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Independent of 4/78

### BENDIGO BENEVOLENT ASYLUM.

The committee met at 3 20 yesterday. Present: Messrs. Quinn (in the chair), Steane, Taylor, Hayes, and Birch (hon. sec.).

Fifty-nine applications for out-door relief were dealt with, and in most cases aid in kind or by order on stores was granted.

One aged female was admitted into the institution. She stated that she was unable to work, having had her thigh broken, and that she had no relations in the district.

The superintendent called the attention of the committee to the case of Mrs. Scott, which had come up at the meeting a fortnight ago. In February the Rev. Mr. MacCullagh recommended Mrs. Scott as a fit subject for out door relief, and an order for 3s. a week was granted, on a store at Kangaroo Flat, where applicant resided. The order was sent to Constable Davidson, who returned it in a day or two with the memorandum, "Mrs. Scott positively declines to accept aid in kind, stating she would sooner starve, but she will take the 3s in money." No more was done in the case, as the aid was not received on the terms of the institution, and on March 15 a letter was received from Constable Davidson, to the effect that Mrs. Scott had changed her mind and would receive the out door relief. This he was told was informal, and the applicant must apply personally. She did so in person at the next meeting, on March 22, and was granted the same aid as before, and made use of the order given on Moore Street. By instruction of the committee the superintendent had written to the several known relations of Mrs. Scott in the colony, enquiring whether they could not support her. One answer only was received, from Mr. D. B. Daly, the son-in-law of the applicant, which was read as follows:—

"Sandhurst March 29, 1878.

"GENTLEMEN,—I do myself the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a letter from your honorary secretary, relative to the application of Mrs. Elizabeth Scott, and to thank you for affording me opportunity of explaining fully the circumstances in connection with this to me most unpleasant affair. I cannot tell you the many, or any of the annoyances I have had to put up with for years past, feeling as I do that family matters or differences are far better when left alone, that they should not be meddled with by those whom they do not concern, and I have no doubt but that you, gentlemen, will agree with me on reading the particulars I feel justified in giving you that it would have been better if the golden rule of non-interference in family matters had been followed in the case under your consideration. Have I acted well or otherwise by her, and have I been fairly treated by the Rev. MacCullagh and the charitable ladies of his congregation, who have made such free use of my name? Dirt has been cast at me from all quarters; my name and my family affairs have been bandied about from tongue to tongue for weeks past; and why? Is it because we happen to differ in religious belief, and that Mrs. Scott's partisans have put down any differences we may have had to that fact? If this be so, I have only to say that I managed to get along with her for the last fifteen years, and I have no doubt would have done so to the end, had we been left to ourselves. I feel satisfied that had I been a member of the Rev. MacCullagh's congregation, he would have deemed it his duty to make some enquiry before interfering in my private family arrangements in such an unreasoning and over-hasty manner. I have no doubt that he believed every word that dropped from the mouth of this venerable old lady (now 75 years of age), but to my mind whether he did or not he should have communicated with me in some way ere removing her from my roof and my protection. He provided her with money, board, and lodging, at a period almost two days ere she left my house, and now in the face of this, it is bruited about that I have acted in a most uncharitable manner; in fact, that I have turned my mother-in-law into the streets to starve. All I can say is this: If she is in this position it is of his doing and through his interference. On this point, I solemnly and sincerely declare that I never did, now or at any time, order her out. She left my house of her own free will, at her own desire, and under the guidance and protection of the Rev. MacCullagh, her minister. This is not her first or third flight from my house in a like temper. She has not only gone into empty huts, but also into the bush in fits of this nature. In Ingleswood in 1863 she went into the bush, as she said to starve. I had to speak to the Rev. Mr. Chambers, her clergyman, who kindly took her in hand, and prevailed upon her to live peaceably with me for the remainder of her stay there. Both at Carisbrook and Pleasant Creek, where I have been stationed for about nine years, many similar scenes occurred, and at the

later place I was compelled, for peace sake, to rent a house for herself. She has been on and off with me at Sandhurst for the past four years. Whilst away from me, I allowed her £2 per month, when not residing in my house, since July, 1862, and continued her allowance, though in a lesser degree, for pocket money, etc., when living with me. I dread to trespass so much upon your time, and trust that my unpleasant position in the matter will be a sufficient excuse, for, believe me, I feel deeply humiliated at having to enter into a defence of this nature, but as my name and character have been dragged through the mire by a lot of meddling and cackling old women, whose names I do not wish to mention, I have no remedy left but to take this stand which I so acutely feel. The next question to be considered is, why have my domestic and private affairs been interfered with in this unwarrantable and unjustifiable way? Is it because I am the only connection or relative who ever held out a helping hand to her from the time I met her first in 1862 to the present, when the rev. friend took her up, or is it with the view of screening her Protestant relatives and connections, for, mind you, I am the only Roman Catholic in the whole lot. Mrs. Scott has two nephews, Church of England clergymen in this colony—the Rev. Samuel Scott in Sunbury, and the Rev. Henry Scott at Ballan. These two rev. gentlemen, being her nephews, are far more in duty bound to see that their aunt is provided with the necessaries of this life than I am; and I must further say that I have not heard of them giving her any assistance whatever, beyond religious advice, which costs them nothing, and Mrs. Scott has informed me that she gave them and their sister shelter and a home when they wanted it badly, on arriving in this colony, 25 years ago. With regard to her other sons-in-law, she has one, a Mr. Tournay, a solicitor, practising at Pleasant Creek, and another, a Mr. Griffith, a State-school teacher at Dromana, when last I heard of him in 1876. In conclusion, I must say that in consequence of this last uncalled for interference in my domestic affairs by persons outside of my family, I must now decline doing anything further in this matter than assisting to pay her passage home to her brothers and sisters, (who are well off), as suggested by the Rev. Mr. MacCullagh, or allowing her an equal amount with her other connections and relatives as heretofore named for her support in this colony, and no matter what may be the consequence, she shall never live again in my house. Your obedient servant, D. B. DALY."

Mr. Dorman said he had seen Mrs. Scott yesterday. She said she would not come to the institution, or go to Moore Bros. She did not complain of Mr. Daly, but said he had assisted her. She wished to go home to her sisters, and wanted money for that purpose.

Mr. Hayes thought they should take action in the matter. The letter from Mr. Daly should be referred to the Rev. Mr. MacCullagh for his consideration and information. As he had interfered, no doubt he would be able to get the other relatives to subscribe the sum required to send the old lady home. He had no doubt that Mr. MacCullagh, whom he knew to be a kind and charitable gentleman, thought he was doing his duty while he was inflicting pain on Mr. Daly. Mr. MacCullagh should have an opportunity to explain, and moreover, as Mr. Daly expressed his desire to have her sent home, the other relations might be induced to subscribe. It was the best and most judicious way of dealing with the matter, and he would move accordingly.

Mr. Birch remarked that Mr. Daly had been paying his mother-in-law 10s. per week whilst she was away from him, and that was more than the institution could give her.

Mr. Quin said they could not refer the letter to Mr. MacCullagh, as it was merely an ex parte statement.

Mr. Hayes: "It is not an ex parte statement; it is a narration of facts."

Mr. Quin: "Mr. MacCullagh may traverse the whole letter?"

Mr. Hayes: All the better if the result is good.

Mr. Quin said it was only just to expect that the relatives could among themselves provide for her. It showed the wisdom of the action taken at a late meeting in asking the Ministry to bring in a bill to compel persons to provide for their relatives when they were in a position to do so. There were here two Church of England clergymen, who might be expected to be guided by the best rules of charity and kindness; also a schoolmaster, a solicitor, and a clerk of petty sessions, relatives in the present case, who might well be expected to make provision for an aged relation. It was evident that Mr. Daly was the only one who had done anything to assist her, and it was quite possible she had made his life miserable. She did not say Mr. Daly had turned her out; only that her daughter had requested her to leave.

Mr. Taylor said that one good would come of the letter being sent to Mr. MacCullagh. He would be able to say why she had been taken from her former residence, and it would be ascertained whether her other relations were as willing

to assist her. Mr. Daly was the only one who had taken care of her, and it was a great injustice that his actions should have been so commented on. He felt much pleasure in supporting Mr. Hayes' proposition.

Mr. Hayes felt quite sure that Mr. MacCullagh had interfered with the best intentions, and he had no desire to meddle.

Mr. Steane thought Mr. Daly must be under a misapprehension, so severely criticising Mr. MacCullagh.

Mr. Hayes said this would be made right by the letter being brought under the rev. gentleman's notice.

Mr. Taylor said he would particularly wish Mr. MacCullagh to explain. He had the highest opinion of that gentleman, but if the letter was correct he must alter his opinion.

Mr. Birch felt sure that Mr. MacCullagh was mistaken, in consequence of the story the woman told him.

Mr. Quin supposed she stated she was turned out, and Mr. MacCullagh believing her, acted accordingly.

Mr. Steane asked whether she complained of poverty.

Mr. Taylor said she has money. Mr. Dorman stated she had told him she would not go to the store or institution, but take what he liked to bring her. She wanted to go home.

Mr. Quin: Perhaps she would require a first-class passage.

Mr. Dorman: She said she wanted £20. Mr. Steane thought aid should be voted to her in the meantime; she could accept or reject it as she chose. He moved that aid in stores at 3s. per week be granted for a fortnight.

This motion, and also that of Mr. Hayes, were carried unanimously.

The reports of Visiting Committee, superintendent, and medical officer, were read and received.

The meeting then adjourned.

2400 365