of Tasmania. Vol. I. p. 306. (Orig. Launceston 1852 re-issued by the Libraries Board of South Australia, Adelaide, 1966.)

The ex-convict was resented, despised and often feared. The most common descriptions applied to them "the off-scourings of English prisons", "the sweepings of the gaols" illustrate the colonial viewpoint without further comment. The Church of England Bishop of Tasmania summed up the attitude of his fellow citizens to the poor of Hobart in 1859, when he was reported as saying to a public meeting called to discuss the founding of a Benevolent Society, "All present know that they could scarcely pass the streets without being beset by paupers and it was equally well known in most instances that the poverty of which they complained was the result of their own vices, of their own misconduct and of their want of desire to work, in short, of their want of social honesty." (3)

Yet the fact remained that poverty existed and since its sufferers were not on the whole prepared to starve in genteel silence it could not fail to be noticed. Clergymen and leading laymen of all denominations in both Hobart and Launceston were moved by the sights of poverty and distress in the cities, for behind the facade of gracious Georgian buildings lay another Hobart and Launceston where the poor struggled for an existence. No great concentrations of slums startled the consciences of the comfortable, but in damp cottages along the Hobart Rivulet (itself an open drain) in narrow alleys and courts off the main streets, around the wharf areas, in the yards of public houses and on the Inveresk Swamp the poor crowded. Nightly men, women

(3) Mercury, 31 October, 1859.

and children, homeless and penniless slept in the streets or sheltered in unoccupied buildings, while many of the families of the unemployed were near starvation in their homes. Begging in the streets was commonplace and ragged, half starved children scavenged and stole in order to exist. Was all this destitution due to vice? The indifferent could shrug it off with this excuse, and point to the numerous public houses daily filled with drinkers but the concerned who had met the poor as individuals could not convince themselves so easily.

The dilemma of the philanthropic caught thus between the theory that poverty was invariably self caused and the fact of obvious involuntary poverty which was a challenge to their Christian principles, left them in a state of personal conflict for the next 30 years. All of the men and women involved were committed Christians. The Bible exhorted them to care for defenceless widows and orphans, to feed the hungry, and to give alms to the poor. How then could they turn their backs upon the destitute and the homeless? They tried, not very successfully, to resolve it by classifying the poor as "deserving" or "undeserving", the former to be aided and the latter admonished. But where was the line to be drawn and how could you ignore the old, the sick or the hungry, however undeserving? The Launceston Benevolent Society in their 1863 annual report expressed their bewilderment. "A very large proportion of the want and distress they have been called upon to alleviate, may easily be traced to the depravity and improvidence of the class of persons relieved and your Committee have been most painfully impressed with the

difficulty of deciding in these cases between refusing bread to the destitute, or appearing to countenance the unworthy." To meet this problem great emphasis was placed on investigation to detect the unworthy and the imposter, and on centralisation of relief to avoid the evils of indiscriminate charity. The benevolent public were urged by all the agencies not to give to beggars or to relieve the poor on a casual basis, but to refer them to those who could investigate their claims for help. Both Benevolent Societies claimed their registrars and committees were past masters at exposing imposters and that on the other hand genuine cases could always be sure of prompt assistance. The idea of centralisation of relief involved not only deterring the public from giving on an individual basis, but in preventing the proliferation of agencies. The Hobart Benevolent Society writing in 1880 of the extension of government relief commented

Up to the year 1869, all cases of distress and destitution in the city, as well as those coming up from the country, were all met by this Society's agency, when the ill-advised step of opening a Government relief office was started, which gave a stimulus to a system of charitable grants, which was then growing larger and larger, and which has made such rapid strides year by year, until self-respect, self-reliance and shame are obliterated, and the claimants for relief now base their demand on a right to receive aid as well as their neighbours. (4)

Such widespread relief they thought could only serve to demoralise the poor.

This fear of encouraging pauperism - in this sense, a willingness, or indeed a preference to sink into permanent dependence on charity, haunted the philanthropic and the legislator

(4) This and all subsequent quotations in this chapter, unless otherwise identified, are from the relevant agency's Annual Reports, the full list and whereabouts of these will be found in the bibliography.

alike. Bound up with the assumption that poverty was self caused was the conviction that it could easily become self-perpetuating. Not only were the worthless to be refused relief and where possible the deserving helped to retain as much independence as they could, but the acceptance of relief was to be made as shameful as possible.

The Royal Commission of 1871 had already made a start in this direction by recommending the publication in newspapers and in notices outside police offices, of the names of recipients of relief. "The more transparency is introduced into every branch of pauper relief, the less danger of imposture and the encouragement of habits of dependence on charity." (5) The Royal Commission of 1888 had another look at the problem. The Benevolent Societies had always given aid in rations (for fear money would be spent on drink) and the chairman of the Hobart Society in evidence reported "that the receipt of rations was looked on as discreditable and that claimants for relief have been known simply to refuse to accept provisions." The Commission recommended the adoption of this method of relief by the Administrator of Charitable Grants and that further, rations should be issued not in the relative privacy of a Government store, but through local shops, considering that if "wider publicity were given to the fact that they were in receipt of rations, this would tend to urge those who would otherwise claim money assistance to endeavour to support themselves, rather than go through a

(5) The full list of Royal Commissions, Select Committees and Special Commissions and their whereabouts will be found in the Bibliography.

course they looked on as humiliating."

These views were not wholly without opposition. The Tasmanian Catholic Standard was perhaps before its time when its Editor in 1882 by implication challenged the assumption that poverty was invariably caused by vice.

There are some, he said in a leading article, who doubt if any deserving indigent poor exist in this city. The view can only be taken by those who have but a superficial knowledge of the community. There are many silent sufferers who are often in want of coal or clothing or necessary food, the result of age, or sickness or misfortune, and we will add what is a well known fact, of improvidence or of an evil or immoral life; but from whatever cause, the necessity for assistance is real, and a Christian Community should be ready to offer relief and comfort to the afflicted, without scanning or weighing too nicely the causes of the distress. (6)

The Hobart Benevolent Society in 1885 ceded a little ground saying rather tartly "although poverty is not a crime, it is certainly not a virtue to be cultivated", but for the present these were mere cracks in the facade. The 80's were a period of relative prosperity, and it was easy then to assume that only the idle and the drunkard were poor.

So much for the poor in the community. But what of those who needed some form of institutional care? There was little argument about the need to provide for the sick and for the mentally ill. These were normal hazards of life, as likely to strike the most upright citizen as the most depraved of the "undeserving poor", but facilities for the care of the aged and chronic sick were provided grudgingly and the inmates regarded in the same light as the destitute in the community. The assumption

(6) Tasmanian Catholic Standard, December, 1882.

that inability to provide for ones old age was due to vice and improvidence was greatly strengthened by the fact that the majority of inmates of the Invalid Depots continued to come from the ex-convict group. The Select Committee on the Administration of Charitable Grants estimated in 1885 that 95% of the inmates of Invalid Depots during the previous 25 years had been prisoners, and as late as 1898 over 52% of the inmates of New Town Charitable Institutions were ex-transportees.^(6A) The fact that these old men and women were now unable to support themselves due to age and physical handicaps and were without friends or relatives in the colony was dismissed as irrelevant. What was important was that they had led irregular lives, had found companionship in the public houses and after years of enforced dependence on the government, had failed, in the limited time they had left, to achieve complete independence.

The Mercury in 1888 in a satirical article by "Tomahawk", called "Our Children of Charity", expressed the contempt felt by the general public for them.

Having come in contact pretty freely lately with the denizens of New Town Charitable Institution he wrote, it has occurred to me that many ratepayers little know how coolly they are swindled. The lazy drunken scoundrel comes to me as a beggar and asks me to keep him and I make short work of him for the time being, but he walks straight away to the Government, asks them to compel me to keep him and they non plus me by obeying his behest and at the point of the policeman's baton. I am compelled to keep this brute in laziness. (7)

In more serious vein, in 1890, Alderman L.S. Crouch giving a paper on "Indiscriminate relief" to the first Australasian

(6A) H.A.P. 18/1899.

(7) Mercury, 8 November, 1888.

Conference on Charity, told his audience "In visiting our Invalid Asylum at New Town a few months ago ... and seeing more than 800 very aged and decrepid men and women, I asked the Superintendent, "What is the cause of all this pauperism"? Without a moment's consideration, he replied, "Drink, unhesitatingly, drink."“(8)

Viewing the various Charitable Institutions in the Colony in 1863, a Royal Commission laid down as the principles of state charity the following.

While the dictates of humanity are listened to, the people shall not be oppressed by undue exactions, that the industrious poor may not be pinched, in order to maintain in idleness and in a higher state of ease and comfort than themselves, the destitute, whether that destitution be the result of sickness, old age or vice. This is no light and easy task, and yet its failure is not more injurious to the taxpayer than to the recipients of charity themselves, in whom an injudicious and indiscriminate administration of it tends to destroy that spirit of independence and self-reliance so essential to the prosperity of every community.

This principle of "less eligibility" as it was known in England where for a period it dominated the whole administration of the poor law, was restated in 1871 by the Royal Commission of that year. Commenting on a witness who had criticised the inadequacy of the bedding at Brickfields Invalid Depot, the Commissioners said,

Our opinion is that it was quite adequate for the class for whom it is provided, in the absence of acute disease, and we would deprecate as pernicious any attempt to make institutions designed for pauperism more attractive than the home which the honest self-denying workman can hope to secure for himself in old age by observance of habits of temperance and economy. Public charity should be not so much a boon, as a mitigation of the consequences of neglect or violation of wholesome general laws.

(8) Proceedings of the Australasian Conference on Charity, 1890. Public Library of Victoria.

The 1888 commission saw no great reason to change this view. Hopefully, it looked forward to the day when the ex-convict group would have died out, "for we believe that, though unavoidable accident or natural improvidence will prevent our ever being free from those who are unable or neglect to lay by sufficient for their old age, still their own pride will prevent them from becoming a burden upon the provident members of the community," a somewhat unrealistic expectation by successful men who supposed that the "industrious poor" could provide for a prolonged old age, after a lifetime on low wages, or starve in proud silence.

Attitudes towards children in need of care were mixed throughout the period under review. One group of children, who still accompanied their mothers to prison, seem to have aroused little or no interest. In annual reports they appeared as statistics only and even the deaths of 9 children in Cascades in 1875 merited no special comment in the report to Parliament. (9) Occasionally newspaper comments drew attention to their presence in the gaol. The Tasmanian Catholic Standard, for example, in November 1867 mentions in passing "the unfortunate and guiltless children of criminals ... kept month after month within the dreary walls of the Cascade prison and taught by prisoners", but beyond this type of comment the children received little attention. No Royal Commission or Select Committee on Charitable Institutions showed any interest in their care, they were mere appendages of their mothers and where she went, they must follow.

(9) H.A.P. 11/1876.

As such they did not even merit serious debate on the type of care they should receive. Eventually with the reduction in the numbers of women sent to prison and the acceptance of their children under the Boarding-Out Scheme, the problem faded out without ever being seriously aired.

The children in the Orphanage received far more attention. There were two main schools of thought, those who rather grudgingly admitted the necessity of making provision, but aimed at the minimum for the shortest possible period and those who saw the State as in loco parentis with a duty to promote the happiness and well-being of the children in its care.

The 1863 Royal Commission on the Cost of Charitable Institutions, belonged firmly to the first school.

The object of such an institution as the Queen's Asylum is not alone to educate the orphans in book learning, it is first to afford them shelter and maintenance during their natural period of helplessness and secondly to train them in such a manner as to enable them, as soon as possible, to relieve the state of the burden of their maintenance by earning their own living honestly.

The 1867 Royal Commission were more easily moved by the children's plight. Appointed to consider reduction in expenditure, they explained their failure to recommend any steps to this end by the fact that contact with the children had aroused their sympathies and said "their most anxious care became not how cheaply the children could be maintained until such an age when they might be got rid of, but rather to place the establishment on such a footing with proper regard to economy as would embrace ample provision for their physical wants and for their moral, religious and industrial training and secular instruction,

considering that if those objects were not attained, the expenditure, whether little or much, would be so much money squandered." The report commented on the prison-like atmosphere and the lack of "joyous hilarity" in the children's play.

These views gained little response at the time. A further Royal Commission four years later took up the point.

We are far from wishing to imply that the same "joyous hilarity" is to be looked for among large numbers of children, strangers to domestic sympathies and constantly under the eye of authority, as among a limited number who are exempt from all restraint except during school hours. An asylum neither is, nor can be made, a perfect substitute for a good home with all its cheering associations. It is a refuge from a bad home, or no home, or one in which misery or vice is the predominating feature and it should be viewed in its proper light.

What proved to be the last word on the subject came in 1873 from William Tarleton, Administrator of Charitable Grants and was the policy he and his successors pursued until the end of the century.

When the government consents to take charge of these destitute children, it assumes beyond the mere duty of feeding and clothing them, a moral obligation of a far higher character. As their guardian, acting in loco parentis, it is bound to promote, so far as it can, the happiness of their young lives, to supply them with the best religious and moral education in its power and generally so to train them up that they shall have at least a fair chance of becoming hereafter useful and respectable members of society. And bearing in mind the gain or loss to the community these children will be, as they may grow up to be members of either of the industrial or criminal classes and how thus a wise liberality must in that light be regarded as the truest economy, it appears to me that all mere questions of expense should be strictly subordinated to the main consideration, how the responsibilities the state has undertaken towards them (and it may also be said, the public in regard to them) can be most effectively fulfilled. (10)

Such ideas were calculated to appeal to the continuing concern for the rising race and in the same way young delinquents also benefitted from this developing feeling of community responsibility for young people without adequate homes.

With these theories forming the background, the next major issue was who should provide for the poor. The second half of the century shows a much more determined effort to put the voluntary agency at the centre of the social services. Although the state played an increasing role in social welfare in England, it was still looked on there and in neighbouring colonies primarily the field for voluntaryism and both the colonial government and the colonists themselves hankered after such an arrangement, in a way that was not in accord with the realities of the situation.

To begin with, the churches, the traditional backbone of voluntary effort, were still in no position to take on new commitments. The withdrawal of state aid, however advantageous in terms of immediate commutation payments and long term independence of action, placed the churches in a precarious financial position. The demands on their resources in terms of church building and the maintenance and housing of clergy in a period of slow but steady population increase, left little room for major social action.⁽¹¹⁾ For the best part of 25 years, the churches were content to leave the job to those clergymen and church members who felt moved to engage themselves in individual effort while the churches restricted themselves to the spiritual care

(11) Population 1857 82,907 (H.A.P. 71/1866)
1890 145,290 (Walsh's Tasmanian Almanack 1892,
p. 244).

of the inmates of the various institutions. In a small way, most parishes did their best by collections for the poor which were administered on a parish level, but it was not until 1879 that the first church sponsored institution was opened.

Without financial backing from the churches, the next most obvious source was the support of the general public. This too continued to be an unreliable source of supply. It was perhaps the logical outcome of the theory that poverty was largely self-inflicted preached so assiduously by benevolent and indifferent alike, that the average citizen was reluctant to dig into his pocket, or give up his time on behalf of such a worthless set of individuals. They might be stirred to temporary enthusiasm when a new society or institution was first established, but the maintenance of their interest remained an insoluble problem. The Hobart Benevolent Society began in 1860 with £837 collected in subscriptions, by 1862 the receipts had already dropped to £600 and by 1886 to £158.19.0. ⁽¹²⁾ A few individuals had left bequests to the society, which invested on fixed deposits brought in some additional income, but this does not alter the general picture. The Boys Home in Hobart (founded in 1869) shows a similar pattern, voluntary donations and subscriptions falling from £282.4.0 in 1869 to £88.12.0 in 1880. Some of the girls homes maintained slightly better figures (it seems that women were still the more efficient, or the more pressing collectors) and supplemented their income by work done by the girls, but were

(12) These and subsequent figures are drawn from the Society's and Institutions' Annual Reports which are listed in the Bibliography.

still unable to make ends meet on their own efforts.

The local cottage hospitals fared no better. Campbell Town Hospital dropped from £236 from July '65 to June '66 to £67.12.0 in 1888, and struggled back up to the £100 mark in later years. The Mount Bischoff Provident Hospital aided at first by the local mining companies had an even more spectacular downfall from £655.3.11 in 1882 to £144.17.0 in 1888. Even the Dorcas Society which maintained its independence through most of the century, found itself with a deficit in 1856, 1859 and 1866, and the City Mission was forced to close altogether for several years for lack of funds.

The laments of the voluntary committee men and women on the subject of subscriptions were constant. In pained tones the Hobart Benevolent Society chided in 1867 "The Committee cannot but express their surprise and regret that so small a proportion of the community should contribute regularly to the funds of a society having such an imperative claim on the charity of every member of the community" and in 1868 they lament the continued diminution of funds at their disposal and with a deficit of £274.3.11 said they were "under continued apprehension that the next month their credit at the bank would be stopped and all operations cease." The Launceston Benevolent Society ran out of funds altogether in October of 1863 and were compelled to reduce the amount of relief and ultimately to advertise their intention to discontinue the operations of the society. The day was saved by the Mayor who called a public meeting and made

special collections to keep the Society going.

A letter to the Editor in the March, 1888 issue of the Tasmanian Catholic Standard headed "St. Joseph's Orphanage" read, "I was greatly surprised to see the smallness of the amount collected for the above institution. The sum received at the annual collection of 1887 throughout the whole diocese, towards the maintenance, clothing and education of forty five orphan children was £61.16.6 of which his Lordship the Bishop gave £10, the balance of £51.16.6 representing the contribution of 30,000 Catholics." Even taking into consideration the relative poverty of the Catholic population and the other demands on their pockets, this cannot be said to represent a charitable outlook. The usual methods of painless extraction of money were of course tried, fairs, fetes, public entertainments and lectures on behalf of charity were regular features of the local scene. Some were resounding successes, others barely made their expenses and hardly warranted the effort involved.

It was early recognised that no voluntary agency could operate on a worthwhile scale without substantial government aid and many would not have been able to start at all without state assistance. Later in the century the scale of government assistance was given as the cause of the apathy of the general public and their failure to subscribe but it is doubtful if this is a valid argument especially in view of earlier experience. The truth seems to be there were simply not sufficient people interested in the well-being of their poorer neighbours to give consistent support to the voluntary agencies.

It was not only funds that were limited, so too were the number of disinterested men and women willing to give their time and energy to charitable work and just as few to take an interest in what they achieved. In 1881 Sir Henry Lefroy, Administrator, speaking to the triennial meeting of the Boys Home subscribers is reported to have said "He deeply regretted that the report would fall on empty walls and empty benches, but he had learnt that such was the ordinary practice and rule under which Benevolent Societies existed in Hobart." (13)

The Hobart Benevolent Society expressed itself somewhat bitterly on the same subject in 1868,

The Executive Committee feel sorry to complain of the apathy shown by members of the General Committee in the management of the charity. Year after year less than a dozen individuals have discharged nearly altogether the very onerous duties involved in the management, and at quarterly and other general meetings rarely any others than the members of the Executive Committee attend, so that it is frequently difficult to obtain the quorum of seven required. Those members who have so long, quarter after quarter, year after year been obliged to manage the society, would gladly see others undertake the duty in their turn.

Their offer was not taken up.

A study of the membership of voluntary committees and boards for the period gives the impression that the whole benevolent work of Hobart was run by a small group of families and individuals in different permutations, the balance of the committees being made up by men and women who worked for a few years only and then retired from what must have been a pretty discouraging task.

One of the most hard working families was surely the Mathers. Robert Andrew Mather was on the Benevolent Society Executive Committee for over 20 years, he was on the board of the Boys Home, of the General Hospital Hobart, on the committee of the Girls' Industrial School and on both the Central and local visiting committees for the Boarding-Out Scheme. His brother Joseph Benson Mather was Honorary Secretary of the Boys' Training School and on the committee for the Ragged Schools. T. B. Mather, Robert Andrew's son, took his father's place on both the Boys' Home Board and the Benevolent Society after the latter's death in 1884 and another son, Robert chaired the Prisoners Aid and Rescue Society from 1891. Alongside the Mathers were the Crouches, father and son, who were secretaries of the Hobart Benevolent Society over a combined span of 22 years, while Mrs. Crouch junior was involved in the care of "fallen women." The Sâliers had George on the Brickfields Board, Harriet as secretary of the Van Diemen's Land Asylum (a rescue organisation) and later of the Girls' Industrial School Committee, and J. G. Salier on the Hobart Benevolent Society Executive.

Other individual men, Alfred Kennerley, Dr. E.S. Hall, Henry Hunter, Henry Cook, were to be found serving for long periods on a series of boards and committees.

In Launceston again the roll call is small though honourable. Isaac Sherwin, E.L. Ditcham, John Tevelein, J.J. Hudson, F. Stanfield, C.S. Button and their wives and other relatives formed the backbone of the Benevolent Society, the Dorcas Society and the boards of the General Hospital and the Girls' Industrial

School.

Few of these jobs were sinecures. The Executive Committees of both Benevolent Societies met weekly and its members also undertook to visit the poor in the evenings and weekends. The Boarding-Out visiting committees usually met monthly and also visited the children under their care regularly. The Central Boarding-Out Committee met 14 times in one year at least.⁽¹⁴⁾ On the death of J.B. Mather the Boys' Training School report for 1890 records sadly, "The Institution has lost one who took a deep and sincere interest in its welfare... His visits were frequent and his mature advice and counsel were at all times available and acceptable."

The list of active workers given is not of course complete, but the picture is true enough, that is of a limited group of men and women devoting a large proportion of their spare time to the service of charity, while the rest of the two cities was content to leave it to the willing horses and reluctant even to back their work with regular contributions of money. Whatever may be thought of their theoretical approach to charity, their dedication to service was undeniable and the constant worry induced by shortage of funds and the frustrating limitations imposed by this on the development of their work must have made it a thankless task. Only a strong sense of christian duty to the poor and helpless and a firm belief in the value of voluntary effort combined with consistent government aid, enabled the voluntary societies to survive at all.

(14) H.A.P. 21/1887.

Successive colonial governments did their utmost to encourage and support voluntary agencies. It was in part from a genuine conviction that the care of the poor and helpless was properly the sphere of private philanthropy. They cherished a notion of utopian land in which voluntary effort formed the backbone of charitable work and there were frequent wistful reference to the state of affairs in England or nearer home in Victoria where voluntarism was a much sturdier plant. Their ideals were stiffened by the hope of economies in government expenditure that the growth of private philanthropy would bring and even when it became palpably obvious to the wildest dreamer that financially the agencies could never be self-supporting, they continued to subsidise since at least by their work the government was saved the overheads of administration.

The means of assistance were numerous and varied. Old Imperial buildings were handed over to the committee of the Girls' Training School, and to the trustees of Campbell Town Hospital. Money was voted to both the Launceston and Hobart Girls' Industrial Schools to enable them to buy better premises, special grants were given to organisations to pull them out of debt, the Launceston Girls' Industrial School, the Hobart Dorcas Society and the Hobart Benevolent Society all benefitting in this way, the first to the extent of £1,000 in 1889, the last on appealing for government aid in 1868 received the reply, "The government, fully alive to the importance of the Society have decided to place £100 at their disposal." (15)

The most common methods were the £ for £ subsidy intended to give the maximum encouragement to private effort, the payment of maintenance for the inmates of various institutions and special provision for certain classes of case. Pauper patients in the privately run hospitals as well as children sent to Industrial Schools by the court or placed by a government department were supported by government funds. The Lying-in cases assisted by both Benevolent Societies were charged directly to the government and in the 60's the Servants' Home was given aid on the grounds that it was helping female immigrants.

In most cases the government provided at least 50% of the income of voluntary agencies and often more. In 1884 for example, the Boys' Home received £99.1.0 in private subscriptions and £227 from the government. In 1890 the total budget for St. Joseph's Orphanage including parental contributions, subscriptions, laundry and dairy earnings was £835.6.11 of which the government provided £438.7.9. In general the girls' homes held their own better with the aid of the girls' own work in satisfying the apparently insatiable demand for laundry services. Even so the 1884 accounts for the Hobart Girls' Industrial School showed subscriptions £76, girls' earnings £173.5.11 and the government contribution £380. Only the Girls' Training School in Hobart of the institutions for children maintained a majority of earned income over government subsidy. In 1886 they showed £329.17.4 earnings and government subsidy £110, and though in 1897 the margin was narrower, earnings £219, government £112, they were still ahead.

There were times when the government's determination to assist seemed to go beyond what was reasonable. The state of the Campbell Town Hospital finances in 1888 was a case in point. £2,200 had been voted by Parliament for a new hospital and an annual grant in aid of £200 was being paid, matched by only £67 in subscriptions, yet the 1888 Royal Commissioners recording these facts still "felt they should deprecate this institution becoming a wholly government one", and instead suggested fairly mildly that the government was entitled to nominate one member of the board of the hospital.

Inevitably the agencies themselves became increasingly dependent on government aid and increasingly convinced that they had a right to demand it. The typical comment on the 60's was gratitude to the government for assisting. In 1861 the Hobart Benevolent Society writing on the support of wives and families of men in prison, said "at first view it seems unfair that the support of these should devolve on private benevolence, but when the liberal contribution of the government to the Society's funds is taken into consideration, such an opinion can no longer be entertained."

The Committee of the Girls' Industrial School in 1884 illustrates the developing view that aid was of right not of grace, "We are also of the opinion" they said of plans to erect a new building, "that strong representation should be made to the government with a view of securing a grant in aid of such a building. The work is purely one of social reform, designed expressly for the prevention of crime and as such we are

satisfied that a responsibility is laid upon the government which ought to be recognised."

The Campbell Town Hospital trustees took the argument one stage further. No longer grateful for the £ for £ subsidy to their funds which was once regarded as a sign of generosity, in 1889 they are criticising the government for adhering to this policy. "It is scarcely necessary to say that to collect by subscription the sum of £100 for each half year is simply impossible and unless the condition is rescinded, the hospital must cease to exist."

The division of "territories" between state and voluntary agencies seems to have been determined by three main factors; the determination of the voluntary agencies to restrict themselves to the deserving or at least the not too undeserving poor, the existence of large imperial institutions filled with ex-convicts and their offspring a proportion of whose costs were chargeable to the Imperial Government and the severely limited voluntary finances which deterred them from taking over areas of need which were already being dealt with by the state.

One clear cut function was the care of criminal lunatics, particularly those who were found to be insane during their period of servitude. The "Imperial Lunatics" - a rather grand title for a pathetic group of men - housed first at Port Arthur and later in the Cascades, were entirely chargeable to the Imperial Government and no-one ever suggested they should be other than a government responsibility.

The numbers of ex-convicts in the early colonial period at the New Norfolk Asylum, where for a long time they formed a majority of the patients, as well as the existence of a long established institution, effectively ensured that the care of the mentally ill also remained an area of state activity. There seems to have been little discussion about this and when the issue of private asylums was raised by the Royal Commission on Lunatic Asylums in Tasmania in 1883, of 16 doctors giving evidence, 14 favoured state provision for the insane, including private patients. The system of providing special accommodation for the "respectable" insane grew up at New Norfolk in the 1860's with no opposition from the government on theoretical grounds, even though they were slow to produce the necessary finance.

Hospitals for the physically sick were slightly more debateable ground. The Joint Committee which considered the state charitable institutions in 1858 committed itself to the view "that it is the duty of the state to provide for all destitute sick poor by means of hospitals, having dispensaries attached treating in-door and out-door patients." Government views on provision for non-pauper patients fluctuated. In 1860 Dr. Bedford of St. Mary's Hospital was complaining that the government was endangering the future of that hospital by soliciting paying patients at the General Hospital, Hobart and offering a sliding scale to those who could pay in part. ⁽¹⁶⁾ The Royal Commission of 1888 took the view that the government should not be making special provision for paying patients.

(16) Legislative Council Papers, 53/1860.

It has often been suggested that provision should be made at the General Hospital for the admission of a wealthier class of patient, who should pay for their medical attendance as well as for their maintenance ... The General Hospital is essentially a Charitable Institution supported by government funds, assisted by the gratuitous services of the Honorary Staff, and intended to provide for the care and treatment of such of the citizens as are unable to provide for themselves, and in no way designed to provide for those who can afford to pay. Provision such as this is usually afforded in a private hospital supported by voluntary contributions and the tax-payers have done their duty when they have made their provision for those in indigent circumstances and should not be called upon to provide for the wealthier classes. The growing practice of allowing those who can afford to be treated in their own homes to enter the hospital, should in our opinion, be discouraged in every possible way, except in the cases of accident and infectious disease.

In practice a sort of compromise was reached of necessity since until the last years of the century there were none but government hospitals in Hobart and Launceston. Paying patients came in increasing numbers as medical knowledge extended and conditions in the hospitals were improved, but no special provision was made for them, and the right to have their own private doctor attending them in the hospital continued to be resisted in both hospitals.

Outside the two cities, the government left hospital provision to voluntary effort, subsidised by the treasury. Hospitals were to be provided by local landowners and local industry and the "industrious poor" encouraged to subscribe small annual sums to pay for their own and their families' hospital care in time of sickness. For a short period this system had been applied to the Cornwall (later the Launceston General) Hospital, which had been handed over to a voluntary board of trustees in 1854, but resumed by the government in 1863 due to a disastrous

falling off of subscriber interest, so that not only had income fallen while indebtedness rose, but it became difficult even to assemble a meeting of subscribers. In spite of the failure of this experiment and the problems experienced by Campbell Town Hospital in raising finance, the government, the hospital boards and local doctors continued to sigh after private subscription to the hospitals. Not only, they thought, would this be a saving in government funds, but it would give the public a personal interest in the running of hospitals, including the right to elect board members. Such a system worked apparently not only in the old established hospitals in England, but also in neighbouring Victoria where in 1888 57% of their revenue was received from voluntary sources in comparison with only 19% in Tasmania. (17) Apart from the provision of samaritan funds and occasional local support for special projects such as a children's ward, this was to remain the pattern until almost the end of the century.

Provision for the aged and infirm might normally have been expected to be work attractive to the philanthropist. Alms houses where charming and gentle old men and women could spend their declining years were traditionally the subjects of bequests or donations in England. Not so in Tasmania. Once more the ex-convict drove away the benevolent. He was neither charming nor gentle. On the contrary he was riotous, hard-drinking, idle and dissolute and he valued his freedom of movement too much to become a picturesque sight. A perfect prototype in fact of the "undeserving poor" and as such not a fit subject for private

(17) H.A.P. 50/1888.

benevolence. The Imperial government had made a beginning providing for the old and invalid and the colonial governments were early under pressure to extend this. By the time the ex-convicts had become old enough to weary of continual movement and assume some respectability, the private citizen was content to leave his care and others of the same age, to the state. The small alms houses in Launceston opened in 1879 seem to have been the only private residential provision for the aged poor, and these were carefully restricted by their charter to "the accommodation or relief of the poor of the higher classes who may have become reduced in circumstances." The rules went on to direct, "That no-one shall be admitted into the said institution that has been convicted in any of the Australian Colonies or New Zealand of any crime that is infamous or who shall be known to be addicted to habits of Intemperance, and that if at any time during the time any such person shall become an inmate he or she shall be found to be in a state of Intoxication, he or she shall be liable to be dismissed from the said Institution." (18)

The principle fields left for voluntary endeavour were the care of children, out-door relief of the poor and that unfortunately named category "Fallen Women". Even within these groups there were subdivisions some being regarded as appropriate for voluntary aid and others fit only for government assistance.

The Imperial government once more had its influence, having left a large working institution for the care of orphan and destitute children aged 2 - 12 years. Because of this and

(18) Launceston Benevolent Society Papers.

because of the size of the problem (the Queen's Asylum still housed over 500 children for many years) this age group with one exception remained the responsibility of the government, first in the Queen's Asylum and later under the Boarding-Out Scheme. The voluntary agencies at first attempted only to fill the gap left by government services and cater for the 10 - 14 age group. Following criticism of the lack of provision for older children neglected or deserted by their parents, Parliament passed enabling legislation in 1867 to encourage voluntary agencies to establish reformatories and industrial schools. In the colony it was quickly divided into deserving - neglected and deserted children - and undeserving - delinquent children - and private citizens wanted nothing to do with the latter. A public meeting reported in November, 1867 in the Tasmanian Catholic Standard decided, "The establishment of Reformatories for children criminally convicted of grave offences, the Committee would not entertain, the general opinion being that the Government was bound to undertake that branch of the subject, and itself provide a system for reformation of its juvenile criminals, more in accordance with modern experience than keeping them in gaol." The Editor put his finger on one basic problem, "While it is so difficult to raise the means necessary to relieve the destitute poor who seek aid from our Benevolent Societies (both institutions in Hobart Town and Launceston being threatened with dissolution from want of funds) it is very unlikely that the public will voluntarily relieve the government from its responsibility of providing for those criminally convicted."

They recognised, however, that there was room for efforts to save children from crime and sin by offering them shelter and surrounding them with good moral influence, a task they thought peculiarly suited to voluntary work. "If lost and neglected children are ever to be reclaimed" wrote the Editor of Church News in September, 1867 "it can only be by religious influence." So the early homes, the Girls' Industrial Schools in Hobart and Launceston and Boys' Home had a firm religious motivation. They were not in fact church sponsored, but their founders were all convinced protestants and the homes had a strong religious bias. It seems to have been this fact which spurred the Catholics into action and produced the first church sponsored home, St. Joseph's Industrial School and Orphanage in 1879. The impending closure of the Queen's Asylum where the children's religious education was assured provided the final goad. The Tasmanian Catholic Standard in November, 1869 arguing then for a Catholic Industrial School which should be "a harbour or refuge, ... better than the streets, better than the purlieus of vice, better than the haunts that are destroying the bodies and souls of our Catholic children in Hobart Town" expressed some concern about the fact that the only existing schools were protestant. "It is here precisely that the danger comes home to us. It is here from being a matter of sentiment and regret that we have no such Reformatory Institution in this diocese, it becomes a question of conscience and duty ... can we stand idly by and see Christ's little ones placed where of necessity they must lose the precious

gift of faith and not feel that what has hitherto been a thing to be desired, has become a positive duty."

The Industrial Schools then were to prevent crime and rescue from sin and to provide homes where older children could be trained to be good citizens. Surprisingly enough only one of the homes developed into an orphanage for younger children (St. Joseph's Orphanage). The others maintained their character of schools for 10 - 14 year olds until the end of the century.

As far as the care of boys was concerned, voluntary agencies held firmly to the view that young criminals were the responsibility of the government. But there was from 1881 a voluntary home intended for girls who might otherwise have gone to prison - the Hobart Girls' Training School. In a sense this was a logical development of rescue work for "fallen women", since many of the girls there were regarded as potential prostitutes. Nineteenth century women on the whole saw sex as something to be enjoyed by men and endured by women, and it followed that it was proper to try to protect young and innocent girls from the degradations of wicked and heartless men. The setting up of Servants' Homes was one means to frustrate masculine wiles. Here the immigrant girl or the girl up from the country who was between jobs and who, alone and unprotected in the city, would be an easy prey, was offered shelter until a respectable living could be found. Another activity was to offer a haven for the girl who had been seduced and deserted and later a place where she could have her baby and at the same time repent of her sin. Probably the first home to be founded for this purpose was the

Van Diemen's Land Asylum for the Protection of Destitute and Unfortunate Females, opened in 1848.

This home, like several that followed foundered for want of funds and Church News was urging in 1874 that such refuges should be backed by the Church of England. "Are our readers aware" the Editor wrote in July of that year, "That at the present time there is absolutely no place whatever into which any poor girl who has been betrayed into evil courses, but who is desirous of leading a better life, may be received. The church," he added "is wasting its time condemning the sin if she 'fails to provide with all tenderness and compassion, a place of repentance for the sinner'." Church News was still pressing the case in 1889. "Rescue work among fallen women is a christian duty which has too long been neglected by the Church in Hobart." (19)

The major field for voluntary activity was of course out-door relief. Here, besides the division into deserving and undeserving, was a further category of short term and long term cases. The leading relief bodies, the Benevolent Societies of Hobart and Launceston were divided in their outlook on the place of voluntary agencies in poor relief. The Hobart Society felt strongly that relief should be maintained as a voluntary activity, so as "to avoid the obnoxious poor rate." The Launceston committee would cheerfully have handed over to the government. In 1863 the committee wrote,

(19) Church News, April, 1899.

They avail themselves of this opportunity of stating their firm conviction that the present plan of relieving the poor by private agency with funds obtained from a comparatively few individuals residing principally in Launceston is objectionable in principle and inadequate in result, the amount collected being less each succeeding year and many persons who can well afford to give largely, absolutely refusing their aid altogether and notwithstanding the rule requiring one months residence in Launceston previous to an applicant being relieved, they find that a great number of the poor from country districts come to Launceston when sickness and want overtake them. For these and other reasons they consider it to be the duty of the legislature to provide funds from the general revenue and appoint administrators from among the residents in town, who should be responsible for the proper discharge of their duties.

In the 1870 annual report they again complained, "The present mode of relieving the distressed through the medium of a Benevolent Society subsidised by the government, is only suited to a community in its earlier stage of existence."

Whatever the theories, the hard fact was that neither society could raise enough finance to bear the whole support of the poor. The government may have hoped originally that voluntary agencies could carry out-door relief with the aid of government subsidies but by 1862 it was recognised that it was not practicable and with the gradual growth of direct government out-door relief, a division of labour was agreed upon. The voluntary agencies were to deal with cases of temporary distress (with government subsidy of course) and the government with long term cases. The point of hand over was when a family had needed aid for more than three months, but the division was never absolutely clear cut, since being on a government allowance was regarded by the voluntary agencies as being more disgraceful than their own relief, certain favoured cases were kept on as

being especially deserving. By 1867 the government were accepting a basic responsibility. "In the absence of local institutions or adequate private benevolence, the Central Government must in every civilised country take measures to prevent the destitute from absolutely starving." (20)

To speak of voluntary and government spheres of action as if they were completely separate is unrealistic and inaccurate in this period in Tasmania. The two types of service were in fact so inextricably entangled that at times it is difficult to say where each began and ended. The one clear point is that the government provided the bulk of the money supporting its own services and providing at least 50% of voluntary agency funds as well as periodic rescue operations. But what the government gave in finance, the voluntary workers repaid in service. Almost every government institution was served by a voluntary board who in varying degrees assisted in the running of the unit. Those who did not have a voluntary board often had visiting committees who operated with varying success. The Boarding-Out System could hardly have survived without voluntary workers who undertook most of the visiting of the children. Perhaps the most extreme example of this joint working was the farming out of government work to voluntary agencies sometimes combined with the loan of staff who drew their salary from the government but gave their services to the agency with the not surprising results that their loyalties became hopelessly divided.

(20) This is part of the evidence given by Solly, Assistant Colonial Secretary to the Royal Commission on the Queen's Orphan School and mainly refers to destitute children. I think its wider application is justified.

Out-door relief in Hobart and later in Launceston was periodically dealt with in this way, and the Launceston Invalid Depot was handed over in 1895 to the Launceston Benevolent Society and the Cascades Lying-in Home to the Home of Mercy, to administer. In this way, voluntary effort penetrated into every aspect of government work.

The voluntary societies, in spite of shortage of both money and workers, functioned fairly efficiently. They had the advantage of choosing their own terms of reference and of limiting themselves to what they knew they could achieve. They came in for more praise than blame from Press and Parliament and it was often assumed, without any evidence as far as can be discovered, that they were innately more suited to charitable work than those in the government services. The fragile child of the 30's and 40's was now a sturdy adult exercising considerable influence in all fields of social welfare. The harassed public servant in the charitable departments and institutions working under far less favourable conditions must often have envied them their relative immunity from the many ills of over-government.

For those in government employment in the social services, praise was a rare commodity and reasonable working conditions and the opportunity to provide a good service even rarer. The Colonial Government took over the state charitable institutions from the Imperial Government between 1855 and 1863 in the confidence that a locally controlled administration would function more satisfactorily and more cheaply than one that owed its allegiance to a government 13,000 miles away. The recent and

serious dissension over the administration of the Convict Department no doubt influenced the Imperial Government's willingness to withdraw from this field. The General Hospitals, the Queen's Asylum, the New Norfolk Lunatic Asylum and the Hobart and Launceston Gaols and Houses of Correction passed into Colonial hands leaving only Port Arthur, with its prison, small hospital, lunatic asylum and Invalid Depot under the control of the Imperial Government until 1877. The main negotiations which were protracted over many years were centred not around the principle of who should control the institutions but on the extent of the Imperial Government's responsibility for their inmates. The final settlement, which did not meet up to the Colonial Government's claims no doubt contributed to the general sourness which characterised the attitude of the government and Parliament in general to the ex-convict inmates and to the children of convicts in the Orphan Asylum. The Imperial Government was to be responsible only for conditions which manifested themselves clearly during the convicts period of servitude or within 12 months of his receiving his ticket of leave. Destitute children of two convict parents were to be chargeable to the Imperial Government and of one convict and one free on a half and half basis. The settlement did enable the Colonial Government to charge a proportion of costs to the Imperial Government, a proportion which gradually diminished as the century proceeded and which was not matched by any increased financial stability on the part of the Colonial Government. Colonial finances were unhappily Micawberish in character and financial crises and cries

of retrenchment commonplace. Administratively the services remained the responsibility of the Colonial Secretary now a Minister of the Tasmanian government.

As we have seen the institutions had been left by the Imperial Government in a very run down condition. The two city hospitals were overcrowded, ill-equipped and in a poor state of repair. The state of the New Norfolk Asylum has already been described. The aged were housed at Impression Bay or in the city hospitals, neither being suitable for their needs. Accommodation for destitute children was also bad. Some were in hospital with their invalid mothers, others were equally unsuitably placed in the Cascades factory, the damp depressing building where numbers of infants had died from lack of care in the past decades. The older children were in the overcrowded Queen's Asylum, yet another prison-like building, surrounded by high walls which made the yards damp and sunless.

Exhilarated no doubt by their new powers and determined to prove their superiority to the Imperial Government, Parliament indulged in what, in comparison with the rest of the century, can only be described as a spending spree. A new hospital was purchased for Launceston at a cost of £12,000. £4,000 was voted for alterations and repairs to the General Hospital, Hobart and over £9,000 was spent on a New Infants Building and for other repairs and alterations to the Queen's Asylum. They baulked at spending a recommended £30,000 for a completely new Lunatic Asylum near Hobart but voted instead £6,000 for essential repairs and alterations to New Norfolk. The Brickfields building was

reconverted for the use of invalid men at a cost of £6,500 in an effort to relieve pressure at the Hobart Hospital.

This halcyon period was over all too soon. By 1862 they were down to earth again and the first of many inquiries into alleged extravagant expenditure on charitable institutions was under way. An 1862 Select Committee on the Queen's Asylum described the new buildings as "extravagant and needless expenditure" and an 1863 Royal Commission rejected a request for a further £5,000 for the New Norfolk Asylum on the grounds that while the suggested additions would be useful, they were not absolutely necessary that year.

For the rest of the century the watchword was "economy" and the policy to postpone the evil day of expenditure as long as possible. Money might be spent from time to time on alterations and extensions but not a single new building was erected for the next 34 years. Instead old Imperial buildings were converted and reconverted to innumerable uses. The most notable example of this was the Cascades building and its record is worth tracing in some detail. An old brewery taken over by the Arthur Government in 1828 and used as the Female Factory for the rest of the Imperial period, it was and remained a wholly unsuitable site and building even for a gaol. It was in fact considered as a possible permanent gaol in 1876 and condemned as a "complete bog" by Henry Hunter, the architect who on examining some work done under the foundation walls reported, "I endeavoured to sink holes in several places, but failed on account of water rushing in when only about two feet below the

surface." (21)

In 1883 Dr. Turnley discussing its use as a Lunatic Asylum describes it to the Royal Commission of that year.

Situated in a hole, which in winter becomes a swamp, it is cold, damp and gloomy, shut in by hills in the immediate vicinity, there is no cheerful scenery upon which the eye may rest, look in whatever direction you may. The yards are surrounded by walls so high that during the whole of the winter time, the sun is excluded except when at its greatest altitude, for about two hours a day. The whole place and its surroundings have a depressing influence, and instead of being a fit place for the cure of mental disease, is rather calculated to produce melancholy madness in the sane.

This then was the building which for the first years of the Colonial Government was used for female prisoners and their children. In August 1867, both male and female invalids were moved in following some internal alterations and the addition of a day room for males and a "dead house". Not surprisingly this last was in regular use. By 1870 it held five groups, under one superintendent, the male and the female paupers, female prisoners, the children of the female paupers and prisoners and those deserted by their parents and too young for the Queen's Asylum and finally male juvenile prisoners. In 1874 the female invalids were transferred to the infants building of the Queen's Asylum and in 1877 the female prisoners went to Campbell Street Gaol. Their respective children accompanied them. In spite of the condemnation of the site for the purposes of a gaol in 1876, there was no thought of abandoning the building. Instead with the closure of Port Arthur in 1877, the male invalids and insane patients were transferred from that station to Cascades

and part of the building was designated a Hospital for the Insane. In possession in 1877 there were the Male Invalids, the Imperial Lunatics and the Boys' Reformatory. With the closing of the Orphan School in 1879 and the availability of those buildings, the Male Invalids were transferred to New Town and the space thus released was utilised for a Contagious Diseases Hospital which opened the same year at Cascades. A Lying-in Hospital was fitted in in 1888. The Imperial Lunatics moved to the Gaol or New Norfolk (according to their condition) in 1890 and the Delinquent Boys and the Lying-in Hospital to New Town in 1896. Only the women suffering from V.D. remained now in the Contagious Diseases Hospital (otherwise called "The Locke"). Even then it seemed a pity to waste the space and Church News reports in December, 1896 that the Home of Mercy was moving to "new quarters at the Cascades, which the Government with great kindness and liberality has placed at our disposal." One would have thought rather dubious "kindness and liberality" in the circumstances.

The Old Orphan Schools, built originally in 1830, with the addition of an infants' building in 1862 showed a similar pattern. Solely for orphans until 1874, it was utilised for Female Invalids, Male Invalids and Lying-in Cases in 1874, 1879 and 1895' respectively. The 1830 buildings were still in full operation at the end of the century although designated in 1867 as "arranged by parties much better acquainted with prison discipline than the conducting of a benevolent institution." (22)

Other buildings had a less chequered history. Brickfields Invalid Depot operating from 1860 - 1882 was taken over from the Imperial Government having formerly been Hiring Depot, a Nursery and then an Immigrant Depot. The old Military Barracks became the Invalid Depot for Launceston supplemented by the use of part of the old Gaol building for the female invalids and in times of pressure for the males also.

The fact that the buildings were old and often unsuitable did not deter the government from economising still further on repairs and extensions. Year after year in annual reports recommendations were made to improve the buildings and just as regularly they were ignored. The Launceston Invalid Depot which opened in 1868 in the old Military Barracks was already clearly inadequate to meet the demands on it in 1869 when the chairman of the Board recommended an additional ward with 30 more beds in the annual report for that year. The new ward was finally added in 1887 and in the intervening 18 years, the overflow of old men were accommodated in the Gaol or by transferring them to Hobart Institutions while others in need were being refused admission. No room was ever provided in the institution for old ladies who were accommodated in the Gaol full time.

The New Norfolk Asylum was equally neglected. Three mainland specialists called in to report on the institution in 1884, twenty five years after the Colonial Government had taken it over, were very blunt in their criticisms.

A large part of the accommodation for the patients, including the old cells, is dark, comfortless and quite unfit for the curative treatment of insane persons. The bathrooms and lavatories are so defective and ill found that it is difficult to secure the personal cleanliness of the patients, and the absence of proper ward stores and pantries leads to untidiness and renders the proper management of the Institution difficult, if not impossible. In many parts the buildings are in a bad condition of repair and this, as well as the want of fittings and of appliances for serving meals etc., induces us to think that an unwise parsimony has for some time been exercised in the control of the Institution. (23)

Later in their report the specialists made it clear where the blame lay. Discussing the role of the Hospital Commissioners they point out that under the Act (22 Vict. 23) they are "charged with the control, direction and management of the Hospital, but have no powers to carry out improvements and alterations to the buildings, or even to execute the necessary repairs, and as appears from their reports for the years 1877, 1878, 1879, 1881 and 1882, their recommendations with regard to the buildings and also as to the wages of staff and other matters have not received immediate attention, or been approved by the Government." The three doctors recommended expenditure of over £30,000 as essential. Parliament voted £12,000.

The Official Visitors for the Cascades Lunatic Asylum were still more handicapped. It was never disputed that the building was totally unsuitable. The 1888 Royal Commission was told that £15,000 would be required to build new accommodation for Criminal Lunatics at New Norfolk and decided against it on the grounds that within 20 years the whole of the present group of Imperial Lunatics would have died out and that in the meantime "no hope can

(23) H.A.P. 38/1884.

be entertained of these men being restored to their senses even under the most favourable conditions." As for day to day expenditure was concerned, Dr. Smart, Chairman of the Official Visitors told the Commission "The Government, although not refusing to spend money, gave us to understand that they would not be put to any large expense, but whatever we recommended in the way of small improvements would be done."

The New Town Charitable Institution also suffered from "the want of all modern improvements" in the view of Mr. T. Reiby, the Speaker who visited the Institution in 1888 and he thought also there was "rather too great evidence of economy as far as paint and colouring are concerned." (24)

The two major hospitals fared a little better, £31,500 being spent on Launceston General Hospital between 1863 and 1890⁽²⁵⁾ and a like amount on Hobart, but this figure cannot be considered lavish expenditure and both hospitals complained continually of restrictions on expenditure for repairs and alterations.

It would obviously not be accurate to imply that no money was spent on the charitable institutions, but it is fair to say that it was almost invariably voted long after its need had been amply justified and that usually insufficient money was then allocated. The same parsimony extended to the staffing both of the institutions and the administration of outside services. Many of the staff were veritable Pooh Bahs. Dr. Turnley, the Surgeon Superintendent of the General Hospital, Hobart in 1877 was in addition Medical Officer for the male and female gaols, for

(24) H.A.P. 1/1888-9.

(25) H.A.P. 3/1890.

the Boys' Reformatory, for the male and female invalids at Brickfields, Cascades and New Town Charitable Institution and for the Queen's Asylum.. He was also Health Officer for the Port of Hobart and Medical Attendant to paupers in their own homes. Dr. Coverdale during his time at the Cascades supervised the Imperial Lunatics, the Contagious Diseases Hospital and the Lying-in Home. Dr. Alfred Jones at Launceston ran both the gaols and the Invalid Depot for many years - the more easily perhaps since the Depot so often overflowed into the gaol. At New Norfolk Asylum in spite of complaints from the board, for over 300 patients there was for many years only one doctor, and he also administered the institution and supervised the farm.

Lesser staff were on poor levels of pay, if they existed at all. The New Norfolk Commissioner frequently recommended increased pay for wardsmen in order to attract competent staff. The rate in 1882 was £30 p.a. The Specialists who reported in 1884 said that although the staff were ample in numbers "some are in bad health, others old and infirm and many of them are drawn from a class whose services would not be accepted in the neighbouring colonies for the discharge of such responsible duties." (26) Over half had less than one year's service and breaches of discipline were overlooked because of the difficulty of replacing staff. They had no separate quarters and slept in the wards with the patients. The Specialists recommended higher wages, separate rooms and annual leave and with the carrying out of these suggestions in part at least, the situation improved.

(26) H.A.P. 38/1884.

The Invalid Depots were even less fortunate since until late in the century they had no outside staff for nursing at all. The practice was to select the more active of the invalids and pay them a modest wage to assist in the care of their fellow inmates. During the 80's the Invalid Depot Superintendents were expressing concern at the increasing decrepitude of those who were acting as nurses, they were, Mr. Witherington said in his 1884 report "totally unfitted from age and their own infirmities to fill the post of attendant."

Mr. W. Crosby who inspected the Institution late one night in 1887 describes some of the results graphically,

I find, however, no improvement has been made in the hospital ward arrangements for attending during the night to the sick and dying who are left to the tender mercies of attendants of about 70 years of age, selected from the inmates whose infirmities and failing health have obtained their admission to the Institution; these, with the assistance rendered by the night watchman, who has to patrol the whole of the buildings and the wards at hourly intervals is the provision made for ministering to the last requirements of suffering humanity in the sick wards. A few appeared to be on the verge of eternity and one in the female division had just "passed away" before we entered the room. The corpse was covered with a sheet and was placed on a mattress on the floor, where it was to rest until the morning, surrounded by the 30 or more occupants of the ward, who appeared unaffected by this, or by the happy release of one of their number. (27)

The outside services were run on the same hit or miss method. Out-door relief, originally a function of the police was by 1870 being administered in Hobart and Launceston by 2 Police Magistrates, William Tarleton and Thomas Mason. Tarleton, the senior of the two, conducted correspondence with heads of charitable institutions and also with all wardens of Municipalities, Magistrates and Clergymen. He was assisted by a Clerk, (27) H.A.P. 10/1887.

a sergeant of Police and one examining officer (with a horse and cart). In 1870 he dealt with 500 cases and granted £5,679.5.6 in allowances. The Royal Commissioners of 1871 who heard this evidence thought there was not sufficient inspection considering the amount of money spent and in the circumstances the lack was not surprising. They questioned "whether the time has not arrived when it is incumbent for the legislature to place charitable relief on such a footing as will liberate its administration from these motives of a temporary and seeming economy which meets difficulties by postponing them." The comment might well be applied to the whole administration of the charitable institutions.

Under these circumstances, serious deficiencies in the services offered, even by the standards of the period, were inevitable. Public and Press criticism were constant, but instead of taking note of the often surprisingly frank and blunt annual reports, Parliament's response was neither to vote adequate funds to put the deficiencies right, nor to recognise in the absence of available funds that the staff might well be doing their best under impossible circumstances. Instead they inflicted on the unfortunate staff a series of Royal Commissions, Select Committees and Commissions of Inquiry, of whose recommendation as often as not they took little note. In the 32 years of 1858 - 1890, no less than 7 Royal Commissions, 4 Special Commissions and 12 Select and Joint Committees probed into various aspects of the Charitable Institutions. The New Norfolk Asylum was investigated in 1859, 1863, 1871, twice in 1883, again in 1884 and in 1888.

The Queen's Asylum came under scrutiny in 1857, 1858, 1859, 1862, 1863, 1865, 1867 and 1871. It closed in 1879, hence its immunity in later years.

The Mercury editor criticising on 16 April, 1867 the appointment of the Royal Commission of that year into the Queen's Asylum, makes a just comment which could be applied more generally. He spoke of "the inadvisability of relegating to Commissions, what in so small a community as this ought to be looked upon as coming within the scope of mere departmental detail. Everything connected with these institutions must be as well known to the Government before any enquiry is instituted as it will be after it."

Very little new emerged from the various inquiries. Problems were aired and then relegated to the cupboard again. Very few abuses were uncovered - in spite of the best efforts of one Select Committee which erupted into the New Norfolk Asylum early one morning more like a revivalist movement ready to clean up Sin City than supposedly sober and unbiassed Legislative Councilors. Recommendations involving the tidying up of administrative details might be followed up but if a major innovation was recommended, it was usually filed quietly away as too expensive. Some matters of dispute cropped up year after year and were only settled by adhering to the status quo. The question of the site of the New Norfolk Asylum was a case in point. In 1859, a new site and building were recommended at a cost of £30,000 or extensive reconstruction costing £10,000. The question arose

again in 1883 when a Select Committee recommended a new site, a Royal Commission an enlarged site and new buildings and the Committee of Specialists in 1884 urged that at least one or the other should be done. The Royal Commission of 1888 remarked, "It may be taken for granted that it has been finally decided to continue the Hospital for the Insane at New Norfolk; we therefore join the other Commissions, with the Specialists, and with the official visitors in urging on the government the absolute necessity of at once taking the necessary steps to secure the land adjoining."

At other times successive commissions contradicted each other the 1867 and 1871 Royal Commissions taking opposite viewpoints on the Queen's Asylum and the government settling the matter by virtually ignoring them both. The New Norfolk Asylum had a similar experience in the space of 2 years. A Select Committee in 1883 reported, "The Management of the Insane at New Norfolk is and has been devoid of any system, tact or administrative ability and that in every department of the Institution, as will be seen by the evidence, humanity, kindness and consideration for the helpless insane have not found place." The Committee of Specialists the following year said more briefly "We are unable to endorse the charges of neglect, or the general charges of mismanagement which were advanced." Yet in between few changes of note had taken place.

Occasionally advances were made. The creation of the Department of Charitable Grants rejected by an 1867 Select

Committee arose out of, (though not directly in accordance with) a recommendation of the 1871 Royal Commission. The Boarding-Out Scheme was endorsed by the 1871 Royal Commission. The decision to import trained nurses for the General Hospital, Hobart arose out of an 1875 Select Committee on the Hospital. In other cases the Commissions often more concerned with cost than quality, acted as a retarding influence. Looked at overall, the public servant of the time might have been pardoned for thinking if the time and money spent on running inquiries had been devoted to improving the services involved, they would have served a much more useful purpose.

It would not be surprising if the effect of working under these conditions would be to depress the quality of the senior public servants and some certainly were of the type Parliament and the public deserved, cautious, defensive and wedded to the status quo as the safest means of avoiding criticism. Of this type the most obvious example is Dr. J. Coverdale, Superintendent of the Queen's Asylum from 1864-74, in charge of Port Arthur from 1874 - 1877, and finally at Cascades from 1878 - 1889. If Parliament and the public made economy their god he would serve it most assiduously. He told the 1867 Royal Commission that he had instituted no changes in the Queen's Asylum since his appointment except to reduce staff to economise. His annual reports that year after year dwell not on what was needed to improve the lot of the children, but on how cheaply the Asylum was being run. The rest of his career followed the same pattern. Not a cruel or a harsh man he seems to have had no real feeling for his

charges and to have been content to mark time and to avoid criticism.

John Witherington in charge of Brickfields and later the New Town Charitable institution from 1860 - 1889 was similarly conservative though this time more from conviction than from self protection. He was an active member of the Hobart Benevolent Society and shared their views on vice as a cause of poverty. A kindly enough man his principle claim was that by good administration he had reduced the cost of keeping the old people, including charges for salaries, maintenance of buildings, food, clothing, etc. to 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per person per day in 1870. By the year of his retirement expenditure had only risen to 9d. per day, and since he ran an orderly institution and rarely demanded any major expenditure, successive governments were well satisfied with him. Perhaps his only critics were the respectable poor who declared they would rather starve in the streets than be admitted to the Institution ⁽²⁸⁾ for as the type of inmate changed and their personal needs altered with increasing age, he failed to keep in step with the times, shrugging off the suggestion that classification was needed and opposing the idea of trained nurses for the aged and chronic sick. Within the limitations imposed on him he did a good job but he never attempted to challenge those limitations and contributed little to the development of new ideas.

(28) H.A.P. 77/1880.

Left to men like these, the public service in Tasmania would have essentially supporters of the status quo and a dead hand on development in the social services. It was the undeserved good fortune of the state that it also produced men who were willing to try out new ideas and when they found a new method which benefitted their people, to defend it vigorously against all comers. Dr. Huston, Medical Superintendent of New Norfolk Asylum from 1859 - 1880 was such a man and so too was William Tarleton, first Administrator of Charitable Grants. Dr. Huston's successors were unfortunately not of his calibre, but the succeeding Administrators, John O'Boyle, George Richardson and F. R. Seager followed in the Tarleton tradition so that the Charitable Grants office became the centre of almost all the worthwhile developments in the state's social services in the last 30 years of the century. Understaffed, overworked and largely unappreciated their achievements were nevertheless considerable. Frequent changes of government (the office of Colonial (later Chief) Secretary changed hands 17 times in 44 years) cannot have made the task of the public servant any easier and periodic retrenchments, not accompanied by any reduction in the demands made on the remaining personnel, further handicapped them. All the more credit then is due to those men who in spite of all this found ways to better the lot of those in their care.

This then was the framework within which the developing social services had to work. In the next chapter we will trace what was achieved.

CHAPTER IV. UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT (2) 1856 - 1890

THE NEW STRUCTURE.

THE HEALTH SERVICES.

The New Norfolk Lunatic Asylum was handed over to the Colonial Government in October, 1855. Dr. G. Husten was placed in charge and Commissioners selected to assist in the governing of the hospital. The first body of Commissioners who operated from 1855 - 1859 was never particularly effective. Of a meeting in 1858 it was recorded "but as has become too usual a course, no quorum was present." (1) Under the 1859 Insane Persons Act (2) the Commissioners were reconstituted, one or two being dropped and new names added to the list, including Bishop Willson, Roman Catholic Bishop of Hobart, a most active member with prior experience in England in the mental hospital services. He was blunt in his criticism of the many deficiencies of the hospital, both of its site which he considered too cut off from regular supervision and its buildings which he said were "designed by those who were much more conversant with planning cells for criminals than apartments for the infirm of mind." (3) Summing up pithily he asserted "if ingenuity could be called upon to produce the largest amount of gloom in the smallest given space, we have it here in perfection". (4)

His fellow Commissioners would not go all the way with these trenchant criticisms though they agreed that "the Asylum is far from being so well arranged as we could desire" (5) but a Joint

(1) C.S.D/1/54/1094.

(2) 22 Vic. 23.

(3) H.A.P. 10/1859.

(4) Ibid.

(5) Ibid.

Committee of both Houses set up to consider the matter in 1859 thought there were "many and great deficiencies which have been allowed to exist too long." (6) They found in particular the accommodation for the violent patients of both sexes was very bad. The men lived in "an inner small quadrangle, with a verandah on one side, and their dormitories are nearly all cells of the prison type, - gloomy, ill-ventilated and lighted worse than the cells in the Gaol at Hobart Town ... This class spend the day in a confined yard shut up all round." The women's quarters appeared even worse. The Committee found that "This unfortunate class of violent and exciteable patients are confined in a narrow corridor into which their cells open and their only space for exercise is a narrow yard adjoining. In this corridor all their meals are taken, and the confinement of their lives in such quarters is a reflection on the management which sentences them to such a dreary and monotonous existence."

A majority of the Committee recommended rebuilding the hospital near Hobart at an estimated cost of £30,000 (the lowest of several estimates) and a minority came down on the side of wholesale reconstruction on the present site requiring at least £10,000. Parliament voted £6,000 in 1860 which was used to reconstruct and improve the worst part of the hospital and at the same time a more liberal regime was introduced. A cottage for paying male patients was built and one planned for women so that the mentally ill from more decent homes would not be forced

(6) The complete list of Select Committees, Royal Commissions, etc. and their whereabouts will be found in the Bibliography.

into daily contact with ex-convicts of the more gross and violent variety. In 1863 the axe of economy fell and they were refused further grants. By constant repetition of their recommendations the Commissioners secured money for the women's cottage in 1867 but were only able to secure separate accommodation for mentally defective boys when, as part of the current retrenchment they lost the hospital's second doctor in 1871 and converted his quarters into a cottage for the boys.

Dr. Husten aimed at moving away from the penal concept of the care of the mentally ill which was concerned mainly with housing the patients and guarding against escape. Philippe Pinel in Paris had abandoned restraint in the Bicetre Hospital as early as 1793, and the leading British Physician in the field of mental illness, Dr. John Connolly, favoured the minimum restraint and an outgoing programme. In a letter to The Times on 22 June, 1863 Dr. Connolly said, "Good food, cleanliness, tranquillity, good air, free exercise out of doors, cheerful mental recreations, agreeable objects, pleasant walks, various employments within doors and without, but especially in farms and gardens, are all acknowledged in all asylums powerfully to contribute to the recovery of the curable patients and to the comfort and happiness of all. Without these even kindness, patience and humane attention are ineffectual." (7)

Dr. Husten was obviously very much influenced by these views and was supported by Bishop Willson, another admirer of Dr.

(7) Quoted in Argus, 22 September, 1863 (In the Willson Papers)

Connolly's methods. The Annual Report for 1864 ⁽⁸⁾ dwells at length on the changes introduced in the preceding nine years. Many of the high walls had been pulled down, recreation had been introduced including dances, professional entertainments, summer walks, drives and picnics outside the hospital. Books were available, as well as games, domesticated birds and small animals, and pictures decorated the walls. Many of the old cells had been pulled down and extra, well lighted day rooms erected. Gardens had been laid out in the grounds. Most important of all, use of the strait jacket and confinement had been reduced to a minimum. The Commissioners claimed the result was "general quietude and contentment." The Royal Commission of 1871 reported "The humane and liberal management of this Hospital and the prompt adoption into the treatment pursued in it of every improvement recommended by science and experience, have gained for it a favourable reputation both in the Colonies and beyond them." There appears to have been some justice in the claim. The Hospital was reported favourably in the British magazine the Journal of Mental Science in July, 1865. ⁽⁹⁾ Two years later, Dr. Husten took a year's leave to go to England to study new developments there and no doubt the patients gained the benefit of this on his return.

All this is very creditable, but it does not seem to have had a great deal of effect on the number of cures the hospital was able to claim. Bishop Willson pointed out in 1859 that the

(8) The full list of Annual Reports quoted in this Chapter and their whereabouts will be found in the Bibliography.

(9) Copy in the Willson Papers.

English County Asylums claimed a 40% rate of cure in comparison of the 6% New Norfolk cures. (10) The rest of the Commissioners preferred to assess the cure rate not in relation to the total population of the Asylum but taking the admissions against the discharges. They considered the large population of chronic cases was to be laid at the door of the convict system which had transported the worst of the English criminal population, enfeebled by a miserable childhood and a debauched manhood so that by the time of their admission they were virtually incurable. (11) Bishop Willson's view was not that the treatment system was wrong, but that the buildings were so impossibly bad that they militated against effective treatment. Whatever the cause the numbers in the Asylum increased steadily and it would seem that it was as much the death rate as the discharge rate which kept them from rocketing. The Commissioners in 1865 were able to claim some improvement to match the change in conditions. From 1859 to 1861 (inclusive), 137 patients were admitted, 33 discharged as cured and 59 died. From 1862 - 4 the admissions were 103, discharges 48 and deaths 49. A few years later the 1869 - 71 figures show 129 admissions, 47 discharges and 53 deaths, a drop then in the percentage of cures for that three year period. (12)

The Commissioners were concerned at these trends which they blamed variously on the lack of a second doctor (only one was

(10) Legislative Council Papers 10/1859.

(11) Ibid.

(12) Figures from Annual Reports.

available from 1871 - 1882) the poor quality of the general staff because of low pay and bad conditions and the deficiencies in the buildings which led to overcrowding, and poor classification. These points were raised regularly in their annual reports but they received little or no attention from the government. Writing in their Annual Report for 1876 they said somewhat bitterly,

We regret having occasion to remonstrate at the neglect with which our repeated and urgent remonstrations have been treated in reference to the professional management of this Hospital" and they added "the law having entrusted to the Commissioners the care and custody of the insane, their representation of what is necessary to the humane and satisfactory discharge of their responsibility is entitled to a more willing and prompt compliance than we have obtained.

They were later accused of a somewhat perfunctory attitude towards their duties and if this was so, it was understandable. In the early 80's the hospital came under increasing criticism and true to form the government of the time responded by appointing a Royal Commission into Lunatic Asylums in Tasmania. The Commission reported in 1883 and was highly critical of government neglect of the hospital.

The buildings at New Norfolk, with some exceptions, are of a very unsatisfactory character, being in many respects ill adapted for the purposes for which they are used. This however, is no matter for surprise, considering that they were erected many years ago for quite a different purpose, and that so far back as the year 1859, when they contained only 205 inmates, they were, so to speak, condemned in the "Report of the Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament on the Accommodation and Site of the Hospital for the Insane, New Norfolk" as not affording sufficient accommodation for either health, classification, occupation, recreation, or other purposes necessary to the well-being

of the patients. This state of things is now intensified with nearly 300 patients occupying the Asylum notwithstanding the various but comparatively insignificant additions, alterations and repairs which have been from time to time effected during the last 24 years.

The Royal Commission thought the present site was suitable though it needed enlarging. They recommended the conversion of the hospital to the pavilion system, i.e. a series of separate cottages holding a maximum of 20 patients each to enable better classification and the provision of greater comfort for the patients. They recognised the expense involved in this plan but considered that "it tends to promote the increased comfort and speedier cure of the patients. Comfort and cure should be considered in such a matter before cost while it is to be remembered that by effecting speedier cures, the more costly method may be cheaper in the end than the less costly and slower method."

They should have known better. Tasmanian governments did not appoint Royal Commissions to make expensive suggestions of this nature and according to practice they were ignored. The report had shown that the care of the patients was satisfactory and that ill treatment was rare and always reprimanded and this was good enough. Unfortunately for the government the matter was not laid to rest so easily. Later in 1883 the Matron was dismissed for drunkenness. The Legislative Council took the matter up and appointed a Select Committee to look at the hospital. Led by Dr. W.L. Crowther, they proved a hostile group, determined to "clean up" the institution. They descended upon the hospital at 8 a.m. one day and following a series of fairly brief inter-

views declared 26 of the patients to be sane and detained unlawfully. The buildings and facilities available were condemned and the blame for all the deficiencies laid on the shoulders of the Commissioners and the senior staff who were accused of being slack and incompetent. The Select Committee wanted the whole hospital abandoned and replaced by a new building at Hobart, where it could be under close supervision. Trained staff were to be brought from England to improve standards.

The Commissioners were not surprisingly indignant. In their Annual Report for 1883 they pointed out that for years they had been asking for improvements with no effect and that little or nothing of the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners with which they heartily agreed had been carried out. They demanded an expert inquiry conducted by Drs. Maning, Dick and Paterson "as the highest authority on the treatment of the Insane in neighbouring colonies." The government agreed and 1884 found the hospital staff once more girding its loins for an inquiry and probably feeling very cynical about the likely outcome. The "Specialists Report", as it became known, placed the responsibility for the poor condition of the hospital squarely on the shoulders of the government for its "parsimony", for ignoring the reports of the Commissioners and for giving them responsibility without adequate funds or powers to meet it. It recommended the transfer of the hospital to a new site near Hobart or the enlargement of the present site and extensive rebuilding at an estimated cost of £30,000. The Commissioners were to be replaced by a transfer of power to the Medical Superintendent who was to be

responsible direct to the Colonial Secretary, combined with the appointment of Official Visitors to supervise the hospital.

Three reports in two years all recommending rebuilding on a large scale were hard to ignore and £12,000 was voted by Parliament on the usual policy of giving too little, too late. For the rest, a change from Commissioners to Official Visitors was cheap enough and this was put into force the following year.

The Official Visitors started off vigorously and hopefully making 21 recommendations for immediate needs. The £12,000 was soon spent on a new cottage for the mentally defective boys and half a building for female patients and thereafter the usual government apathy prevailed. Recommendations for improvements in the drainage to combat outbreaks of typhoid, for better fire precautions since the present pressure of water was not sufficient to reach the roofs of any of the buildings, for a steam laundry to enable more frequent changes of clothing and bedding, were all ignored year after year. The year 1890 found the hospital fuller than ever due to an increase in admissions so that the male accommodation was described as "taxed to the uttermost" and female patients had to sleep in the corridor to relieve pressure on the wards. (13)

Dr. Macfarlane (appointed in 1880) described the course of treatment at the hospital to the 1883 Royal Commission as "Moral and medicinal. Moral treatment, including work, recreation, restraint and discipline. Medicinal treatment embracing the use

of sedatives, alternatives, narcotics, tonics and stimulants." The restraint consisted of the use of camisoles, sleeves and canvas mittens and occasionally separate rooms. Padded cells were not available though he thought they would be useful. The women were occupied in general domestic work and the lack of a steam laundry meant the men's time was chiefly devoted to cutting up wood to maintain the supply of hot water. The Official Visitors considered the task detrimental to the patients' treatment because of its unending monotony saying "the occupation of the galley slave could not compare with it for inertness and stupidity" (14) but their criticisms of the hospital were aimed at the government for its failure to meet the needs of the hospital, rather than at the staff. In their 1890 Annual Report they recorded "From our own observations as well as from our inquiries we were satisfied that the patients are kindly treated and their welfare carefully attended to. The quiet contented demeanor of the patients and also their clean and tidy appearance testify to the care and attention which they receive at the hands of their attendants."

The hospital in 1890 was a tolerable place for the patients in that they met with kindness and were given adequate physical care, but the consistent neglect of its needs had resulted in general stagnation and it had not fulfilled the promise of the 1860's.

(14) H.A.P. 9/1888 - 9.

Outside the New Norfolk Hospital, the picture was even less satisfactory. The treatment of the Imperial Lunatics seems to have consisted of a passive waiting for them to die and although some attempt was made towards the end of the period to give them the benefit of the type of treatment available at New Norfolk, it seems to have been too late to rouse the men out of their lethargy or to effect much improvement in their condition.

At the point of intake conditions for many years were calculated to increase disturbance rather than bring about an early cure. The 1858 Insane Persons Hospital Act⁽¹⁴⁾ provided that insane persons wandering abroad or being cruelly treated could be brought before 2 Justices who with the aid of a doctor was to investigate their condition. Alternatively two doctors, not in partnership could make an order for detention in hospital at the request of relatives. In the 1863 Annual Report, the Commissioners for New Norfolk Hospital were complaining that "persons declared to be insane and fit subjects for this Institution, by properly qualified medical gentlemen, should too frequently be subjected to a public examination in the Police Courts before the required order for admission can be obtained."

Others who were not admitted direct to the New Norfolk Hospital were subjected to haphazard care to say the least. Northern patients were housed in the gaol pending transfer to New Norfolk and in 1882 the Superintendent of the gaol in

(14) 22 Vic. 23.

Launceston complained also of the habit of northern police officers charging the "destitute imbecile" with vagrancy so as to clear them out of their district. Jones maintained that the patients condition was worsened by their forced association with the criminals proper, "to whom their pitiable condition affords matter for amusement and ridicule." (15) For these and for the insane prisoners he arranged boards of inquiry or a visit from a magistrate to facilitate their admission to hospital and if this was not possible admitted them to the Invalid Depot. The Launceston General Hospital for many years had no facilities other than the general wards for such patients, or the use of three small cells which the Medical Superintendent considered so inadequate that it was cruelty to shut patients in them. In Hobart they were commonly admitted to the General Hospital and placed in the ordinary wards or if violent in one of several gloomy cells. Delirium tremens patients were a constant source of worry in the general wards particularly when they were admitted during the night and disturbed the whole ward.

The 1883 Royal Commission on Lunatic Asylums in Tasmania to which this evidence was given recommended Reception Houses in the grounds of both General Hospitals and considered that "under proper temporary treatment many of the cases committed to the New Norfolk Asylum might we think be speedily cured, while the unhappy patients and their friends would be spared the pain which the very thought of commitment to New Norfolk awakens."

(15) H.A.P. 24/1882.

Some separate apartments were set aside in Hobart for the insane in the 80's but the Launceston patients continued to be housed in the gaol. The proposed Reception Houses were not provided in Hobart until 1890 and in Launceston in 1892. Thereafter treatment of these patients was improved and some at least recovered sufficiently during their period in the General Hospitals to be discharged home without going to New Norfolk.

The hospitals, as well as the Lunatic Asylum, were classified among the Charitable Institutions right to the end of the century. Whereas in our own time they aim to make provision for all citizens, offering concessionary rates, or a free service to those unable to pay, the 19th century services were primarily to provide for the poor and as a concession admitted their wealthier neighbours. The change from the latter to the former approach was already noticeable by the end of the century but not sufficiently advanced to remove them from the general charitable administration. They therefore tended to suffer from the same handicaps as the other services for the destitute but did derive benefit from their use by the non-destitute population who were more vocally critical of the deficiencies of a service for which they were paying. While the results of this are not easy to pinpoint in terms of this, that, or the other improvement, there can be no doubt that it was one of the factors which must be borne in mind in considering the changes that did take place. Another advantage they had over the general run of charitable institutions was the regular injection of new ideas from overseas trained staff, since only first year medical

training was available in Tasmania. Many of the doctors were a sad reflection on the training system but there were enough good ones to enable the hospital services to progress. This particularly applied to Launceston who had some very fine surgeon superintendents.

The Board of Management who took over the General Hospital, Hobart on 1 January, 1859 found the buildings greatly overcrowded, in a bad state of repair and very ill equipped. The Female Hospital in particular, they said, was "unsuited to the purposes for which it was being used being positively revolting to the stranger, crowded as it was with sick patients in small, ill ventilated rooms; with invalids and with women and young children who were represented to the Board as being of too tender years to be admitted to the Orphan School." The Hospital was being used for both male and female invalids and the children of the latter, as well as those for whom it was principally intended, the curable sick. (16)

The Cornwall Hospital in Launceston, handed over to voluntary Trustees in 1854 was in an even worse state. The old hotel rented in 1836 for £150 per annum and added to in a piecemeal fashion, was still in use. It was small, crowded, infested with bugs and being on a main road, extremely noisy. Because there was no provision for invalids in the north, (other than the Gaol on a vagrancy charge) they crowded into the Hospital, not only in the beds intended for sick patients, but sleeping on the floor in the wards, the corridors and anywhere else there was space. (17)

(16) H.A.P. 10/1861.
(17) H.A.P. 23/1858.

The provision of a new hospital for Launceston (now to be called the Launceston General Hospital) and alterations and repairs to the Hobart General Hospital eased the position somewhat and the gradual removal of the invalids and their children as other facilities opened made more space available for the curable sick. The Hobart General Hospital, in spite of some improvements, continued to be an unsatisfactory unit. The Board of Management appointed in 1859 was early complaining of its lack of powers to combat this. The Members had hoped that they would be able to put up annual estimates and if these passed government scrutiny, they would be left to manage the hospital within the available finance, as they judged best. (18) In fact the Colonial Secretary's Department retained full control of finance and the Board members, deprived of any real powers and kept short of money, rapidly lost interest. Vacancies became difficult to fill and even the most conscientious had little heart for the job. (19)

The removal of the female invalids in 1867 enabled the old wing of the hospital to be emptied. It was closed in 1870 for a time but the "Lock" section for women with Venereal Disease was set up there in 1872. Apart from this there were few changes of significance.

In the early 1870's the hospital was increasingly a focus of public criticism. A Select Committee set up in 1875 to investigate the causes of this found the hospital "not only defective but greatly behind the age." It was dirty and infection

(18) H.A.P. 21/1863.

(19) H.A.P. 64/1875.

ridden, hot water was still not available on all floors and the standard of nursing by untrained staff was very low. The Select Committee's recommendation that trained nurses should be brought from Sydney was put into effect the following year. They quickly made it clear they were unwilling to tolerate the dirt and disorder which the doctors had allowed to persist from indifference or inability to induce the staff to do any better. Before long Florence Abbott, the new Lady Superintendent was writing first to the medical staff and then to the Colonial Secretary demanding radical changes and ultimately threatening to resign along with the other nurses if more attention was not paid to their complaints. The threat induced the government to order a further inquiry this time a Royal Commission in 1877 which completely vindicated the nurses.

The Commission again remarked the lack of hot water on each floor and the shortage of it where available so that often three or four patients shared the same bath water. In the "Lock" section the single toilet was shared by both nurses and patients suffering from venereal disease and the male wards had only tubs which were emptied through a hole in the wall. Only one doctor kept any written record of his diagnosis or of the medical and dietary treatment he was pursuing for each patient. The rest relied on their memories and often forgot to communicate the instructions to the nurses.

In spite of the frequent disputes between the nurses and the medical and administrative staff, the doctors who gave evidence before the Royal Commission were with one exception in favour of

retaining the nurses services and considered the hospital had been far cleaner and better run and the patients more comfortable since their arrival. They were obviously prepared to compromise rather than lose them.

Following the Royal Commission a new Board of Management was appointed who started off with the energy of a new broom. Hot water was made available throughout the building in 1878, improved sanitary facilities were installed and the daily routine of the hospital reorganised. In the early 1880's a wing for infectious diseases was built and further extensions were built in 1887. The Reception House for insane patients was completed in 1890.

Launceston had experienced less difficulty. The new hospital opened in 1863 gave good service for a number of years. Trained nurses were introduced in 1879 with far less conflict than in Hobart. A children's ward was built in 1883 and a Dental Department formed in 1890 and facilities for isolation of infectious cases provided the same year. Launceston General Hospital maintained a better reputation than its opposite number in Hobart. The 1888 Royal Commission found it clean, well conducted and commented on "the well known confidence felt by the people at large in the management, the ability and zeal of the present surgeon superintendent and the amicable relations existing between the medical staff and the Hospital Board."

Campbell Town Hospital, started by local effort in 1855 and handicapped by lack of funds for most of its life, received no such accolade from the 1888 Royal Commission.

They reported,

We found this hospital to be an old brick building in very bad repair, the rooms being small and most inconveniently situated; the furniture, dormitories and bedding all clean but of the most meagre and primitive description, no spring mattresses being supplied. There is no bathroom, the only available bath being an old plunge, which was filled from the kitchen boiler when hot water was required. There are no instruments or surgical appliances belonging to the hospital, the medical officer in charge having to supply his own.

A new hospital was built with government aid in 1889, only just in time as the old hospital was destroyed in December, 1889 and to add insult to injury the board found the insurance had lapsed.

Two other cottage hospitals operated in the 1880's, Mount Bischoff Provident Hospital opened in 1881 and the Devon Cottage Hospital in 1888. Both were small units supported by local funds with government subsidy.

At all the hospitals conditions were primitive by modern standards, but were a vast improvement on the convict days and public confidence in them steadily grew. Private patients used them increasingly and in so doing came to show greater interest in their progress and amenities. Stagnation was not a problem in this area as it was in the treatment of mental illness.

Both the city hospitals and those in mining areas were constantly overstrained by severe outbreaks of infectious illness, most notably Typhoid, Diphtheria and Diarrhoea. The cause of these outbreaks was not far to seek. The major cities and the mining towns had grown up in a haphazard fashion with little attention to drainage and sanitation or water supply. Still

essentially a rural state, the country strayed into the town in the form of pigsties. "Mostly in a condition offensive to sight and smell." (20) Cows and horses and poultry were also commonly housed in backyards in the centre of the cities.

The government inquiring somewhat belatedly into the matter in 1875 was told by Dr. Turnley of the Hobart General Hospital, "Tasmania stands almost alone as a British Colony in having no legislative enactments, nor any organisation for the protection of Public Health." Both he and Dr. Miller of Launceston General Hospital blamed the state of the sewage for the increase in Typhoid fever. (21) Local health enactments for Hobart and Launceston (22) had been largely ineffectual.

An Officer for Health was appointed the following year with greater powers who struggled to improve the sanitary conditions in Hobart by persuasion and education. The situation was improved somewhat by the Act of 1885 which created a Central Board of Health which was to promote the setting up of local boards of health in each municipality. (23) The Central Board took a long look at Hobart and Launceston in 1886 and their report makes unsavoury reading. True the Act had enabled the pigsties to be cleared out of the city and a few of the worst cess-pits where human excrement was often kept for years without removal to be closed up but in spite of the Act kitchen and chamber slops were still allowed to run in the gutters of the public streets.

(20) H.A.P. 23/1877.

(21) H.A.P. 93/1875.

(22) 21 Vic 15 & 22 Vic. 13.

(23) 49 Vic. 18.

Where they exist these gutters convey the sewage exposed to sun and air either directly into some watercourse, or into a sewer communicating with one and in either case it flows ultimately into the estuary of the Derwent. In its passage along these open gutters in a shallow and intermittent stream it is precisely in the condition most favourable to the development and giving off of unpleasant and noxious emanations. Part of it is partially dried and remains in the joints and holes of the gutter beds, or is glued to the borders by the coagulated grease of the kitchen washings and becomes still more noisome. In some cases these gutters are open sewers of several hundred yards in length receiving foul water from every house they pass ... This condition of things is still more prevalent where the streets are not made. Their surface and that of neighbouring land becomes a swamp from the continual discharge of house sewage endeavouring and usually vainly to find some outlet. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that considerable areas in various parts of the city have become saturated with sewage. It lodges in every hollow, even on steep hillsides forming little stagnant pools and the whole surface becomes a sort of fomenting bed for filth. (24)

Launceston had similar troubles and the Inveresk Swamp, housing about 47 to the acre in small ill-ventilated houses, not only had its own sewage problems but found the sewage of other parts of the city was flung back on them by the tide. The poorer areas in most towns were not supplied with dustbins but merely threw out their rubbish to rot in the streets.

The Central Board of Health tackled the problem as vigorously as they were allowed. Finance was as limited for them as everyone else and in 1895 they were cut back to one paid officer only in spite of the fact that their task was by no means completed. Drainage was improved though in rather a patchwork fashion and a number of slum properties condemned. In 1889 they named as the worst area for Typhoid deaths in Hobart the "Notorious Antil Street Block" and the whole of the central

area bounded by Macquarie, Campbell and Collins Streets and the Rivulet. "An examination of this block would show many houses whose condition and circumstances combine almost all the elements of unhealthiness - damp, dirt, dilapidation, overcrowding, unpaved and undrained yards, floors flush with or even below the adjoining soil - all this on made up ground only 3 or 4 feet at the most above the tide and liable to be flooded in wet weather." (25)

In spite of their efforts in public education, and in enforcing the 1885 Act, Typhoid outbreaks continued and a particular severe epidemic in 1898 with 802 cases and 83 deaths showed the problem was as serious as ever. Nevertheless the general death rate had been reduced from 27.3 per 1,000 in 1875 and 22.1 per 1,000 in 1885 to 12.5 per 1,000 in 1900. (26) One other death figure of 1901 however is rather illuminating. A Rat Extermination Campaign in Hobart, initiated against the threat of Bubonic Plague accounted for 15,878 rats caught and burned and 4 or 5,000 more poisoned. (27) Such additions to the Hobart population could not have been conducive to health. The best one can say of public health measures in the late 19th century is that the problem had been recognised and that a few determined men on central and local boards were striving their utmost to conquer it and had they received greater government support, much more might have been achieved.

In the meantime the sick had to be tended. Typhoid was

(25) H.A.P. 71/1890.

(26) Figures from Annual Reports of Central Board of Health.

(27) H.A.P. 71/1901.

not the only problem. Diphtheria, Diarrhoea, Measles, Scarletina, Influenza were all regular visitants to the houses of the poor. Smallpox was tackled fairly effectively by an inoculation campaign. The rest and the accidents and day to day illness if not too serious were dealt with in out-patient departments in the major and the cottage hospitals who between them all accounted for between 2 and 5,000 patients each year (depending on epidemics). From the beginning of 1887 a Poor Law Medical Officer (later called Government Medical Officer) served in Hobart and made 800 - 900 visits each year. This was a limited service, available only in Hobart but was an improvement upon dependence on the goodwill of local medical practitioners, the only treatment available until then.

RESCUE WORK.

Another infection which created much concern was venereal disease in its various forms and its prevalence in Hobart in 1879 caused even the Navy to complain and to threaten to refuse to allow its ships to visit Hobart unless steps were taken to control it. (28) The Contagious Diseases Act passed that year (29) and reinforced in 1882 (30) provided for compulsory treatment in special hospitals for carriers who failed to attend for voluntary treatment. A hospital was opened at the Cascades in November, 1879 and in Launceston in 1886. After the first few years rather less than 50 patients were treated compulsorily each year but voluntary treatment was accepted as preferable and the disease

(28) H.A.P. 33/1879.

(29) 42 Vic. 36.

(30) 45 Vic. 23.

was more or less under control. The youngest patient seems to have been 13 years but the majority were 17 - 45 years. The agitation in England led by Josephine Butler, with its counterpart in Europe condemning the offence against human dignity and the destruction of civil rights involved in arrest on suspicion of being a common prostitute, hardly reached Tasmania. One or two members of parliament expressed doubts about the passage of the first Contagious Diseases Act in 1879, but the subsequent act of 1882 passed without real opposition. The police could lay a complaint against a woman "reputed to be a common prostitute" and the burden of proof was on the woman to prove she was free of venereal disease - a strange reversal of the keystone of British Justice. From time to time the Medical Officers of the contagious diseases hospitals found girls had been compulsorily admitted who had no infections but these cases caused little stir and though similar acts were repealed in England with great acclaim in 1886, the Tasmanian Acts remained in force to the end of the century.

Work for the prostitute, the potential prostitute and the unmarried mother was not popular with the general public, male or female. The need was certainly there. Mr. A. A. Boyd, the Superintendent of the Hobart Police, told a Select Committee on Immigration in 1861 that there were upwards of 20 known brothels in Hobart Town. Mr. Gray, City Missioner giving evidence the same year to a Select Committee on Industrial Schools said the brothel keepers met the girls leaving the gaol and the hospital and drove them straight back to their own haunts.

An appeal for a Penitents Home starting in 1856 claimed that "there is reason to believe that the number of women in this city who live by the wages of sin is fearfully large." (31)

The Hobart Benevolent Society in their 1862 report were expressing concern about pregnant girls "the victims of heartless seduction" who were a drain on the Societies resources. But, they added, "unless such aid were extended, the woman would be driven into a state of permanent prostitution."

The Society was reluctant to spend their normal funds on this "lest it should be deemed by the Public a misappropriation of funds" and indeed the public thought just that and it was reported in their 1874 Annual Report that many subscribers objected to their money being applied to such a purpose. Nor would the public support Penitents Homes four or five of which were started between 1856 and 1890 each failing after a few years for lack of funds. For the pregnant girls the government reached an agreement with the two Benevolent Societies, that it would meet the confinement expenses if the Societies would administer the service. The Hobart Benevolent Society who from 1863 selected 6 respectable homes who would board the girls for six weeks and arranged a nurse for the confinement on the premises, laid down that the women must be strictly destitute, not of profligate character and were to be admitted for their first pregnancy only. (32) Both they and later the Launceston Benevolent Society formed a small committee of women to deal with these

(31) Church News, May, 1856.

(32) Hobart Benevolent Society Minutes, July/August, 1863.

cases which the men seemed to find rather beyond them. In Hobart this arrangement continued until 1888 when the government opened a Lying-in Home at Cascades and recruited a voluntary women's visiting committee to assist them. Rather less than 20 girls a year passed through the Lying-in Home. The street girls were left to the Sisters of Charity who visited them in gaol and in hospital until 1883 when the Salvation Army also entered the field starting in Launceston by scouring the streets at night to meet the girls and talk to them. The Launceston Examiner reported on 4 December, 1883 that they had succeeded in closing one brothel in Launceston and rescuing its six inmates and three days later again reported that "officers in the army have reclaimed no less than 21 unfortunate women during the last week." Temporary accommodation was found pending the raising of funds for more long term provision.

In spite of these efforts, rescue work up to 1890 was patchy and inadequate and the public was more prone to condemnation than to practical assistance.

THE AGED & CHRONIC SICK.

In 1856 the Aged and Invalid were being cared for in the Imperial Depot at Impression Bay, in the General Hospital, Hobart and in the Cornwall Hospital, Launceston. There was no government out-door relief and only the Launceston Benevolent Society and the Hobart Dorcas Society were functioning effectively in the relief field. Theoretically all the old men in need were supposed to go to Impression Bay, but the northern men in particular were often found too feeble to make the journey.

Those that did frequently disappeared en route or shortly after arrival and begged their way back north. According to the 1858 Joint Committee some had done the journey 2 or 3 times (costing the government £3 per head coach fare each trip) and each time returned under their own steam to Launceston. Brickfields opened in 1859 but these extra places still failed to meet the demand and under pressure from the Launceston Benevolent Society and the Launceston General Hospital, the government opened the Launceston Invalid Depot for men in 1868 and allocated part of the Gaol for Women. Cascades and New Town Charitable Institution were utilised in 1867 and 1874. The number cared for in 1856 was 268 at Impression Bay ⁽³³⁾ and an unknown number but probably less than 100 in the two city hospitals. In 1879 provision was made for 897, this being the peak year. By 1890 the figure stood at 802.⁽³⁴⁾ Until the last 10 years of the century, pressure on the accommodation was continuous and many old men and women slept on the floor as the only means of fitting them in. Launceston frequently transferred the aged south, or overflowed into the gaol and others in both cities were found temporary lodgings while awaiting admission. Still the waiting time could usually be counted in weeks, whereas today's waiting lists are reckoned in years.

The criterion for admission was not age alone but inability to work combined with a total lack of relatives willing (or compellable) to support the applicant, or friends willing to

(33) Legislative Council Papers 12/1856.

(34) Figures from Annual Reports.

assist. Many old people worked long after the present retirement age, usually well into their 70's, to maintain their independence as long as possible. Others crippled prematurely by rheumatism or chronically sick with respiratory diseases or cancers were admitted in their 50's. The typical inmate was the friendless ex-convict but the immigrant who had not had time to build up a network of family ties was beginning to rival the ex-convict by the end of the century.

Standards of accommodation varied. The Impression Bay establishment both defective and overcrowded, was moved to Port Arthur in 1857 into more spacious accommodation to which a number of improvements were subsequently made. In 1871, it was described as consisting of airy, well lighted dormitories housing 140 inmates in iron bedsteads (instead of the earlier bunks) with mess rooms, kitchen, baths, laundry etc. available.⁽³⁵⁾ The men were transferred in 1877 to the far poorer depot at Cascades. This old female prison, damp and depressing was a most unsuitable building for old people suffering from rheumatism and respiratory diseases the two most common conditions on admission. Dr. W. Benson the Medical Officer for Cascades criticising the building in his evidence before the 1871 Royal Commission drew particular attention to the wards for the bedridden patients which he said were in the worst part of the building and poorly ventilated. The old men disliked Cascades and preferred to be sent to Brickfields where buildings were more tolerable, having been adapted from a slightly more modern Imperial Depot. The New Town

(35) H.A.P. 127/1871.

Charitable Institution though old and gloomy except for the 1862 wing, was at least a healthy site and the removal from Cascades to this building in the 1870's was a marked improvement for the old people concerned. The Launceston aged were poorly housed throughout, the Depot being overstrained and in constant need of repair and the Launceston Gaol, part of which was set aside for female invalids had long been condemned as unfit for habitation.

The regime in the several institutions was not harsh, but the whole service was strongly tinged with the penal outlook. Certainly the early inmates were a problem and were reported as "leaving the Institution in government clothing and making away with same, returning drunk and uproarious, fighting and assaulting the officers, using abusive and threatening language and destroying and making away with utensils for their use." (36) The successful Superintendent reported with pride "The utmost discipline has been preserved within the Depot" (37) and the less successful complained of their lack of power to punish the inmates. Regulations in the 1870's which allowed for the "Detention" of inmates were welcomed. At the same time efforts were made by an adequate diet and the provision of books, papers and occasional concerts to keep the old people quiet and contented. The Brickfields Board in 1866 resisted a move to cut the men's meat ration on the grounds that "a good diet is the most efficient way of preserving discipline among the inmates." (38)

The 1880 New Town Charitable Institution Regulations illustrate this dual approach well. (39)

(36) H.A.P. 10/1872.

(37) H.A.P. 11/1865.

(38) H.A.P. 14/1867.

39. Richmond office. T.C.P. 362.

included using "his best efforts ... to quell disorder." Rules enabled the Superintendent to punish the inmates for failure to carry out light duties, for destroying government property, or for "gambling, profane or obscene language, quarrelling, fighting (or) insulting language towards officers." Punishment varied from deprivation of tobacco, through solitary confinement within the institution to a three months gaol sentence. On the other hand the wardsmen were instructed that "They shall especially attend to the wants of those invalids who are unable from infirmity to help themselves. They will at all times refrain from using harsh or irritating language and under any circumstances from striking or ill using an inmate.

Apart from the lack of adequate physical care for the sick and dying which has already been mentioned, the chief faults of all the institutions were the separation of man and wife, the lack of provision for the retention of normal human dignity and the soul destroying monotony of life in the Depots. The roughest and coarsest men and women lived crowded together with the quiet and the decent. Facilities for privacy were non existent, the inmates slept in large dormitories, meals, eaten off tin-ware, were in crowded dining rooms and day room facilities were limited. There was room neither for individual possessions, nor individual tastes. Bathing and washing facilities were usually inadequate and occasionally repulsive. The 1888 Royal Commission recorded the situation in the New Town Charitable Institution in these terms,

The bathing accommodation is insufficient in the hospital wards and generally is capable of considerable improvement. One washing trough that we inspected is certainly of the most primitive nature and calculated to spread disease when we consider that it is used by all classes of inmate. It consists of a wooden trough divided by partitions and erected round three sides of a room; the water enters from a tap at one end and passes from one division to another through holes at the bottom of the partitions until it escapes at the opposite end. Thus if an inmate who washes in the upper level of the trough should happen to suffer from any infectious disease, there is a danger of the infection being spread amongst those using the trough at a lower level. In any case the plan is very disgusting...

The daily routine of the Depots was unchanging and the diet though adequate was unvarying. For those of the inmates who had neither friends nor relatives in the colony - and they formed the majority - visitors and trips out were not available to relieve the monotony. It was understandable that from time to time the inmates went out and got roaring drunk. The less decrepit men were encouraged to grow vegetables, help with repairs around the institution and occasionally to do light work on the roads, but the rest had little to do but wait for death. During the 70's and 80's the community began to show a little more interest in their aged. Ladies Committees were formed to visit Cascades and the New Town Charitable Institution and the 1882 Annual Report records that the "Benevolently disposed of Launceston" were taking an interest in the Launceston Invalid Depot. These groups seemed to specialise in reading to the old people, chatting to them and bringing them small comforts. Perhaps more important was the influence that regular contact with the old people in the institutions had in enlightening public opinion about the needs of the aged, the effects of which were to be seen in the last decade of the century.

OUT-DOOR RELIEF SERVICES.

More fundamental changes were taking place outside the institution and were enabling a large number of the destitute aged to live out their lives without entering an institution at all. In 1856 only a small minority of the aged without relatives to support them were enabled to remain in their homes with the assistance of small allowances from the Hobart Dorcas Society, and the Launceston Benevolent Society. They were joined in this by the Hobart Benevolent Society in 1860, but all three societies were loath to allow the permanent cases to accumulate on the books because of their financial difficulties. Some preference was given to married couples but none to the single or widowed aged. It was government out-door relief that really eased the position of the aged. For a time the policy was to insist on admission to a Depot except in the case of married couples, but by 1883 the Administrator of Charitable Grants had allowed the number of single old people on relief to grow to 182 cases, as well as the 77 married couples. (40) In his report for that year John O'Boyle, the Administrator, defended his policy on the grounds that some were still able to earn a trifle and others had friends who assisted. He thought it "unnecessarily harsh" to force them into the Depots and respected the reluctance of the more respectable aged to give up their independence for life in an institution. He particularly spoke out for the right of aged married couples to stay together. Writing in his 1884 Annual Report he said, "I feel sure the most strenuous opponents

(40) Annual Report for 1883.

of the system of out-door relief would not under the circumstances advocate the compulsory separation of man and wife and regard their unfortunate position in a light other than that which influenced me in allowing them a small weekly pittance to enable them to pass their few remaining years together."

The amount given weekly for the support of the aged was thought by the Hobart Benevolent Society as "bordering on extravagance by English standards." (41) O'Boyle himself had described it as "a pittance" and since the amount was between 2/6 and 5/- each person per week his comment seems the apter of the two. Those who were able were expected to work to pay the rent but the very old and handicapped were given a rent allowance. Christmas treats and an allowance of wood in the winter were often added. The Hobart Benevolent Society more commonly gave the equivalent in rations, but exceptions were made for the respectable aged who were paid in cash. The allowances given were determined on the minimum necessary to achieve survival. The Launceston Benevolent Society gave double rations for a married couple and said they were "just sufficient to keep them if they beg a trifle for rent and also get clothing in the same way." (42) Still it was the beginning of a recognition of community responsibility towards the aged and the principle was an important one, if the practice was not precisely generous.

General out-door relief followed the same pattern. In 1856, the widow or deserted wife with children was expected either to provide for them herself, or to put them in Cascades or the Orphan

(41) H.A.P. 11/1889.

(42) Evidence before 1871 Royal Commission.

Asylum, according to their age and work to support herself and contribute to their maintenance. The voluntary agencies did not feel able to take on large numbers of permanent cases and supported the family only until suitable arrangements could be made. Again it was government out-door relief which provided the solution. Starting in a modest way in 1862 with the expenditure of £48.14.6 it had grown by 1866 to £2,119.6.3 ⁽⁴³⁾ and attracted the attention of Parliament sufficiently to warrant a Select Committee on Charitable Grants in 1867. Originally grants seem to have been given to support the aged awaiting admission to an Institution, or children awaiting a place in the Queen's Orphanage but gradually it was becoming an acceptable alternative to institutional care. Solly, the Assistant Colonial Secretary justified it on the grounds of cheapness and pointed out in his evidence before the 1867 Select Committee that cost of keeping 230 men, women and children during 1867 in an institution would have been £5,122 whereas in out-door relief it had been £2,093, a significant saving. He described the categories of those on relief as "Those in which the father of the family is dead or has deserted his children, or where he is imprisoned, or mentally disabled from working for their support." Unless the mother was also unable to work, relief was given for children under 12 only, excluding the eldest child whom the mother was expected to support. The rate for a woman and five children would be 10/- per week, i.e. 2/6 per week for each child after the first. Allowances were made for six months and then reviewed but a police

(43) Legislative Council Papers 56/1867.

sergeant visited in the interval to establish continued need. Solly wanted the relief system put on a better footing by the creation of a department to deal with pauper relief, in institutions for children and the aged, for hospital patients and for out-door relief. The Select Committee did not take this up but instead recommended that the government should provide the Hobart and Launceston Benevolent Societies with funds to relieve the poor in the cities. It is perhaps not without significance that sitting on the committee were Alfred Kennerley, first chairman of the Hobart Benevolent Society and Isaac Sherwin, a former member of the Launceston Benevolent Society.

No changes of any note came as a result of the Select Committee. The cost of out-door relief continued to grow and reached £5,619.5.6 in 1870. ⁽⁴⁴⁾ The following year another inquiry was under way, this time a Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions. William Tarleton, Police Magistrate, was now administering the service in Hobart and country districts and his counterpart Thomas Mason acted in Launceston. Tarleton justified out-door relief to families with children not on the grounds of financial expediency but that it was in the best interests of the children. "In the majority of cases" he told the Royal Commissioners, "I believe that it is best to let the children reside with their parents taking such care as is possible that they should go regularly to school. Whereas in the Asylum a child grows up a unit amongst a large number,

(44) H.A.P. 63/1871.

destitute of every kindly home influence and feeling that no-one has any individual affection for him, he on his part loves no-one and thus the best part of his nature is not drawn out."

The Commissioners wanted to know if relief was given to parents of poor character. Tarleton replied that character inquiries were made but "aid is often granted to families the heads of which are known to be undeserving, the more depraved the character of the parents, the worse is the position of their children who in many cases would starve without assistance."

The Royal Commission recommended the setting up of a Charitable Relief Commission, consisting of three members nominated by the government one of which should be a paid official. The government adopted the idea in part by creating a Department of Charitable Grants and appointing William Tarleton as its first Administrator. Under his leadership, the policy continued on the lines he had already established.

In the meantime the two Benevolent Societies were continuing to deal with the temporary cases on somewhat more stringent terms. Relief was to be given to the worthy only and reports were given yearly not only on how many were given aid but also how many were refused. The 1873 Launceston Benevolent Society's Annual Report for example says they received 161 fresh applications of which only 67 were relieved. "This" they reported, "will show the care that is required for investigation in all cases." Similar figures were quoted each year

until the late 70's when rejection figures gradually drop. In 1883 referring to the figure of 2 rejections only, the Annual Report commented that this was "tolerably fair proof that applicants have discovered their appeals are useless unless they have a fair case to submit." The basis of rejection by the Launceston Benevolent Society is not known. The Hobart Benevolent Society's records show some of the reasoning. Note was taken of anyone on relief appearing before the court for being drunk and disorderly or appearing for any other offence and paying the subsequent fines, and even of attendance at public entertainments, the implication being that either relief rations were being sold and put to improper uses, or that there was an undeclared source of income. The Mercury on 5 July, 1862 criticised the Hobart Benevolent Society for their over harsh standards while at the same time urging the public not to give relief except through the society.

The Executive Authorities of the Benevolent Society render the charity they administer to the poor a hard, heartless poor-law guardian sort of thing, which may be very well and righteous in its way where it is supplemented by private philanthropy, but which is insufficient for the relief of distress and poverty where the pockets of the benevolent are hermetically sealed by special and urgent request.

In the same year the Society rejected 39 applicants "as being cases of imposture or applicants of idle and intemperate habits." (45)

The problem of hungry children of drunken parents was a cause of great anxiety. Sometimes the Society gave the

(45) Hobart Benevolent Society Annual Report for 1862.

family rations to save the children from starving, but normally they aimed to feed the children away from the home. In 1860 they contracted with Mr. Chamberlain's Eating House in Liverpool Street, for three good meals a day per child at 4d. a meal. (46) The following year they opened a soup kitchen in Melville Street and fed the children, along with other casual poor, there. (47) In general they were opposed to providing aid to unworthy families. On 9 July, 1867 the Committee resolved to give evidence before the Royal Commission of that year "to show that the Charitable Allowances by the Government to keep children out of the Queen's Asylum is much abused and productive of great evil to the child." (48) The Society opposed it again before the 1871 Royal Commission on the same grounds. In the Society's view the children were better off in the institution in spite of its many deficiencies which it also criticised.

Another vexed question was whether or not relief should be given to the unemployed. The Executive Committee recorded on 19 February, 1860 on the subject of the unemployed, "The distress existing among their families has however unhappily been undeniable and although we have felt that we ran a great risk of encouraging idleness and want of energy, we have not felt ourselves justified in withholding relief where absolute destitution was shown to prevail." (49)

A most important step in the Hobart Benevolent Society's eyes was their establishment of a woodyard where a labour test

(46) Hobart Benevolent Society Minutes, 30 March, 1860.

(47) Annual Report for 1861.

(48) Minutes op. cit. 9 July, 1867.

(49) Ibid.

could be applied to men who alleged they were destitute because no employment was available. The men were offered 4d. to 6d. per hour for cutting wood, and it was claimed that in 2 hours they could earn enough to feed their family for a day and still leave the remainder of the day free to hunt for employment. Thus the woodyard had a three-fold function, it tested "worth," it offered "the moral advantages of granting honest work in the place of the degrading dole of charity",⁽⁵⁰⁾ and it got the wood cut for distribution to deserving families - a very economic use of facilities in the circumstances. Refusal to work in the woodyard meant automatic refusal of relief, and thus made a clear cut decision simple.

Neither Society came to develop on lines of the Sydney Benevolent Society in providing in-door relief. The Launceston Society with its longer experience, does not seem to have considered expanding. The Hobart Society for some time had ambitions to open an Asylum and Refuge. On 19 September, 1860 the Executive Committee wrote to the Colonial Secretary to ask for government aid and the use of the old St. Marys Hospital building for overnight lodgings for the homeless, a soup kitchen and a workyard.⁽⁵¹⁾ The government declined to assist. The following year the soup kitchen was opened out of Benevolent Society funds and £500 worth of government debentures was purchased as the first step towards opening an Asylum and Refuge. It also proved the last step. As public support dropped away,

(50) Ibid. 18 August, 1860.

(51) Ibid.

it was not possible to add to the sum and in fact for several years the debentures were acting as security for the Society's bank overdraft. Eventually the project was abandoned and instead lodging house keepers were found who would take cases at short notice at the request of the Society.

The adequacy of the relief given was in part determined by the lack of funds available but also on the principle that if the life of the poor was made too comfortable they would be encouraged to depend on charity and that the knowledge that help would be forthcoming would be a deterrent to thrift. The Launceston Society had to cut relief in 1863 due to shortage of funds and the Hobart Society balanced its books in 1869 after several years of an overdraft "by rigid economy in its issues, and the striking off of many cases which the Committee after searching investigations into them, found the recipients unworthy and by the issue of good sound coarse bread instead of fine." (52) Meat was also cut out of the rations but the quality of the soup was improved. A Ration in Hobart consisted of 8 loaves of bread, 2 lbs. sugar, 6 ozs. tea, 2 lbs. of oatmeal, and soup from the soup kitchen. Cocoa and cornflour were substituted for other items in the case of the sick. Single, double or half rations might be issued depending on the circumstances. Rent was a commitment frequently left to the family. The wife was expected to take in washing or go out cleaning or the husband to do odd jobs, to make up the deficiency, thus fostering their independent spirit and proving their worthiness for continued (52) Annual Report for 1869.

rations in one blow. Other help was given from time to time, firewood in the winter and extra and more luxurious food at Christmas. Blankets were sometimes given (and marked clearly "Benevolent Society" to prevent pawning) and at other times sold for small weekly instalments again to encourage independence.

Relations between the Benevolent Societies and the Charitable Grants Department were frequently strained, particularly in Hobart. The outspoken criticism by the Societies of the Department's policies to which as public servants the staff had little opportunity of reply, did not create a good atmosphere. Pressure was frequently brought to bear for the Benevolent Societies to take over the whole relief of the poor in Hobart and Launceston. This had first been recommended by the 1867 Select Committee on Charitable Grants. Solly, the Assistant Colonial Secretary opposed it then and again at the 1871 Royal Commission considering centralised control to be much more effective. "The question frequently arises" he said in his evidence "whether it would be the better course to admit an applicant into an Invalid Depot or to afford out-door relief, or whether the children of an applicant should be admitted into the Queen's Asylum and again it often happens that the father is an in-patient of the hospital and that the mother and children are left destitute by his inability to labour for their support."

Central control was in fact available from 1872 to 1880 under the Administrator of Charitable Grants. It coincided with

a period of economic difficulty and greater demands on the relief sources so that expenditure rose from £4,953 in 1869 (53) to £7,317 in 1879. (54) In 1880 the government decided to hand over the administration of relief for Hobart and suburbs to the Hobart Benevolent Society. The Administrator of Charitable Grants later claimed that this decision was made due to pressure from the Executive Committee of the Society. The latter denied this but their continued shower of criticism had doubtless contributed to the decision. The government hoped they would be saved money both by the more stringent tests applied by the Benevolent Society and by the saving in administrative costs. The sum of £100 per annum was paid to the Society for undertaking the work and a relieving officer, Mr. Catley was seconded to the Society from the Charitable Grants Department. No consideration seems to have been given to the recipients of relief themselves. During 1880 the Hobart Benevolent Society set out to prove its superior efficiency. In their report to Parliament for 1880 the Chairman reported, "The first step taken by the Society was thoroughly to investigate each case singly as to its merits and necessity ... and I would here state that the Society found ample scope in readjusting which came before it. Every individual in turn was ordered to attend. For about eight weeks the Committee met twice a week." He added "There were some cases in which the parties would not subject themselves to examination and were consequently struck off the books." (55)

(53) H.A.P. 63/1871.

(54) H.A.P. 22/1895.

(55) H.A.P. 111/1881.

The poor found themselves transferred from cash payment to rations, their rent allowances paid direct to their landlords, or they were sent to work in the woodyard to earn their rations, They might protest and some more independent or more aggressive or more desperate than the general run did so, but when the alternatives were submission or starvation the element of choice hardly existed. The 80's were a period of prosperity for the state and the number of poor requiring aid gradually declined. The Hobart Benevolent Society claimed the reduction in costs in Hobart was due to their superior administration but when the figures for the whole state are taken into consideration this is not really borne out. Hobart relief expenditure certainly dropped from £2,361 in 1879 to £900 in 1889. At the same time the expenditure for the remainder of the state had dropped from £4,956 to £2,628 ⁽⁵⁶⁾ and the government expenditure covered a wider field of activity including not only the aged, deserted wives and widows, and families with a sick, handicapped or unemployed bread-winner, but also costs of the Lying-in Services in Hobart and Launceston, transport of paupers to hospitals or invalid depots, pauper burials, the feeding of tramps at Campbell Town Police Station, and the support of deaf and dumb children in interstate training establishments.

The system itself was not easily workable. The respective roles of the Department and the Society had never really been defined. The Society thought they should have sole control of pauper relief including the right to admit paupers to hospitals and the aged and invalid to depots provided they were

(56) H.A.P. 22/1895.

medically certified as needing this type of care. The Administrator on the other hand trying to establish an overall policy on in-door and out-door relief wanted the right to control admissions. The position of Mr. Catley, the relieving officer, drawing his salary from the Department but giving his allegiance to the Society was a particular cause of dispute. The 1885 Select Committee on Charitable Grants recommended the maximum freedom of action for the Society. Three years later the 1888 Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions reversed this and criticised the spending of government money without government control. They reported "While the care and trouble taken by the Chairman and the Executive Committee in investigating all the cases brought under their notice is worthy of commendation, we suggest that direct government grant for charitable purposes should be distributed, and admission to government institutions granted, under government control and by a government official only."

There was no immediate change, but one other result of the Royal Commission, the passage of the Charitable Institutions Act of 1888,⁽⁵⁷⁾ produced the change indirectly. The Act was principally designed to protect the funds of the Societies and to enable them to claim reimbursement from the relatives of those assisted or direct from the persons concerned when they were in a position to pay. It was never a particularly useful one and before many years passed was a dead letter but the Hobart Benevolent Society chose to interpret the invitation to

(57) 52 Vic. 8.

register under the Act as an insult. At an indignant meeting, members stated that "not being willing to be dealt with as new comers, they positively declined to register under such an abominable Act." (58) The government pressed the point and during late 1889 a somewhat acrimonious correspondence took place with both sides stubbornly refusing to give way. The outcome was the termination of the arrangements for the relief of the poor in Hobart and suburbs and control of out-door relief for the whole state was returned to the Charitable Grants Department. Once more the unfortunate poor were caught between the upper and nether millstones. The first problems occurred in the transfer. Rations were issued weekly in two parts. The Benevolent Society issued half on the 31 December, 1889 (a Tuesday) but refused to issue the second half on Friday 3 January, 1890 and did not notify the Administrator until Thursday of their decision. They also declined to allow their office to be used by the government for the Friday issue. Hasty arrangements were made and the poor were all supplied, but O'Boyle the Administrator, thought the Executive Committee's attitude was "unsympathetic and ungenerous." (59) As winter approached the Executive Committee took a further decision, and declined to continue the issue of fuel to persons on government aid. O'Boyle purchased £30 wood for those in the greatest need (the origin incidentally, of the present Heating Allowance) and claimed the Committee was "punishing the unfortunate poor

(58) Annual Report for 1889. (In fuller copy in Hobart Benevolent Society Papers).

(59) H.A.P. 51/1890.

solely on the ground that they were recipients of government aid." (60)

In the meantime the process of reinvestigation of each case was going on in reverse. O'Boyle reported,

The whole of these cases have been most carefully inquired into, ... but it was soon discovered that in several instances aid was not needed and should have been withdrawn long ago, and in others that reductions in the amount of relief afforded should have been made some time before. It was also reported to me by the Inquiring Officer as follows - "During my inquiries into cases receiving out-door relief, I came across many who had never received an official visit from anyone. It appears they were asked a few questions in front of the counter, and further particulars were obtained from some of the other recipients. There are numerous cases in which the recipients had not been called upon for the last eighteen months to two years. This omission appears to have given some of them the opportunity to remain on the books, and boast of it after their circumstances had improved." ... How this is to be reconciled with the assertion so frequently made with regard to the superiority of the oversight exercised by the Committee is not for me to say. (61)

O'Boyle must have enjoyed writing this particular annual report and he closed with a further statement of his position.

Before concluding, I desire to avail myself of this, the sole opportunity I have had, of referring to the oft repeated assertion that it is impossible for the duty of relieving the poor to be satisfactorily discharged by a department under the government. An answer thereto, I think, will be found in this report, in which it has been shown what can be effected by systematic and conscientious work, followed up by unceasing vigilance, inquiry and supervision. (62)

In this situation then with the Charitable Grants Department once more in a position to develop a coherent policy for long term relief cases and the Hobart and Launceston Societies dealing with the bulk of temporary cases, the relief services moved into the 90's and to a period of intense difficulty for

(60) Ibid.

(61) Ibid.

(62) Ibid.

all concerned.

We have discussed here mainly the method of dealing with city cases. The country had its poor too. Both Benevolent Societies claimed that the country poor flooded into the cities where aid was available and certainly the fact that medical aid, institutional care and relief giving societies were all present in the two cities tended to produce this result. But a fair proportion of the country poor were dealt with by the Charitable Grants Department by allowances paid through the wardens of local municipalities and through police and ministers of religion and this continued through the whole period.

The picture presented of the Benevolent Societies, in particular of the Hobart Benevolent Society is in many ways an unfavourable one. Statements in annual reports and decisions of the Executive Committee often seem self-righteous and self-satisfied. Yet it would not be fair to close this section on relief services without showing something of the other side of the picture.

Mr. Witt, the Registrar of the Hobart Benevolent Society for 30 years, made a brief record of many of his cases and this is still in the possession of the Hobart Benevolent Society. It shows a kindly man, sometimes infected by the prejudices of his age, but more often full of generous impulses who must have appeared in the light of a good friend and even of a saviour to the poor. Working long hours, visiting at weekends, at night and even on Christmas day to bring extras to poor families on

his books, he gave many years of fine service. Some excerpts from his account of his work are worth recording. They will serve also to illustrate the conditions under which many of the poor were living even in the comparative prosperity of the late 1880's. The punctuation is Mr. Witt's own, though I have corrected his rather erratic spelling.

6448 H - Alfred, not long from England, visited this case found the wife very ill suffering from a bad breast, infant 6 weeks, eldest child 2 years, living in one room lying on the floor with a very little covering, brought them a bedstead, etc. and gave them blankets, informed Dean Dundas of their destitute circumstances. April 2nd, 1887.

6824 S - Louisa, Elizabeth St. Mother and five children living in a damp room. No furniture, the scanty bedding on the floor with a very little to cover them. Wife not heard from her husband. Told the little girl to come down in the evening for a pair of blankets. Rent 3/-. July 13th, 1889.

No. 6847 T - Blanche went to the office on Saturday expecting money from her husband. Not receiving any she went out of her mind and wanted to destroy herself, the little girl aged 10 years had the presence of mind to hide the knives from her. She had to be sent to the Hospital. A Policeman brought the five children to me in the evening, the babe only seven months old. None of the relatives could take them in, got them under the care of a Mrs. Smith in Goulburn Street, gave the children something to eat and plenty of food to take with them, the Policeman Charnley was very kind and attentive to the children. (I feel greatly obliged to the Police in helping me in this matter). Sunday morning called at the Hospital to enquire after the poor woman. Dr. Payne said it was a sad case and permitted me to see her in the cell, she was still raving and crying for her baby, my daughter tried to pacify her, in telling her the Baby was all right and cared for. We then went to Mrs. Smiths and found the children well cared for, they were eating bread and jam and Mrs. Smith promised us, she would take great care of the Baby. We then waited upon Mrs. Moody and gave her particulars respecting her sister and the children. August 19th, 1889.

H - Sarah, Old Wharf, Hunter Street. Found the family in great poverty. No food to be seen, not an article of furniture, only two broken boxes which they use for table

and seats, in the room upstairs beds on the floor with all their poverty they gave old Bet A - shelter who is receiving aid from the Benevolent Society, told Mrs. H - to send for more food in the morning. Husband a Drunkard away from home again. Wife said he had been fishing but did not bring any money. 18th November, 1889. (63)

These excerpts speak for themselves without further comment.

Although we do not have the benefit of such records of the Launceston Benevolent Society we can safely assume that similar situations met by similar reactions would have existed in that city.

CARE OF CHILDREN.

The children of the poor in their own homes may often have suffered privation in spite of the best efforts of their parents, but the lot of neglected or orphaned children in the 50's and 60's was worse again. Field services were virtually non-existent and Tasmanians did not seem willing to be their brothers keeper. Only if such a child came by chance under the notice of the police, the clergy or a particularly public spirited person could he expect to receive any care. The story of a nine year old boy told in a report to the Chief Magistrate in March, 1857 illustrates this. He was "found by the Sandy Bay Police sleeping in the open air and upon being questioned his statement was as follows ; that his father died about 12 months ago and that his mother died about 5 years previously. Since his father's death he had no particular place of abode, nor could he find any person who would keep him for more than a day or two; that for the last three or

four months he generally slept in the open air and subsisted by private charity. His father and mother were prisoners of the Crown ... the boy further states that he has no friends nor relatives in the colony that he is aware of. He is apparently suffering much from want of the necessaries of life and is also nearly naked." (64)

His was not an isolated case. Among the earliest boys admitted to the Boys Home in 1869 were,

"J.E. illegitimate, deserted by his mother, a drunkard and very bad character, father's residence not known. Left utterly destitute in the streets.

G.B. father dead, mother not to be found. Boy apprehended on the wharf living in boilers, deserted, friendless, destitute." (65)

A Select Committee into the need for Industrial Schools in 1862 brought forth evidence of very young girls taking to prostitution to keep themselves or their drunken parents, including in their numbers one child of 9 years. It was alleged that many young boys were supporting themselves by stealing and scavenging and one Fagin-like establishment with 8 boys working for a gentleman of dubious character operated on the wharf. The children who were found got a mixed reception. The Hobart Benevolent Society fed them in their soup kitchen and the Launceston Benevolent Society paid other poor families to take them in. Two less lucky children aged 7 and 10 years

(64) C.S.D/1/113/3696.

(65) H.A.P. 63/1871.

found sleeping in a barn in 1867, were sentenced to three months imprisonment on a charge of being idle and disorderly and were only freed after an indignant campaign in the Mercury, not opposing the gaol sentence but protesting that they had been made to walk 12 miles to their prison. (66)

Both the Hobart and Launceston Benevolent Societies drew the attention of the public and the government year after year to the plight of neglected children in their communities, children of those described as "idle, drunkard and worthless parents" and of young delinquents who were being sent to prison to mix with old and hardened prisoners. They urged the establishment of Industrial Schools and Reformatories to house these children and train them to be good citizens. After a number of false starts, Parliament passed two acts in 1867, the Industrial Schools Act and the Training Schools Act.⁽⁶⁷⁾ They were based on the assumption that voluntary agencies would establish and staff the schools and the government would guarantee the maintenance of the children committed there, or placed by their parents, if payments from the parents were not forthcoming. The Training schools were to be for young offenders and the Industrial Schools for homeless, destitute or orphan children or those found wandering or in the company of reputed thieves. The latter group could be brought before two Justices who could order them to be detained in the Industrial School until they were 16 years of age.

(66) Mercury, 6 November, 1867 and several subsequent dates in November.

(67) 31 Vic. 37 and 31 Vic. 36.

An Industrial School for girls had already been started by a women's committee in Hobart in 1864 and this was put in a stronger financial position by the maintenance provisions of the act. Nothing immediate was done for boys, but when it became clear that the government was not intending to take any further action, Alfred Kennerley took the initiative himself and purchased a building to open a Boys Home in Hobart. Assisted by a group of fund raisers, sufficient finance was available for him to open the home in 1869. A girls Industrial School in Launceston followed in 1877. All these were protestant establishments and in 1879 the Catholic Church came into the field and opened the St. Joseph's Industrial School and Orphanage in Hobart. No boys industrial school was opened in the north but arrangements were made with the Boys Home in Hobart to take northern boys. Between them the homes were able to make provision for most children who came under their notice and magistrates were encouraged to make use of the facilities available.

The homes restricted themselves in the main to children between 9 and 14 years, with the exception of St. Joseph's which had an orphanage for younger children as well as the industrial school section. They declined to care for delinquents, physically or mentally handicapped children which they regarded as the role of the government but they took in children described as "street arabs", "wild and unmanageable" and "beyond the control of the parents" and gave them firm but kindly care

backed by religious instruction. The children were to be kept within their proper station in life and trained to be good manual labourers or domestic servants. Appeals for support were aimed at a curious mixture of charitable feelings and self-interest. An appeal for funds for St. Joseph's Orphanage and Industrial School in the Tasmanian Mail of 12 January, 1878 was fairly typical of the approach used.

The primary object will be the training of girls to become thoroughly efficient domestic servants with a view to which end they will go through a regular course of instruction in housekeeping, cookery, washing etc. while the building will also be used as a comfortable home for those unfortunate little waifs and strays who deserve the kindly care and consideration of all who are benevolently disposed. The need of such an institution is incontrovertible and the benefits to be derived by the community generally by the preparation of useful domestic servants ... are unquestionable.

In all the homes stress was laid on industrial training, domestic work for the girls, gardening, milking and other rural pursuits for the boys, but part of the day was set aside for formal education within the home. The Launceston Girls Industrial School was the only one to try to break out of this pattern by sending the children out to school. In their 1889 Annual Report they spoke of 19 younger children now being sent to the local school.

Their attendance at the Public School has been fraught with the most beneficial results, as they not only make more rapid progress than they could be expected to make at the Home, but it is found to be of great advantage in regard to their general education and training. Their mixing freely with other children has the effect of breaking down class distinctions, and lifting them largely out of the category of Charity Children, and it has this further advantage, that when they have to go out into the world they are better prepared to resist temptation to evil.

Unfortunately this enlightened policy was not allowed to continue. The following year the Minister for Public Instruction withdrew permission for the children to attend the Public School and the home regretfully appointed a school mistress to the staff to teach the girls at home.

The scandals in the Industrial School system which took place in New South Wales had no equivalent in Tasmania. The schools had their troubles but in the main theirs was a record of quiet achievement. The homes were small, housing between 30 and 40 children and the regime though strict was kindly. The Boys Home rules are a good example of the spirit behind the home. Rule II lays down, "That the Master and Mistress shall both by precept and example and by every means in their power foster and encourage religious and moral principles amongst the children committed to their care and while habits of obedience, industry and cleanliness must be strictly enforced they shall endeavour to maintain as far as possible all the comforts and arrangements of a home so that the children may be won by love and kindness to respect them." (68)

From time to time the homes had trouble with individual children. Children from the Boys Home had to be transferred to the Training School or were sent to gaol for offences committed while absconding and the Launceston Girls Industrial School had serious worries in 1879 when some of the girls were "evincing such a spirit of insubordination as not only led to the neglect of their ordinary duties, but induced them again

and again to make their escape from the school. This at last reached such a height as threatened to peril the Institution itself." (69) But like other similar periods of trouble, it soon died away without any major upheaval.

There was a genuine care for the interests of the children. Two homes (St. Joseph's and the Hobart Girls Industrial School) cared for children with great devotion during long and ultimately fatal illnesses. Employers for the children were selected with great care when they were ready for work, and their interests watched while in employment. The children would be brought back to the home if their employers proved unsuitable. Generally the homes claimed that the children did well in employment and that failures were comparatively few. The children were kept hard at work both in the homes and later in employment but they were a great deal better off than they had been sleeping in the streets and received more care and affection than the younger children who were being housed in the Queen's Asylum or other government institutions.

Most commonly the children under 9 years would be placed in the Cascades Pauper Depot or the Queen's Asylum. In the former they would be cared for with other children of women prisoners and paupers. Some 371 children passed through Cascades in one year (1867) and depended on the services of the inmates for their well being and on their casual kindness if they were to receive any affection. (70)

(69) H.A.P. 15/1880.

(70) Legislative Council Papers 61/1867.

In the Queen's Asylum they would find themselves a unit among over 500 other children, fed and clothed adequately and educated after a fashion but deprived of any emotional warmth or mental stimulation.

On leaving the comparative security of the Orphanage to be apprenticed at 12 or 13 years, the children were once more in a perilous world. Theoretically the guardians (2 clergymen and the Asylum Superintendent) were responsible for selecting suitable masters for the orphan apprentices and arranging for their supervision. In practice little real care in selection seems to have been exercised and supervision often depended on the willingness of the local clergy or the police to be bothered with a child from the Queen's Asylum. Cases of ill-treatment of apprentices were not uncommon. One 15 year old girl whose case was brought to the notice of the Colonial Secretary by the Hobart Benevolent Society was found wandering in the streets and admitted to hospital with severe bruising and V.D., both of which it was alleged were inflicted on her by her master. Another girl was turned out by her master at night with her young baby, alleged to be his. (71) A boy was found virtually in rags and had been made to sleep winter and summer in a loft above a stable "open to the winds of heaven." (72) The children, apprenticed without wages until they were 18 years and liable to punishment if they left their employment, were dependent entirely on the choice of a good master or mistress if life was to be tolerable.

(71) Minutes of Hobart Benevolent Society, 11 October, 1865.

(72) H.A.P. 63/1871.

The Queen's Asylum gave satisfaction to no-one. A source of trouble to every government since it was founded, it responded little better to Colonial management. The colony took it over from the Imperial Government on 1 January, 1860. Dr. Benson was appointed Surgeon-Superintendent with a board to assist him and a new infants building provided to relieve overcrowding. Industrial training was still the emphasis and general education as "kept down to the level in life the children will occupy." (73)

1862 brought a further change in management. The Surgeon-Superintendent was replaced by a lay Superintendent, Mr. A.H. Boyd assisted by a visiting doctor. A Ladies Committee was appointed the same year to interest themselves in the girls. Dr. Smart, the medical officer tackled his sphere energetically. He found 200 cases of ophthalmia in 1862 and reduced them to 63 the following year. (74) Scabies, another prevalent disease, was almost wiped out and the death rate reduced. The other appointments were not so successful. The Ladies Committee clashed with the chaplains by interfering in religious matters, still a very touchy subject and with the Superintendent because of their criticisms of the care of the girls. The committee was disbanded in 1864. Boyd found himself clashing not only with the Ladies Committee but with almost everyone on his staff. In 1863 he charged the matron with general inefficiency but the charge rebounded against himself. The matron was exonerated and the Superintendent criticised for allowing

(73) H.A.P. 114/1861.

(74) Annual Reports on Queen's Asylum for 1862 & 1863.

matters within his responsibility to go unnoticed for 10 months though he was supposed to inspect the boys each morning. The Board of Inquiry which looked into the matter reported that the "uncleanly state of the boys' heads was so well known throughout the school that those persons [the staff] did not deem it necessary to bring it under the notice of the Superintendent, who would almost appear to have been the only responsible officer not cognizant of the fact." (75) Later in the year after further staff troubles the Board of Management concluded that their own enquiry "disclosed the existence of such a lamentable state of feeling and want of cordiality between the Superintendent and the majority of his officers, that it is compelled to record its opinion that an effective administration of its several departments is impossible without some change in its administrative organisation." (76)

January, 1864 found the Orphanage back to the Surgeon-Superintendent system with Dr. Coverdale as the appointee. Dr. Coverdale was no reformer. His aim seems to have been to please the government by economising and by running an orderly home which kept out of the public eye. Instead he received constant and adverse publicity in the Hobart press, and criticism from the Hobart Benevolent Society about the poor placements and inadequate supervision given to orphan school apprentices. The inevitable government response was the appointment of a Royal Commission.

(75) H.A.P. 52/1864.

(76) H.A.P. 90/1864.

The terms of reference of the 1867 Royal Commission on Queen's Asylum reflects the government's outlook perfectly. They were appointed "with the view of ascertaining if any, and what changes can advantageously be introduced tending to reduce the expenditure of that establishment and to increase the practical value of that institution as a training school for orphan and destitute children, maintained there at public cost." (77)

The Commission had its own ideas. Contact with the children moved them to compassion and they considered instead how they might be better cared for. They found the orphanage buildings depressing and the regime deadening.

We think it must strike any person on first visiting the Asylum that the Establishment had been arranged originally by parties much better acquainted with prison discipline, than the conducting of a benevolent institution and it still retains too much of its original character. There is a listless look noticeable in many of the boys and girls during play hours which offers a marked contrast to the ordinary joyous hilarity of children on their release from the studies and confinement of school.

... The high walls around the yards and the almost constant confinement within them, must have a most depressing effect, especially on the children who are not engaged in out-door pursuits.

They criticised the whole moral and industrial training of the school. The latter was badly organised often there were not even enough tools to go round and half the group in training would be standing idle waiting their turn to work. They found the Superintendent too detached from his charges, leaving far too much to his staff and interfering only when a breach of discipline was reported. They concluded,

If the Establishment had been conducted on a proper system, those children who had been longest in the Asylum, would, as regards their intelligence and habits, have been generally superior to those who have been in the Asylum for a shorter time, but such does not appear from the evidence before us ... of the apprentices, many of the worst characters are to be found amongst those who have been longest in the Establishment, even from infancy. It is therefore impossible to come to any other conclusion than that the intellectual, moral and domestic training of the children has never been properly conducted.

Their recommendations were not revolutionary. They contented themselves with suggesting the replacement of the Surgeon Superintendent by a master and matron who could create a more home-like atmosphere (a virtually impossible task as there was then over 450 children in the Asylum) and a number of minor administrative changes. What was important was that the evidence they had taken and therefore published with the report, included discussion of alternative means of child care for the first time. The evidence was tentative but thought provoking. Thus Mr. R.G. Gray the City Missionary talks of the Boarding-Out System and said, "The idea has occurred to me that these children should be treated and brought up more as a family. They are too crowded. Home feelings and sympathies are crushed out of them." Archdeacon Hunter, the Roman Catholic Chaplain commented, "Their affections are not fostered like children in a private family." Dr. Smart, the former medical officer spoke more strongly. "Children enter with their feelings generally in a natural, intelligent condition and in a few months become ... dogged, stupid, sullen, selfish and cunning and almost it may be said demoralised, their worst passions become predominant,

their better feelings almost extinct ... I attribute the change in the first instance to the total loss of home influences and sympathies and in the second to the entire loss of individuality by the children being massed together." He too thought boarding-out was worth considering.

The Commission found the idea attractive but doubted whether enough satisfactory foster homes could be found in Tasmania and wondered how they could be supervised. They contented themselves with suggestions that the guardians of the Asylum might be allowed to place out some of the children.

In point of fact the government ignored the report of the Royal Commission. Dr. Coverdale remained in charge with the system unchanged. Curiously enough, it was a later Royal Commission, that of 1871 on Charitable Institutions, composed of men of a much narrower outlook, which unwittingly dealt the death blow to the Queen's Asylum. For the Orphanage itself they recommended a number of alterations to tidy up the administration. The industrial training was to be extended but cheaper and inferior teachers were regarded as good enough for general education. The home was there to train the orphans to support themselves as early in life as possible and relieve the government of their maintenance. They dismissed Tarleton's views that even a bad home was better than mass care in the institution. They considered the influence of bad parents could not be over rated and that you could supply the place of these relatives "by regulated discipline, removal from the

temptations of abject want, by the enforcement of cleanly habits, by industrial, moral and religious education."

Yet it was these joyless men who were responsible for the initiation of the Boarding-Out Scheme. Solly, the Assistant Colonial Secretary, and William Tarleton both recommended the scheme in their evidence. R.A. Mather, a man whose word carried weight in matters of charity also gave it his cautious support. "I think," he said, "such a system very desirable as calling out the best feelings of the children, but I see great difficulties in carrying it out."

The Commission studied accounts of boarding-out in England and Scotland and concluded there was merit in the scheme if carefully carried out and recommended it accordingly. Perhaps more important, their recommendation of a government body to control pauper relief which led to the creation of the Charitable Grants Department provided machinery to carry out the Boarding-Out Scheme.

The Queen's Asylum was left intact, on the face of it likely to continue to function for an indefinite period. Yet eight years later it closed, not as a result of any frontal attack, but simply because it was starved of inmates. The process had begun in 1862 with the introduction of out-door relief to fatherless families. The average daily number of inmates in 1861 was 468. (78) The figures rose to 557 in 1865 while the effect of out-door relief was principally to hold the numbers to manageable proportions during a period of general distress and

(78) H.A.P. 78/1862. Subsequent figures from Annual Reports on Queen's Asylum.

unemployment. By 1871 out-door relief combined with a more liberal discharge policy had brought the daily average down to 353. Admissions after 1872 dropped sharply, and by the end of 1878 with discharges continuing as normal there were only 88 children left in the Asylum. With such numbers the huge institution was simply not worth maintaining. (79)

Dr. Coverdale had not seen his institution emptying and its average costs rising without some attempt to fight back. Calculating that the Boarding-Out Scheme was more expensive than care in the orphanage, he recommended to the government the transfer of the boarded-out children to the Queen's Asylum, but was defeated by Tarleton who flew to the defence of his infant scheme with such vigour that the government decided not to intervene. (80) Coverdale left the Asylum for Port Arthur in 1874 and his place was taken by Sandford Scott, a man of over 60 years who did much to make the Asylum a pleasanter place in its last few years. He was helped of course by the smaller numbers he had to deal with but his kindly nature must also have endeared him to the children. He urged that the children should have the best possible teaching to overcome their early handicaps, and in his last report he says of the children, "Formerly they were represented as being dogged, stupid and unamiable. I am glad to say they are not so now." (81)

Visitors to the Asylum confirmed his claims. The Premier

(79)	Admission Figures	1871 - 54	1875 - 20
		1872 - 53	1876 - 15
		1873 - 23	1877 - 19
		1874 - 16	1878 - 16.

(80) Legislative Council Papers 54/1873.

(81) H.A.P. 11/1879.

Thomas Reiby wrote of a visit in 1877. "I was pleased with the appearance of the children, boys and girls, and delighted to witness the bright happy faces, very different from the dogged expression of the children in this establishment some 20 years ago." (82)

The Orphanage closed in 1879, the remaining children being discharged or transferred to one or other of the Industrial Schools. During 51 years of providing mass care for children it had no doubt served a useful purpose in saving children from starvation and misery, but its record throughout its career was poor and few lamented its passing.

In the meantime the Boarding-Out Scheme had got well under way. The 1871 Royal Commission had listed the points emphasised by the English advocates of boarding-out. They were,

- 1) Children should be placed as young as possible.
- 2) Guardians should be carefully selected and should preferably be married couples.
- 3) Guardians should not themselves be on poor relief or entirely dependent on the money from the children for subsistence.
- 4) The children must not be deprived of education or sent to work too soon.
- 5) There should not be more than four children in any home and preferably less. Families should be kept together as far as possible.
- 6) There should be frequent inspection by officials.
- 7) Volunteers should be used to encourage guardians to persevere with the children's difficulties.

The Commissioners went on to say "If it can be shown that desirable foster parents can be obtained, that parochial

interest and supervision will be cheerfully enlisted, that homes can be found in convenient proximity to schools and places of worship, that efficient checks can be provided against the relaxation of duty on the part of parents and connections among the poorer classes as a consequence of the system, we should unhesitatingly recommend its partial adoption. Beautiful in theory, we do not perceive why it should not be also in its results, if carried out with the precautions on which its advocates insist."

The selection of William Tarleton as Administrator of Charitable Grants in 1872 ensured the success of the scheme. Already opposed to the massing together of children he had in addition to extending out-door relief, as he told the 1871 Commission, made a small start "in the country by allowing small sums to decent persons for the support of children." By 1873 there were already 45 children boarded out in the state. (83) Replying to Dr. Coverdale's attack on the scheme that year he puts forward his view that the state is "in loco parentis" to the children and responsible for their happiness. He was convinced this was promoted by boarding-out.

There can be no doubt that this mode of dealing with children if carried out under proper conditions, most nearly approaches ordinary home life, and affords the best substitute for true parental training. If entrusted at an early age to the care of kind and well conducted persons, children will soon regard them in the light of parents, whilst the latter, on the other hand, performing constantly towards the children all the offices of a parent, learn to take a warm interest in them, and thus a bond of mutual affection springs up which goes far to replace the want of real parental love. In the free atmosphere of a respectable household, where there is no

(83) Legislative Council Papers 54/1873.

daily round of depressing monotonous discipline, but where unrestricted association of brothers and sisters, and friendly intercourse with school fellows and neighbours are permitted, the healthy growth of natural ties and domestic affections is promoted, and the children are surrounded by humanising influences of infinite value which are not brought to bear upon them under any other system or in any institution. (84)

No additional staff was given to Tarleton to select homes or supervise the children. He and the relieving officers visited them when they could but he spoke in his 1874 Annual Report on the Boarding-Out System of the urgent need to provide more systematic and regular supervision than he and his limited staff could provide. The problem was solved by the appointment of voluntary committees. A Central Committee for boarding-out began operations on 1 January, 1881 and was to be aided by a number of local visiting committees. There had been an earlier central committee in 1879 which folded up and a short period when the Hobart boarded-out children were placed under the Hobart Benevolent Society, but both these arrangements were now superseded by a more settled system. The first Central Committee consisted of John O'Boyle who had succeeded Tarleton as Administrator of Charitable Grants in 1879, James Grant, Alex Irvine, Robert Andrew Mather and Tarleton himself. The local visiting committees were supposed to visit the children monthly and the Central Committee saw the whole annually.

The voluntary committee system worked quite well but it had its deficiencies. In 1888 for example two of the four visiting committees had lapsed due to resignations and there were periodic reports from local committees apologising for the fact
(84) Ibid.

that they had not visited for several months due to illness or absence of members. In spite of this the benefits of the Boarding-Out System to the children were undoubted. Although from time to time children had to be moved because of neglect by their foster parents, or because they became unmanageable, the majority were reported as having happy and alert faces, and doing well at school. Each year some children were recorded as "adopted", by which it was meant that the foster family took full responsibility for them since no legal machinery for adoption existed. The system was used for both short term and long term care. In 1881 for example, 191 children were dealt with under the scheme, 122 for the full twelve months and the rest for periods varying between 3 and 364 days. (85) The Central Committee's first report found the scheme working well. Following a full inspection, they said, "It was evident that the foster parents as a body were kindly disposed and conscientious women for whom the children entertained strong feelings of affection." They noted deficiencies in some homes but said "upon the whole the inspection was highly gratifying and impressed the Committee most favourably with the existing system of dealing with the destitute children of the community." The 1888 Royal Commission looked into the scheme and gave it its approval. The scheme was now an established method of child care, and no doubt the more acceptable to successive governments both for its economy and the approval given to it by both public servants and voluntary committees in an unusual state of unanimity.

(85) Annual Report of the Central Committee.

Apprentices too benefitted by the new arrangements. Officers of the Charitable Grants Department visited them monthly and like the boarded-out children they were always seen alone to ascertain their views on their placement. With this extra care most of the apprentices did well. The continuity of policy provided by Tarleton and his successor and late chief clerk, John O'Boyle, and further strengthened by the length of service of the staff (George Judge the Inspecting Officer in Hobart served for 21 years) ensured the steady development of the service. These men must have known the children in their care really well and appear to have been genuinely devoted to their welfare.

During the same period a more satisfactory pattern for the care of young delinquents was evolving. In the 50's and 60's the presence of children in gaol was quite commonplace. Many of course were the children of women prisoners who served the sentence with their mothers, but others were prisoners in their own right and the presence of 8 or 9 year olds in gaol evoked little comment, the assumption being that they were fully responsible for their own actions. The only real concern was that while there they might learn from older prisoners more advanced techniques of crime. As late as 1875 some 53 boys aged 8 - 16 years were in Campbell Street Gaol either serving their full sentence or awaiting transfer to the Boys' Reformatory which had opened at Cascades in 1869. (86)

In 1882 when the Hobart figures for juvenile prisoners had dropped to 13 for the year, Launceston Gaol still housed 36

(86) H.A.P. 66/1876.

boys under 15 years of age. (87) Young girls were also liable to gaol sentences though some of the kinder magistrates preferred to dismiss the charges against them than to convict them and be forced to send them to gaol to mix with older thieves and prostitutes. In theory the juvenile prisoners were to be kept apart from the rest to avoid contamination but in practice the Gaol Superintendents admitted freely that their best efforts to achieve this end were doomed to failure because of the total unsuitability of the old gaol buildings.

Between 1869 and 1879 some special provision was made for boys in a section of the Cascades buildings and termed a Boys' Reformatory. The head of the establishment was also responsible for the other inmates of Cascades - aged pauper women and women prisoners and their children, but in spite of the fact that the boys can only have occupied a corner of the Superintendent's mind, some efforts were made to educate the boys and teach them trades and later apprentice them. Under the Training Schools Act, most of the boys spent a short term in gaol - usually 10 days - before being transferred to the Reformatory. Between 1879 and 1883 the Reformatory seems to have lapsed. During this period a school for the juvenile prisoners was started at the Hobart Gaol but apart from this there seems to have been no special provision. In 1884 a fresh start was made and the Boys' Training School opened at Cascades with a separate Superintendent, James Longmore and a Board of Managers whose secretary was Joseph Benson Mather. The combina-

(87) H.A.P. 24/1883.

tion seems to have been a good one. J.B. Mather was a liberal and kindly man, very much in tune with Longmore who had devoted much thought to the care of young delinquents and eventually published a pamphlet outlining his theories. He reported in 1884 that he had four main aims,

- 1) to inspire family feeling and create a home influence.
- 2) to give as much freedom as is compatible to good order,
- 3) to avoid corporal punishment and
- 4) to arouse good moral tone. (88)

The school was said to be governed by the law of kindness and to work by trust rather than repression. Trade instruction as well as formal education was part of the programme with particular emphasis on farm work. Rewards such as a monthly afternoon out, and early licence as well as a merit system by which money could be earned and placed in a savings account to be used after discharge, seem to have given the boys sufficient incentive to behave well and removed the necessity for harsher punishments.

Longmore campaigned continuously against the practice of sentencing of the boys to a prison sentence before admission to the Training School and at the other end of the process for guardianship of the boys to the age of 18 years in order to provide for adequate after care. He was successful eventually in the latter but 1890 found him still complaining that some of the boys had served 1 months prison sentence before admission.

(88) Annual Report of Boys Training School.

The move to establish separate care for girls came in 1881 and was initiated by a voluntary committee. The Girls Training School in Hobart seems to have been a less enlightened establishment than the Boys Training School. The girls, aged 15 to 18 years largely supported the establishment by their laundry work and were in addition taught cooking, needlework and housework. The 1888 Royal Commission while praising its work in general terms compared it unfavourably to the Boys Training School and reported,

Some steps should be taken to alter the forbidding aspect of the interior of this building. It was originally a military prison and still presents all the external and internal evidence of its former use. The girls are nightly locked in the old military cells in the same manner as that in which criminals in gaol are dealt with. This is not as it should be. The inmates of the institution are not there solely for punishment but as the name of the establishment denotes to be reformed; surely this end would sooner be attained if the building in which they must spend their period of detention were made as much as possible like the home they will inhabit when their freedom is regained. An improved morale would be encouraged by allowing the girls more frequent access to the outer world, should their behaviour warrant it.

This advice was not followed but while in the home, the girls seem to have given little trouble. Indeed the yearly reports that "everything has gone along quietly and steadily" must make modern principals of training schools yearn to know the secret of their success. Few records are available so the mystery is not readily solvable. The only incentive offered seems to have been money rewards for good behaviour which were placed in savings banks against their time of discharge.

The revolution in the care of children between 1862 and 1890 is a remarkable story in its way. Outside influences played their part. Developments in the United Kingdom and to a certain extent in other states were discussed but the principle credit must go to a few enlightened men and women in the community and in the public service. If one had to single out one man for highest praise it would certainly be William Tarleton, but the small group of active workers in the field of charity also played a vital role. By their combined efforts large scale institutional care for children ended in Tasmania in 1879 and thereafter children were cared for in units of 40 or less or in private homes. They might still find themselves in prison, but more commonly they had some hope of future security and normality offered by the training schools and for all the children there was now a genuine concern not only for their work potential, but for their personal happiness also.

CHAPTER V. CHANGING ATTITUDES - THE DEPRESSION YEARS,
1890 - 1900.

Although in the decade 1890 - 1900 there were few changes in the structure of Tasmanian Social Services, yet as a period it stands on its own because of the development of new ideas and attitudes towards the poor and because of the very marked increase in voluntary activity. Like South Australia, and unlike the eastern states, the government in Tasmania had long played a significant part in the total social services, so that the move in emphasis from voluntary to government activity which on the mainland is regarded as one of the most significant features of the 1890's, has no equivalent here. New South Wales began government out-door relief for destitute children only in 1896 and for the aged, in a very limited way during the 1890's. Tasmanian government out-door relief had been well established since 1862, with the state accepting responsibility for long term cases and the voluntary agencies seeing their role as relieving only temporary distress. Here, too, the state had played the primary role in the provision of hospital services throughout the century, and had provided a large sector of the children's services.

In contrast voluntary activity had been relatively weak, concentrating before 1869 almost entirely on out-door relief activities and thereafter on out-door relief and the provision of industrial schools. Forays into the field of hospital care had been few and until 1880 only one unit, the Campbell Town

Hospital, had survived and that only with the aid of the government. Attempts to provide facilities for rescue work had without exception failed.

The 80's and 90's saw 5 more voluntary hospitals established, mainly connected with mining towns except for Queen Victoria Hospital, Launceston. Rescue work began to get on its feet from the late 80's onwards and the number of voluntary agencies in the relief field increased considerably in the 90's and those not only temporary organisations to meet the special problem of unemployment but long term agencies which have lasted until our own time.

The commonest explanations of the changes in Australian social services in the 1890's are the growth of nationalism with its philosophy of the right of all Australians to equality of opportunity and to a good life, linked with this, the growth of the Labour Party whose platform was based on these ideas, and the impact of the depression and large scale unemployment in the 1890's.⁽¹⁾ Certainly all these factors and most particularly the last, played their part in the rather different developments in Tasmania but here we should also add the influence of a new generation who had grown up since the end of the convict era and whose ideas were not determined by the generally accepted view of the ex-convict. The increased activity of women and of the churches (as opposed to individual Christians) both arose from these factors and contributed to the developments in ideas.

(1) T.H. Kewley. Social Security in Australia (Sydney 1965) pp. 5 - 7, and
R.J. Lawrence. Professional Social Work in Australia (Canberra 1965) p. 19.

Tasmania shared with the rest of Australia the growing sense of national identity and impatience with the old class structures which charitable agencies had tended to bolster. The mining boom of the 1880's bringing new ventures and new townships in which hard work and good luck were of more importance than a man's class in society, contributed its quota to the development of these ideas. The Labour Party too was present in Tasmania in the 1890's though it did not gain its first parliamentary representation until 1903. One may remark in passing that the Labour Party like the Trade Union movement was principally concerned with the rights of the working man, to employment opportunities, decent wages and security on retirement with the aid of aged and invalid pensions. They paid little or no attention to the widow, the deserted wife or destitute children. Women and children were likely to benefit as dependents of some man, rather than in their own right. Nevertheless their pressure for aged and invalid pensions which formed an official part of the Party platform by 1900, carried with it the idea of the right to assistance during times of dependency, and of community responsibility for some at least of the poor, and these notions of right not grace once accepted were bound to spill over into other areas of poor relief.

These ideas were only just beginning to emerge in Tasmania at the end of the 1880's. The dominant view was still that poverty was largely self-caused and that assistance had to be grudgingly given lest it confirmed the recipient in pauperism. The 1880's had been years of prosperity in Tasmania. Work was

plentiful and the future of the state looked rosy. Out-door relief had dropped from £7,317 in 1879 to £3,483 in 1889,⁽²⁾ due not so much to economies but to a genuine drop in demand. The Hobart Benevolent Society noted in 1885 that pauperism had greatly decreased⁽³⁾ and the Launceston Benevolent Society was experiencing a similar drop in applications.⁽⁴⁾ Around the same time the startling growth in self help organisations was a cause for satisfaction among those who saw this type of forethought as the mark of a good colonist. In 1873 there were 16 branches of Friendly Societies with 2,179 members.⁽⁵⁾ In 1889 there were 89 branches with 8,692 members and a paid up capital of £59,523.⁽⁶⁾ The lesson that poverty wore the badge of shame had been well learned by the working man and in 1886, a report to Parliament on Friendly Societies noted that 1 in 5 of adult males belonged to one or other society.⁽⁷⁾ The Registrar of Friendly Societies in 1891 commenting on this again, added "it must be borne in mind that the majority of members of Friendly Societies are men of very limited means, whose contributions are often met with great difficulty."⁽⁸⁾ The Friendly Societies under their rather strange names - Rechabites, Oddfellows, Foresters, Druids, Hibernians, etc. - offered assistance to contributors and their families in times of sickness and rescue from the fear of pauper burial, at the cost of an initiation fee and a small weekly contribution.

(2) H.A.P. 23/1890.

(3) Minutes of Quarterly Meeting of Hobart Benevolent Society, 12 January, 1885.

(4) Annual Report Launceston Benevolent Society for 1885.

(5) H.A.P. 61/1886.

(6) H.A.P. 124/1891.

(7) H.A.P. 61/1886.

(8) H.A.P. 76/1891.

The Societies in 1890 paid out £7,942 in sick pay, £8,133 in medical expenses and £3,565 in funeral expenses ⁽⁹⁾ and with this aid as long as employment was available, the members could survive temporary family crises without resort either to charitable agencies or government pauper funds.

In contrast to these upright and independent citizens was set the picture of the improvident and often drunken pauper. In a paper to the First Australasian Conference on Charity in 1890 G.S. Crouch, the secretary of the Hobart Benevolent Society, devoted most of his time to the evils of imposture and professional begging and to intemperance which he describes as "the principle cause of pauperism and the helpless condition of the poor." ⁽¹⁰⁾ The Chairman of the Society enlarged on this in his Annual Report for 1895. In addition to drink as a cause of poverty he saw two other factors,

Generally the knowledge that the necessities of life can be so easily obtained induces men who are not really destitute to throw themselves upon the State ... (and)... the fatal influence of compassionate aid in past years, charities and missions competing against each other with gifts of food and clothing, these things leading to an absolute want of self-reliance. When the correctional discipline of the State compels the lazy to work, the drunkard to maintain his home, so employs the prisoner that his earnings shall support wife and children, when citizens are more guarded, when local interest creates a keener supervision over the recipients of charity, when pauperism is felt to be a disgrace, then and not till then may we hope for better times for the poor and needy.

That he could make such a statement during the worst depression Australia had experienced is an indication of the continuing strength of the view that poverty was due to vice and

(9) H.A.P. 54/1891.

(10) Proceedings of the First Australasian Conference on Charity 1890 in Public Library of Victoria.

not to factors outside the control of the poor.

The decade had opened in Hobart at least in a spirit of complacency. The Hobart Benevolent Society in their annual report for 1890 wrote "Subscribers and the public may be fairly congratulated on the general prosperity of the country. Never perhaps, since the foundation of the Society has the claim for merely casual aid come so near to the point of extinction. Of course the claims of the widow and fatherless, the sick, infirm and injured must be met for months, perhaps for years. It is something, however to be able to record that there is work for all those who will work."

Launceston that year was already feeling the pinch. The Society there described 1890 as a year of "unusual distress." The Hobart Benevolent Society began to feel the impact of the depression in 1892. Having supported only 7 and 10 unemployed in 1890 and 1891 respectively, the numbers rose to 123 in 1892, 400 in 1893, 419 in 1894 and over 200 in 1895 and 1896. Launceston, which did not separate off its cases of unemployment, reported a large increase in casual cases reaching a peak of 2,000 assisted in 1894, a figure which included the unemployed with other temporary problems and they refer in 1893 to the heavy demands due to "the long continued depression." (11)

The Hobart Benevolent Society while assisting those in need, did so in fear that they were creating a new class of pauper. "Inability to obtain employment has caused many, for the first time in their lives, to seek assistance. Having got

(11) Figures from Annual Reports in both cases.

over the pain and shame of living on public charity, the rapidity with which such persons descend to lean on others is most distressing. This difficulty is one of the greatest problems facing the Committee. The absence of self-reliance means the loss of self-respect and a constantly growing burden on the public purse," (12) though by 1896 even they were driven to the conclusion that poverty is not always due to "any innate depravity existing in man." (13) The Launceston Benevolent Society accepted the situation a little more easily seeking out cases of poverty among the respectable who were too proud to apply, (14) but the main pressure for a more generous attitude to the unemployed came from outside the older charitable organisations. For among the applicants for relief were those very men whose sturdy independence in preferring self help to charity had made them model citizens and their plight moved people who before had assumed that an unemployed man was almost certainly an idle and lazy man.

In 1879 the Editor of the Mercury was able to speak contemptuously of the unemployed of that period with little fear of rebuke. Referring to a meeting of men out of work he said,

The recent little demonstration here on the part of the unemployed brings to the front a singular combination of severe distress consequent on a temporary want of employment, of gross attempts at imposture and of that permanent pauperism that is not so much the natural consequence of physical incapacity as the result of a dependence on Government aid which is being fostered in these Colonies, who seem to regard it as the duty of the State to provide

(12) Annual Report for 1893.

(13) Annual Report for 1895.

(14) Annual Reports for 1894 & 1895.

for all who have been too improvident to provide for themselves, or who scorn the mean and craven spirit of the Apostle who said that "if anyone would not work, neither should he eat." (15)

Such a statement would not have gone unchallenged in the 90's. In 1893, Dean Beechinor addressing a meeting called in Launceston to devise ways and means of assisting the estimated 800 unemployed men in Launceston, spoke against those who opposed relief on the grounds that it would demoralise the poor. "In these lands of smiling plenty" he told his audience, "many men who were able and willing to work, were penniless and on the verge of absolute starvation." (16) Mr. Mulcahy, speaking in 1894 in the House of Assembly on the need to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into means of helping the unemployed, estimated there were at present 500 in Hobart alone. "Many of these men were members of benefit societies, struggling to keep up their payments and had to face the terrible fact that perhaps for the first time in their lives, if they did not get work and pay their dues, their names would be struck off the books and they and their families would be without provision in time of sickness." (17) This type of thinking was a recognition of honest and involuntary poverty and of community responsibility to assist.

The incursion into the field of both relief and rescue work of a number of religious bodies who were concerned with the sinner rather than the saved, widened the scope of voluntary activity. The Salvation Army, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd,

(15) Mercury, 17 July, 1879.

(16) Morning Star, 2 September, 1893.

(17) Monitor, 14 April, 1894.

Church of England rescue workers, the City Mission and St. Vincent de Paul Society all come within this category. Discrimination between the deserving and the undeserving was by no means a thing of the past, but among the undeserving were discerned a group who might yet be saved. The girl who was drifting onto the streets, or who had had an illegitimate child, the drunkard who was trying to reform and the ex-prisoner were some of the problems the new agencies were prepared to tackle. It is interesting to note that four out of five of these agencies were either dominated by women or had women working on equal terms with men. Women too ran the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Society, the Village Settlement Scheme, the Brabazon Society and a woman visitor was appointed by the Hobart Benevolent Society. These women were not content with subordinate roles on Ladies Committees to assist a male run agency, or with the relatively domestic activity of running homes for girls. They were women with ideas, prepared to experiment with new methods and in new fields, still judgemental in their attitudes but with a wider range of tolerance than the rather conservative men who ran the older agencies. They both absorbed the new ideas and contributed to their development.

THE HOSPITAL SERVICES.

Four more cottage hospitals run on voluntary funds (18) joined the field in the 1890's. A more important move was the establishment of the Queen Victoria Hospital, Launceston in 1898 the first hospital for maternity cases and the first time the (18) Beaconsfield, Strahan, Waratah, and Latrobe.

needs of the ordinary married woman patient had been given primacy in a hospital. A women's committee had played an active role in bringing this project to success. Voluntary effort along with government aid improved facilities at the Launceston General Hospital. The "ladies of Launceston" raised £500 towards the provision of Isolation Wards for infectious diseases, (19) other legacies and donations were used to make up the funds needed for an Operating Theatre, a Bacteriological Laboratory, a new Nurses Home and to swell the Samaritan fund for "deserving and indigent patients." (20) The government provided Reception House for the insane was opened in 1892.

Hobart General Hospital also acquired an Operating Theatre in 1895 as a result of a legacy and another legacy paid for electrical and surgical appliances. The government provided a Bacteriological Laboratory and a new Nurses Home. The government's decision in 1894 to hand over the running of the city hospitals to their respective boards for an agreed annual sum with freedom to use the fees of paying patients and donations and legacies gave the boards and their local supporters fresh incentive to work for the betterment of the hospital. Thus the long term ambition of Tasmanian governments that voluntary effort should be drawn into the running of the general hospitals was at last realised and the combination produced a marked improvement in both the coverage and quality of the colony's hospital services. Only the New Norfolk Asylum did not benefit from this and though some changes were made to

(19) H.A.P. 9/1899.

(20) H.A.P. 3/1900.

improve the buildings its isolation from the general community continued, to its detriment.

Outside the hospitals the Government Medical Officer was a regular visitor to the homes of the sick poor in Hobart and the Launceston poor received attention from the voluntary District Nursing Association which was established in 1895, yet another example of increased voluntary interest in the health services.

THE AGED & CHRONIC SICK.

The Editor of Church News in two leading articles devoted to "Our Aged Poor" in July and August, 1891 noting that the care of the poor which was once entrusted to the church had now passed into the hands of the state, went on to say "It is sometimes said that the state should never undertake to do more than keep body and soul together and that anything more should be done by private charity. But this is not in accordance with the spirit of our times. The people, on the contrary are of the mind to entrust the helpless poor to the care of the state."

The 1888 Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions was prepared to accept that the state would have to provide for the aged but not that it should go beyond the minimum in comfort and cost. They estimated that as a combined total 82% of the inmates of New Town Charitable Institution and the Launceston Invalid Depot were former British convicts, and since this group were gradually dying out the need for institutional care would, they thought, rapidly decrease. That being the case,

they reported, "We feel compelled to refrain from suggesting any vital changes in the system, such as might do much towards improving the condition of the inmates, but at the same time would entail very considerable expense to the colony."

No trained nurses were to be appointed, since most of the sick were incurable anyway and mass care and separation of husband and wife were to continue as before. Launceston should have better washing facilities, more hot water and an extra ward but no change was thought necessary for the old women whose quarters at the gaol were regarded as adequate. Not a great deal of money was forthcoming from the government during the 1890's, both on principle and in practice because it was a period of acute financial difficulty.

John Witherington, the conservative Superintendent of New Town Charitable Institution who had been brought up on the evils of convictism and drink retired in late 1889, no doubt to the relief of his deputy F. R. Seager whose evidence before the Royal Commission criticising the existing methods was in marked contrast to Witherington's expression of satisfaction with the status quo. He was replaced by George Richardson, later to be Administrator of Charitable Grants and Secretary of the Neglected Children's Department. Richardson introduced as much fresh air into the system as the limited finances would allow. Gas was installed throughout the institution in 1890 making the old buildings less gloomy. A garden was set out for the women inmates and crockery plates and mugs were substituted for the tinware formerly in use. (21) The following year four

(21) H.A.P. 14/1891.

paid wardsmen were appointed to replace the services of the increasingly decrepit inmates, a change described by the visiting medical officer as "a conspicuous improvement." (22) The diet was progressively improved and warmer clothing was issued to the inmates. (23) The institution itself was repainted in brighter colours. Visitors were welcomed to the institution to provide interest and stimulation for the inmates. According to the Annual Report the visitors book for 1893 showed 1,682 visits to the female division alone that year. The offer in 1900 by Emily Dobson to introduce the Brabazon Society was promptly accepted (in contrast to the more conservative approach in Launceston) and the Society provided materials and taught the inmates basket work, Turkish mat making, bent iron work and knitting with the aim of "enlivening the otherwise monotonous lives of the old, cripples or deaf and dumb inmates of the institution." (24) The drop in daily average numbers from 589 in 1889 to 372 in 1900 (25) enabled the inmates to spread out and enjoy a little more space in both the sleeping quarters and the day rooms.

In Launceston the situation was much less satisfactory. Launceston too had a change of Superintendent in 1890 when Mr. A. Jones was replaced by H. J. Quodling from the northern branch of the Charitable Grants Department. Paid attendants were appointed in 1891 and the diet improved to add to the comfort of the inmates. But unlike the southern institution, Launceston

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- (22) H.A.P. 28/1892.
(23) H.A.P. 9/1901.
(24) Ibid.
(25) H.A.P. 27/1898 & 15/1901.

continued to be very overcrowded and the building itself was older and more run down. The Superintendent reported in 1894 that "the old buildings are becoming yearly less habitable" and prophesied increased costs if the institution was to be maintained. (26)

Rather than spend large sums of money either repairing the present building or building anew, the government proposed closing the Northern depot and making New Town Charitable Institution the centre for the whole state. Launceston residents objected to this, both from local pride and the reluctance to lose a city amenity, poor as it was, and from a genuine wish to keep the aged in their own environment and near interested relatives and friends. The Launceston Benevolent Society offered instead to administer the Depot for the fixed sum of £2,000 per annum. The government agreed and the Society took over the Depot in January, 1895 and changed its name to the Launceston Benevolent Asylum.

The arrangement had the advantage of preserving local contacts for the aged but it had little else to recommend it. The Launceston Benevolent Society was in no position to spend large sums of money on the Asylum and the minutes of the board who administered it show frequent decisions not to approach the government for extra finance for fear the reply would be the closure of the Asylum. (27) Donations of money, blankets, linen, food, clothing and periodicals helped to improve the comfort of the inmates and a hard working staff got the best out

(26) H.A.P. 6/1894.

(27) Minutes of the Board are in the Launceston Benevolent Society Papers.

of the building. The Superintendent was reported as commenting wryly that "on taking charge, he could sweep as many as half a pint of bugs from the floor and had hard work to keep the vermin from running away with the inmates." (28) This was cleared up and the walls and the floors kept as clean as possible, but no amount of patching and cleaning would render the building suitable. Criticism of the building and of the management of the Asylum was common after 1898. In a letter to the Examiner of 17 March, 1898 Mr. Ben Tillett reported on a visit to the Asylum and said "I did not see a happy face among the whole of the men I saw there on my visit; they were cowed and sullen and an awful reproach to their keepers." A month later the Examiner wrote "it is admitted that, from an economic standpoint the management is run on as fine lines as possible, indeed the opinion is fast ripening that the cheese-paring policy has been carried to the extreme." (29) The buildings, the paper said are damp, dilapidated and inconvenient. In September, 1900 T.H. Walduck, M.H.A. commented "The walls and floors only need inspecting to satisfy anyone of their unhealthy condition. The impression the building gave me was that the whole place should be burned to the ground." (30)

The Board took little heed of these criticisms. They considered the food and warmth provided were adequate, the building reasonably maintained and the regime satisfactory. A request from Mrs. Emily Dobson to introduce the Brabazon

(28) Examiner, 13 September, 1900.

(29) Ibid. 12 April, 1898.

(30) Ibid. 13 September, 1900.

Society was deferred to see if the scheme worked in New Town and only agreed to after further submissions from Mrs. Dobson later in the year. (31) The Board generally were playing safe to avoid any action which might lead to the government changing the present arrangement. Members of Parliament who pressed the government in 1899 to give up the existing building and build afresh at property owned by the state at Glen Dhu, received the reply that while vacancies existed at New Town, it was wasteful to spend £10,000 on a new building for Launceston. (32) The Asylum lingered on with gradually falling numbers and the situation unchanged at the end of the century.

No very fundamental changes had come about in the institutional care of the aged. The Examiner in 1898 expressed the views of many when it wrote "one of the greatest blots on the present system is the compulsory separation of man and wife. It is a cruelty which could and ought to be avoided." (33) Still the public were now interested in the aged poor and sympathetic towards them and this at least opened the way for improved provision in the future.

Developments in out-door relief were of greater importance. Numbers of the aged supported in the community showed a slight but encouraging increase from 150 single aged and infirm and 78 aged married couples in 1886 (34) to 222 single aged and 91 aged couples in 1891. (35) Allowances were still minimal but no longer the target of so much criticism. Out-door relief for the aged had by now become respectable, so much so that the

(31) Minutes of the Board, 19 June, 1900 & 2 October, 1900.

(32) Examiner, 27 March, 1899.

(33) Ibid. 12 April, 1898.

(34) H.A.P. 22/1887.

move towards the establishment of old age pensions was received with general approval. Braddon the Premier in 1899 referred to it as "a wise and beneficent system" which he hoped would replace institutional care. (36) Tasmania made no moves to enact its own legislation (as did New South Wales and Victoria) content apparently to await the Commonwealth legislation of 1908, but the principle of community responsibility for the aged poor had been very largely accepted and the policy of the Department of Charitable Grants in declining to force the aged into institutional care had laid the foundations in the state for a system which respected the right of the aged to independence and personal dignity.

OUT-DOOR RELIEF.

Government relief in the 1890's was very little changed apart from the slight increase in the numbers of the aged on allowances. Even during the worst period of the depression there was no increase in the numbers on relief. On the contrary the total expenditure dropped during the middle years of the decade. Total out-door relief expenditure (in round figures) stood at £3,147 in 1890 and at £2,890 and £2,769 in 1893 and 1894, the two years with peak unemployment figures. (37)

Out-door relief in 1893 was distributed as follows -

216 aged and infirm single men and women

93 aged and infirm married couples

(36) Examiner, 27 March, 1899.

(37) H.A.P. 15/1901.

16 deserted wives	}	with 532 children
64 widows		
48 sick men with families		
10 wives of prisoners		

In addition to the £2,890.6.4 spent on these a further £1,334.16.2 was allocated by the Department on supporting blind and deaf children at interstate training institutions, examinations for lunacy, medicines for paupers at out-patient departments and medical attendance for the poor at home, 13 girls in the Lying-in Home at Cascades, food and lodging for tramps at country police stations and winter fuel and Christmas treats for those on out-door relief. (38) This was typical of the whole of the decade except that after 1899, the blind and deaf children were progressively transferred to the new Tasmanian institute opened by a new voluntary agency led by Mrs. Emily Dobson. This agency aimed at endowing the handicapped with skills to enable them to be self-supporting and during training payments were made on piece work rates and thus, their report for 1899 said "there is no danger of pauperising anyone or lessening their self-respect." (39)

Apart from 1897 when the passages of a number of unemployed were paid to the west coast to find work (40) and 1898 when £400 was granted to the Launceston Benevolent Society, to aid the unemployed, (41) the Charitable Grants Department did not enter the field of unemployment relief.

(38) H.A.P. 39/1894.

(39) Annual Report for 1899 Tasmanian State Archives.

(40) H.A.P. 27/1898.

(41) H.A.P. 30/1899.

In 1895 in an attempt to reduce expenditure further the government once more farmed out the payment of allowances. Hobart and Launceston relief was handed over to their respective Benevolent Societies at a fixed sum of £740 per annum for Hobart and £380 for Launceston and a sum allocated to wardens and stipendiary magistrates of various municipal and police districts for out-door relief, food and lodging for tramps and medical aid to the poor. The Charitable Grants Department retained responsibility for other miscellaneous services. (42) This system continued until 1902 in Hobart and 1904 in Launceston. It did not lead to any drop in expenditure which instead rose to £3,044 in 1899 (43) and appears to have achieved little improvement in the service.

Government policy for the unemployed did not include the giving of money or food without return. As far as they did anything (and they were much criticised for inaction) it was to bring forward deferred public works to provide employment and to share the cost of relief works with voluntary committees. The relief works were usually small projects which were useful while not being strictly necessary, and for which the men were paid at a lower rate than normal wages. A Select Committee on the Unemployed which looked into the problem in 1894 heard evidence that most projects for which Parliament had voted money and which had been deferred for economy reasons had now been carried out and had given employment to 220 men. The Committee

(42) H.A.P. 25/1896.

(43) H.A.P. 15/1901.

suggested that the remaining outstanding projects should be brought forward, and that money be voted to build roads to open up land for new settlement and that local industries should receive encouragement. Although they heard evidence of distress and hunger among both city and country unemployed, no suggestion was made that the government assume responsibility for relief payments. Instead they said "seeing that

probably state assistance will have to be given in some form, there can be no doubt that such help will be more acceptable to the recipients, and more profitable to the government if it is earned." (44) A number of voluntary committees in Hobart and Launceston were proceeding on the same lines.

Money was raised to finance relief works and in some cases the government agreed to assist on a £ for £ basis. The All Saints Committee decided to finance a road to Ridgeway in order to "provide for the unemployed immediate work which they might accept without feeling dependent on charity." (45) The Concert Committee (so named because their funds were raised by a benefit concert) employed 20 men on work on the Domain, (46) and the General Committee for the Unemployed undertook other small projects around the city. (47) Emily Dobson in October, 1894 inaugurated a plan to settle unemployed families on the land. (48)

All these small projects no doubt helped to ease the problem, but the main burden of supporting the unemployed and

(44) H.A.P. 47/1894.

(45) Mercury, 13 June, 1894.

(46) Ibid, 20 June, 1894.

(47) Ibid, 15 June, 1894.

(48) H.A.P. 66/1894.

their families after they had sold anything they had of value, fell on the two Benevolent Societies. Launceston's expenditure rose from £1,070 in 1890 to £1,840 in 1894.⁽⁴⁹⁾ In Hobart where in 1890 the Society were assisting less than 100 persons each week, the figures rose to over 800 per week (men, women and children) during the winter of 1894 and over 1,000 per week during much of 1895 and 1896.⁽⁵⁰⁾ At first use was made of work in the woodyard and of stone breaking for small wages but this type of expedient could not meet the demands of so many. Both Societies had to draw heavily on their reserve funds to keep going. A number of new societies assisted. The City Mission, taken over by a women's committee in 1887 moved more definitely into relief work, mainly by giving clothing and blankets because of limited finance. Such money as they had was used to help the sick, the unemployed and other destitute families, with food, to pay their arrears of rent or to help with firewood in winter.⁽⁵¹⁾ The St. Vincent de Paul Society started work in Tasmania in 1898 and the Salvation Army increased its work. None of these were able to work on the scale of the Benevolent Societies but they did what they could.

The lack of work and the general fall in wage levels made the 1890's a harsh period for the poor. Dr. Barnard, the Government Medical Officer who visited and treated the sick poor reported in 1893, "The condition of the poorer classes in several instances was intensified by abject poverty which was

(49) Figures from Annual Reports.

(50) Hobart Benevolent Society Minutes 1890 - 1896.

(51) Papers of the City Mission.

painfully evident on my visits. Want of work with the consequent want of means to buy necessities, was the reason given, and when sickness is in the house, misery could hardly reach a lower ebb." (52)

The Morning Star reported families "on the verge of starvation" and "in the most pitiable state of distress," (53) during 1893, while others were living hand to mouth, picking up odd jobs and a few weeks on relief works and selling their clothes and furniture to keep going. At the end of the decade with the economy scrambling to its feet and unemployment figures steadily dropping, the voluntary committees for the unemployed folded up and left the field to the relief societies, now augmented by a number of newcomers whose activities roused fears in the older societies of overlapping and the encouragement of professional spongers.

It would be pleasant to record that the experience of the 1890's had taught the old societies more tolerance, but the fact is that their general practice remained much as before. The Launceston Benevolent Society Minutes for 1898-1904 show a number of cases struck off rations for drunkenness or suspended for insolence or insulting conduct. The unemployed of 1901 were suspected of malingering and the committee insisted that they worked for a day in the Benevolent Asylum grounds to prove their worth before being given rations. Inadequate relief was still being given to force the mother of the family

(52) H.A.P. 23/1893.

(53) Morning Star, 28 October, 1893 &
4 November, 1893.

to work to make up the difference. The Hobart Benevolent Society still found it necessary to assure their subscribers that they were not aiding the indolent and were discriminating between the worthy and the unworthy. But the new agencies (54) were taking a broader view. The members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society were told in their manual of instructions, "We must not consider ourselves offended if they [the poor] do not yield implicitly to our advice; we should not attempt to make them receive it as from authority and command ..." The impious were not to be repelled, but treated with kindness. The brothers were told "The title of the poor to our commiseration is their poverty itself" and while careful inquiries about the poor must be made the brothers should not be "too suspicious which might be unjust towards them," and later "our tender interest - our very manner will give to our alms a value they do not possess in themselves." (55)

This was good practice, softened by a kindness and a respect for the dignity of the poor which had little in common with ration suspensions for "insolent conduct." The coming of agencies like these to the relief scene gave the poor some element of choice and softened the harshness of the older, more authoritarian system.

(54) The Salvation Army, the City Mission and St. Vincent de Paul Society in the relief field.

(55) Manual of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, originally issued in 1845 but influencing Tasmania only after 1893 (Reprinted Dublin, 1935).

CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

The pattern of care remained as established in the 1870's and 1880's until 1896 and the passage that year of the Neglected Children's and Youthful Offenders Act.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The Act also improved the provision for children cruelly treated, bringing into its orbit a rather inept Act passed in 1895 entitled "The Prevention of Cruelty to and Better Protection of Children Act."⁽⁵⁷⁾ Under the 1896 Act neglected, ill-treated or delinquent children could be committed to the care of a Neglected Children's Department or direct to an Industrial or Training school as appropriate. The Secretary of the Department was the guardian of committed children until they were 21 years and had the right of inspection and certification of Industrial and Training schools. An inadequate school could lose its certificate and thereafter could receive neither Departmental children or direct committals. The Boarding-Out Scheme was also to be administered by the Department.

Unfortunately the Act retained the provision of the 1867 Training Schools Act which allowed the young offender to be committed to prison for 10 days prior to admission to the Training school and also provided for prison sentences for insubordination and absconding. Children committing like offences in Industrial Schools could be subjected to solitary confinement for 2 days on bread and water, or transferred to a Training school.

(56) 60 Vic. 24.

(57) 59 Vic. 10.

The Act came into force on 23 October, 1896, George Richardson was appointed first Secretary and was succeeded by F.R. Seager in 1899. The office was held in conjunction with those of Administrator of Charitable Grants and Superintendents of New Town Charitable Institution and the Boys Training School.

The immediate impact on the voluntary industrial schools was a drop in admissions. From 1897 - 1900 inclusive only 18 children were committed direct to the Industrial Schools by the courts in comparison with 65 committed direct to Training schools and 213 to the care of the Department. (58) In placing the children committed to its care, the Department continued to put its main stress on boarding out. In the same four years 135 children were boarded out, 41 sent to Training schools and only 23 placed in Industrial Schools. The rest were in service employment and miscellaneous placements. (59) The Industrial Schools were concerned by this development which created financial problems. Those schools which were full had a higher ratio of voluntary admissions who were likely to be poorer payers. It is in this period that we see the beginning of the boarding-out versus voluntary homes controversy which has so bedevilled child care in Tasmania this century.

In its 1897 Annual Report the Girls Industrial School, Hobart, wrote

The committee view with regret the annually decreasing number of admissions to the school owing it is believed to the difficulties caused by the last "Neglected Children's Act" which makes many deserving cases apparently ineligible.

(58) Annual Reports of the Neglected Children's Department.

(59) Ibid.

Only 18 are paid for by the government at the present time, though the terms are the same or lower than that for "boarded-out" children, while the training is naturally infinitely better as the entire time and thought of skilled persons are devoted to the work.

The homes continued to do a good job within the limits they set themselves. In 20 and in some cases over 30 years they had changed very little and were tending to settle down into a rather rigid pattern of care, still stressing the production of domestic servants and manual labourers who would fit into their proper place in society without recognising that society itself was changing. Their Annual Reports show no indication of dissatisfaction with the service they were offering and little desire to change their methods and while they were still filling a useful role in the children's services their complacency bode ill for the future.

The Boarding-Out Scheme was still proving a satisfactory alternative to institutional care. The Launceston visiting committee reporting in 1890 expressed the opposite viewpoint to the Industrial Schools.

There can be no question in the minds of our committee that for the most part these children are more suitably placed in the homes of working people than they would be in Orphan or Industrial Schools. The care of a motherly woman, the discipline of a father's presence, the contact with boys and girls, in fact the whole circumstances of natural family life - which is the Divine institution, are much more helpful to most children, especially the more degraded ones, than the best school is. (60)

The Central Committee gave way in 1896 to the new Department but the Hobart and Launceston Visiting Committees continued

to function and visited the children monthly. Departmental officers in Hobart and Launceston also visited the children and the apprentices. With this regular supervision unsuitable foster homes were usually detected early and the children transferred elsewhere where necessary. At 12 years some of the girls were transferred to Industrial Schools for 2 years domestic service training to equip them for work at 14 years - fairly late for the period and indicative of some extra consideration given to the children. Efforts were made to keep brothers and sisters together in foster homes and to apprentice them near to one another in service employment. On the whole the system seemed to be working well, though periodically children needed transfer to Industrial Schools or Training Schools because they failed to settle. 161 children were in foster homes at the end of 1900 and were being given the opportunity of living in ordinary families, attending normal schools and sharing in the daily life of the general run of Tasmanians.

The Boys Training School also underwent a change of management in 1896 and at the same time was transferred to a new building at New Town with the old New Town Farm property attached for farm training. Longmore was retired and the Board of Governors superseded by direct control from the Neglected Children's Department.

The Governors protested against the change fearing the boys interests would suffer, but in fact the move was beneficial.

The new building was a vast improvement on Cascades, industrial training was broadened, and an extended classification and reward system introduced. The home did well by its boys and the use of prison for punishment was not reported.

The Girls Training School was showing some sign of running down in numbers and the old building was rapidly decaying. Only 9 girls were there at the end of 1900. Other homes were acting as preventive services and few girls were committed direct to the school. It had not changed in the years of its activity and its prison-like atmosphere was rapidly becoming outdated.

By the end of the century then the children's services were on a good footing with the care of delinquents and deprived children well integrated so that the needs of each child could be considered. Prison for children was not yet abolished but the numbers were very considerably reduced so that it was no longer a commonplace to find a child serving a prison sentence. The linking of the children's services with the out-door relief service was both practical and beneficial to the children since it brought many under the notice of the Department who might be subject to neglect or ill-treatment. The staff seem to have been energetic men who cared about the children in their care and the numbers were still small enough for each child to be known as an individual. Judged in its period the state of the children's services in 1900 was a fine achievement.

RESCUE WORK.

Perhaps one of the most significant indications of changes in attitude to the poor was the acceptance of rescue work as a worthwhile activity. From being one of the most neglected areas of the social services, it comes into its own at the end of the century. The government played some part but the burden was increasingly shouldered by the various churches.

A Government Lying-in Home had opened in Cascades in 1888 and a Ladies Visiting Committee was appointed to take an interest in the girls. Some of the girls stayed at the New Town Charitable Institution until their confinement and others were discharged there with their babies until other arrangements could be made. Most kept their babies and were helped to find accommodation or employment. (61) The home itself moved to New Town Charitable Institution in 1895 and remained there until the end of the century though numbers dropped from 22 in the home in 1896 to 3 only in 1900. (62)

The Church of England moved much more vigorously into the field from 1890 onwards. The diocesan sponsored Home of Mercy was opened that year and in 1892, a private venture, Hope Cottage was taken over by the church. The Salvation Army continued its work in Launceston and in 1897 opened the Elim Maternity Home in Hobart. The Catholic church opened the Magdalen Home in 1893 run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd and a non-denominational home, the Anchorage was also operating

(61) Tasmanian Government Archives S.W.D. 39.

(62) H.A.P. 20/1897 & 9/1901.

in Hobart.

Hope Cottage would only accept first pregnancies and The Anchorage too had a somewhat punitive approach. The latter reported that the confinement was to take place at Cascades "as a wholesome punishment for those who err" (63) and they were not re-admitted until the government institution ceased to keep them "so that things should not be made too easy for them." (64) The girl was to remain with her baby for twelve months and then would be placed in employment with her child and the hope was that in caring for the child their "womanly dignity" would be restored. (65)

The Home of Mercy was prepared to go a great deal further. They assisted with the management of the Contagious Diseases Hospital (The Lock) from November, 1890 and encouraged the girls to enter the Home of Mercy when treatment was complete. They visited the prison and scoured the streets at night, offering the girls they found an alternative way of life. The Magdalen Home while not taking pregnant girls, did not discriminate on the basis of worth when admitting. Girls were taken from The Lock, the New Town Charitable Institution Lying-in Home, the Police, from parents or on request from the girl herself. Their age range between 1893 and 1900 was 12 - 39 years with the majority being under 20 years. (66) Elim's early policy is not recorded in their papers but it is reasonable

(63) Church News, June, 1892.

(64) Proceedings of Australasian Conference on Charity, 1890
Paper by Lady Hamilton on "The Anchorage" in Public Library
of Victoria.

(65) Ibid.

(66) Mt. St. Canice Papers.

to assume that it resembled the northern Aspley House which was willing to take girls straight from brothels. These relatively broad based homes show a marked advance on the attitude in the 1860's when the Hobart Benevolent Society were criticised for helping the single mother. The church supported homes proved to have the stability that privately run units could not provide. Hope Cottage had to be amalgamated with the Home of Mercy, but the latter survived and eventually developed into the present day Clarendon Children's Home. Elim and the Magdalen Home (now Mount St. Canice) are still with us. The Anchorage went the way of other projects dependent on direct public support.

During the 1890's too for the first time ex-prisoners received some attention from voluntary agencies other than the giving of spiritual aid. Hobart and Launceston both had Discharged Prisoners Aid and Rescue Societies opening in 1890 and 1891 respectively. The committees were supplied with lists of prisoners to be discharged each month and the men and women were met at the prison gate and offered help. Work was found for them, tools purchased, temporary board and lodgings provided and fares paid to join relatives in other colonies. The committees corresponded vigorously with the government to persuade it to pay the fares of prisoners back to their own home on discharge, pressed for better provision for inebriates who formed a significant proportion of the recidivists and drew attention to the New Zealand Act of 1886 for probation for

young offenders. (67) The Hobart Society led by Robert Mather had a particularly liberal outlook. They gave help "Even in doubtful cases rather than refuse a helping hand" (68) and they defended this policy in 1893. "There have been cases that have caused much disappointment and the Committee have been deceived, but what of that? it is better even to help some who may prove unworthy of assistance than fail to give help to any whom it may be the means of saving."

Such heresy as this is perhaps one of the best illustrations of the new thinking.

CONCLUSION.

When beginning this study, it was assumed that a pattern of social services similar to the generally accepted Australian picture and in particular, similar to New South Wales, (a fellow penal colony) would emerge. The little literature available on the history of Australian social services gives primacy in the 19th century to the voluntary agencies. Shorn of their qualifying clauses, typical statements (backed mainly by evidence from Victoria and New South Wales) are

Voluntary organisations occupied a central position in the charitable relief services. (69)

In so far as social needs were met, they were met by voluntary organisations. (70)

(67) H.A.P. 131/1891 and 79 & 82/1893.

(68) H.A.P. 82/1893. (69) Kewley op.cit. p.5.

(70) Lawrence op.cit. p. 18.

Voluntary organisations, with the approval, support and quite frequently with the direct sponsorship of the government, were assigned the task of providing many of the community's essential social services. (71)

and occasionally the words "except in South Australia" may be added.

This study has shown that Tasmania too must be excepted from these generalisations. Willingly or unwillingly (and very often the latter) the state played a central role in providing social services throughout the century while the voluntary agencies played a relatively subordinate role. In the 1890's, the trend on the mainland was towards greater government involvement, in Tasmania to increased voluntary activity. The result was that the two systems began to meet in roughly the same balance and this may have led to the assumption that they reached this position by the same routes. This was not so.

Development of the social services was, as we have seen by no means steady throughout the century. After rapid forward strides under Arthur, stagnation set in for the remainder of the Imperial period. With the coming of independence the pace of progress once more increased, but before long the driving need for economy again posed a threat. That the services did not again stagnate was due to many factors not least among them being the existence of two small groups of men. First were

(71) Leonard Tierney "Patterns of Social Welfare", Chapter 7 in A.F. Davies & S. Encel Australian Society (Cheshires, 1965) p. 117.

the public servants in particular succeeding Administrators of Charitable Grants and their staffs. These men by exercising their existing powers to their limits, by their quickness in taking advantage of new legislation or new administrative authority and by their willingness to express even unpopular views pushed forward steadily in improving and expanding their sector of the social services often going faster than public or parliamentary opinion would have wished. The rapid development of out-door relief and of the boarding-out scheme and the termination of mass care for children are excellent examples of the results of this policy. Tarleton, O'Boyle and Richardson all made a significant contribution in this way.

The other group, working in the voluntary agencies, kept social problems constantly before the government and the public. The Mathers (still there at the end of the century with Robert in the Discharged Prisoners Aid and Rescue Society and Thomas chairing the Hobart Benevolent Society) were among the most notable of these but many others made useful contributions. Often these two groups took opposite view points, but their arguments helped to sharpen public interest in the problem debated and when they were agreed they were almost irresistible. Neither were social reformers in the sense that they saw the need to attack the basic inequalities of the social structure but their combined efforts had helped to make Tasmania a less harsh environment for the least privileged members of that society.

While Australian social services as a whole were defective in 1900, Tasmania at least had little to be ashamed of in comparison with the larger states. This relatively poor state, beginning its existence with a large penal population and handicapped by constant financial difficulties nevertheless had produced a viable system of social services. The "safety net" had much wider meshes than the present day one, but it did exist. The sick poor could get treatment, in-patient or out-patient in the two cities or in one of the cottage hospitals now scattered around the state. Out-patient treatment included the right to free medicine for the destitute, and a Government Medical Officer in Hobart and the District Nursing Association in Launceston visited the sick poor in their own homes. The mentally ill both pauper and paying had access to the New Norfolk Asylum. The unmarried mother could be cared for before and after her confinement in one of three homes. In the cities the poor married woman could get assistance for her confinement from either the Hobart or Launceston Dorcas Societies who provided the necessary equipment and paid the midwife. The married aged and the handicapped who were unable to work were provided for at home in temporary troubles by the voluntary relief agencies and on a long term basis by government out-door relief. The aged single or widowed ^{MAN OR} ~~married~~ woman without friends or relatives could be offered accommodation in one of the Invalid Depots. Orphaned and neglected children could be cared for under the Boarding-Out Scheme or in an Industrial School. Special provision was being made for the delinquent

and the young prostitute. For the ex-prisoner after care was now being given by two societies. Deserted wives and widows with children and the unemployed had their needs met by government and voluntary relief agencies. Thus of the major social services in Tasmania today, only the Probation Service was wholly absent. The adequacy and quality of these services was, as we have seen, much in question but they had developed as knowledge and experience grew and were making a genuine attempt to meet the needs of those who asked for help. At the close of the century with the promise of aid for the aged and infirm from the newly created Federal Government and the wider involvement of the community in the service of the poor, the future looked very hopeful.

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