

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

FRIDAY, 26 AUGUST 1864

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the Education Board, seven-tenths—eight-tenths, including the Presbyterian body—were deprived of participating in the assistance rendered by Government to education. He considered it was quite time that the tyranny exercised by two-tenths of the population over the majority of the people in the Colony should cease. It was too late to introduce, during the present session, a Bill on the subject, but he might state his intention to do so at some future time. He proceeded to point out, that from the peculiar manner in which the Board of Education was constituted, the Episcopalians and members of the Roman Catholic Church are nearly unrepresented. He contended that education without religion was something like ploughing up land which should have been allowed to be fallow, and sowing the seed of infidelity. The board should be composed of members of different denominations, care being taken that those members should be of the very highest standing in their respective denominations. The system of education at present in existence in the Colony was certainly not the national system; it was a general system of education adopted in no other place. He believed the time would come when the money paid by seven-tenths of the population towards education would be expended in the manner which it ought to be, and those seven-tenths of the population would cease to be ridden over roughshod by three-tenths. It was most unjust and absurd that so great a majority of its population should be unable to obtain a sixpence out of the coffers of the state for the purpose of education. He concluded by moving the resolutions.

The Hon J. WATTS expressed his intention of supporting the motion, as the resolutions were in accordance with his views. He would quote, as expressing his opinions on the subject before the House, an extract from a lecture by Mr. Cockburn, at the School of Arts, Ipswich, in 1859. The extract was as follows:—

“That the general education of the people can only be attended with beneficial results, so long as it is based on religious training.

“That that training should commence with the most elementary schools, and pervade the whole course of educational instruction.

“That it is a solecism in a Christian community to support any system of instruction which affirms the principle, that education is not the province of the clergy.

“That it is the duty of Government to assist and countenance education, but not to control it.

“That it is a wide-spread and deep-rooted fallacy to imagine that the most elevated course of secular instruction can be accompanied by any other results than those of a most demoralising tendency.

“That as the amount of education imparted by the national system is directed solely to the development of mental powers and rational faculties, it cannot but exercise a most prejudicial effect on the community at large.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 26 August, 1864.

The Board of Education.—Immigration Bill, read 2^o.—
Pastoral Lands Assessment Bill, read 2^o.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

The Hon. W. WOOD moved,—“(1.) That in the opinion of that House, the Board of Education, as at present constituted, had entirely failed to carry out in its proper spirit the Act 24 Victoria, No. 6. (2.) That an address be presented to the Governor in Council, praying him to cause the necessary steps to be taken for the appointment of a board, to consist of persons whose high official standing, whether clerical or lay, will be a sufficient guarantee of their fitness to discharge their duties, and who shall be selected with a view to a fair organisation of the different religious denominations. (3.) That the resolutions be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly for their concurrence.” In bringing forward the motion, he did not intend to trouble the House with a number of statistics, but would simply state, that by the hybrid system of education carried out by

“And that, although the denominational system may not accomplish all that is to be desired, it is the only system that can be regarded as deserving of the support of all who are solicitous to uphold that righteousness that exalteth a nation.”

He did not desire to interfere with the religious scruples of other people. All he desired was that a fair share of the money set apart for education should be bestowed upon each denomination in proportion to its numbers. That such was not the case under the system advocated by the existing board, must be apparent to all. No assistance whatever was rendered by the board to non-vested schools, although the Board of National Education in New South Wales invariably gave assistance to that class of schools. He maintained that a necessity existed for the combination of secular and religious instruction, even in the infant schools; that was, if it was desired to maintain among the rising generation a feeling of peace and good will among men. The honorable member proceeded to argue that a great deal of harm was being done throughout the world in places where secular instruction alone was imparted in the schools. The demoralising influence of the character of the education given in various portions of the continent of Europe was pointed out in the pamphlet from which he had already quoted. The lecturer remarked:—

“Look at Sweden, which, in the emphatic language of the venerable prelate at the head of the Roman Catholic Church in these colonies—Archbishop Polding—is described, in his evidence before the Select Committee on Education in 1844, as being one of the most educated countries in Europe, and at the same time one of the most deprived. He further says, that ‘in Sweden, the proportion of readers as compared with the entire population is as 999 to 1,000; but the statistics of the country betray such a state of demoralisation as one can hardly conceive to be possible.’ Look at Prussia, where education, as Sir Archibald Alison says, ‘is more generally diffused than in any other country of equal extent in Europe,’ and listen to the testimony of that celebrated historian respecting it. In the tenth volume of his works, at page 10, he says, that ‘over the whole of its dominions, one in seven of the whole population is at school; while in France, the proportion is one in twenty-three; in England, one in fifteen; and in Scotland, one in eleven.’ And then he continues—‘there can be no doubt that this is the greatest proportion of persons undergoing instruction which obtains in the world. Instruction is there compulsory; the laws compel the sending of children to school by their parents, and, when necessary, that duty is enforced by the magistrates. In general, however, it is unnecessary, so great is the desire of parents and relatives to give their children the blessings of education. Schools are established in every parish, and the costs of instruction are very trifling, so as to be within the reach of the humblest of the people; and to the destitute it is given gratuitously. The tree of knowledge, however, has in Prussia, as elsewhere, brought forth its accustomed fruits of good and evil. In Prussia, there are, according

to the most recent returns, no less than *twelve times* as many crimes committed, in proportion to the population, as in France, where education is not diffused to a third of the extent it is in Prussia—a fact which demonstrates equally with the experience of every other country the sedulous care which it is indispensable to take before that great instrument of *power* is put into the hands of the people.”

The honorable member concluded by stating his determination to vote for the motion.

The Hon. G. HARRIS considered that the resolutions consisted of a direct vote of want of confidence in the Board of Education, and he considered that no evidence had been adduced in support of such an assumption. He would, therefore, oppose the resolutions.

The Hon. E. I. C. BROWNE was also of opinion that no proof had been adduced to show that the Board of Education had failed to carry out the spirit of the Act; and, therefore, he was of opinion that the resolutions were not called for.

The Hon. W. WOOD expressed his willingness to withdraw the resolutions, and his intention, during next session, either to move for a select committee to enquire into the matter, or to introduce a Bill, which would carry out the spirit of his resolutions.

The motion was accordingly withdrawn.

IMMIGRATION BILL.

The Hon. J. BRAMSTON: Honorable gentlemen, I rise to move the second reading of the Immigration Bill, a Bill which will exercise a great influence upon the future of this Colony, for it is mainly upon the number of immigrants who arrive that our future progress and prosperity will depend. The success which has attended the system of immigration adopted by the first Parliament of Queensland has been so great, that I am quite sure it is generally considered advisable to continue it. The principle of attracting emigrants from the old countries has proved so successful, that I think we should be foolish in the extreme to do away with it altogether. But, since its first introduction, there have been expressions of opinion that some modifications of the system should be introduced. The question has been fully gone into in the Legislative Assembly, and discussed in all its bearings. The Bill which I now ask you to read a second time is the result of their deliberations. As you will perceive, it provides, as before, for the appointment of some gentleman to represent this Colony in England under the title of “Agent-General for Emigration.” Much will depend upon the exertions of the gentleman, whoever he may be, who will act in that capacity. Upon his efforts will rest, in a great measure, the success of the scheme. It will be found that the details of the system provided for by this Bill differ somewhat from the immigration system of 1860. It has been modified so as to remove objections, which experience has

proved to be well founded. The Act of 1860 empowered the Government to grant a land order for eighteen acres of land to every adult immigrant who had paid his own passage; and to give him a further order for twelve acres after he had resided two years in the Colony. It will be seen that this principle is still maintained, in reference to emigrants paying their own passage to Queensland, with this difference, that, instead of receiving an £18 land order upon arrival, and a £12 land order in two years' time, the immigrant will receive a land order warrant which will entitle him to take up thirty acres of land on arrival in the Colony, for which he will obtain a deed of grant from the Crown at the expiration of two years. The object in view in giving the title to land after two years' residence in the Colony, is to do away with the custom which has prevailed, of disposing of the land orders for cash. It was never the intention of the Legislature that this Colony should be made a convenience to immigrants who were on their way to other colonies,—that we should supply the Colonies of New South Wales and Victoria with immigrants at the expense of our own exchequer. That was, nevertheless, the result of the original Act. The same attraction is held out in this Bill to every immigrant paying his own passage, while it offers a further inducement in the shape of a half land order to every child between one and twelve years of age. Under the former system, land orders were not given to children, unless there were two, in which case they were considered equal to one statute adult. This alteration seems at least fair, and its insertion in the Bill will, I trust, meet with the approval of the House. I will now pass on to the thirteenth clause, and point out another alteration in the law as it now stands, which I think will be admitted to be both reasonable and just. In the case of immigrants introduced by any shipping firm, or other persons, a land order for £18 sterling for each adult immigrant is given to the shippers in return for the cost of his introduction. That was the case under the old law, but then the immigrant who was put to no expense whatever for his passage, would have been entitled, after two years residence in the Colony, to have claimed a second land order for £12. That land order will no longer be given, as such immigrants will have been brought out at the direct charge of the Colony. In the tenth clause of this Act it will be observed that a very important, but an entirely new element, has been introduced, one which I think is deserving of the most careful consideration. It empowers the Governor in Council to issue debentures to the extent of £100,000 per annum, for the purposes of immigration. This, I think, is putting the matter upon a proper footing. We have had land orders coming in to such an extent that the land revenue has been absorbed, and at the same time we have had to incur a large expenditure in cash, to meet the cost

of immigration. The ordinary revenue of the Colony has not been sufficient to meet this outlay, and we have appeared to be getting into debt. Hitherto, as long as the land revenue was absorbed for general purposes, we have been in reality borrowing for the purposes of immigration. There are two other modes by which emigrants may be introduced into this Colony. Upon the approval of the Agent-General for Emigration, an assisted passage may be given to such emigrants as are unable to pay their own passage, on terms provided in the schedule, at the rate of £8 for adults, and £4 for female domestic servants—the same rates under which the assisted immigration is carried on at the present day. This branch of the system has been found to work well, and during the last year there were many thousands of pounds paid on behalf of those who could not afford to defray the cost of their own passages. These persons have consequently been introduced into the Colony at a much lower rate than would have been the case had they been brought out by a shipping firm, as a land order would then have been given in each case to the shippers. The Governor is authorised from time to time to grant free passages to female domestic servants and others who may be deserving. It is very desirable to place this authority in the hands of the Government, because occasions may arise when there may be a great want of certain classes of labor, skilled or unskilled, and it may be advisable to introduce it, even at the expense of the country. In the seventeenth clause a principle has been introduced which has been found to work very well in Victoria and Tasmania. It is that of making persons who have been brought out in this manner repay to the Government one-half the cost of their passage. This is not made imperative in every case, but the condition is placed before the emigrant in England, and those who are anxious to settle themselves in this Colony subscribe to it, and thus obtain priority of shipment. The twelfth clause also empowers the Government, upon deposit of a non-transferable land order, to advance to the owner a sum equal to one-fifth of its nominal value, which has to be repaid within two years. There is one other very important introduction in this Bill, which is contained in the fourteenth clause. This clause gives the Government authority to purchase from the shipper land orders at the rate of £15 each. In fact it fixes the rate at which we pay for the introduction of immigrants into this Colony. Honorable gentlemen, these are the leading principles of the Bill, which I only wish I could do more justice to. For the importance of this measure is so generally admitted, that I feel sure every honorable gentleman, before coming to this House, has already calculated the probable working of its various clauses. I believe that it embodies several very desirable improvements in our system of immigration, and is of such a character that it cannot fail to receive your

support. I have, therefore, no hesitation in asking you to read it a second time.

The Hon. H. B. FITZ said he had great pleasure in supporting the motion, and he thought it was a pity that such a Bill had not been in force for some time past. Had that been the case, the crisis which had occurred would no doubt have been avoided, as it would have been impossible for the Government to have made such continual changes in the system. He trusted that no difficulty would be thrown in the way of the Bill; that the immigration would continue, and the progress of the Colony be no longer retarded. There were some of the clauses of which he certainly did not altogether approve, but he did not intend to endanger the passing of the Bill by proposing any amendments in them. He referred to the sixth, ninth, and twelfth clauses. With regard to the sixth clause, he thought the immigrant, upon his arrival, should have no difficulty in making a transfer of his land order. He could not see why the immigrant should not be placed in the same position in that respect as the shipper. He was aware from correspondence with persons in the mother country, that emigrants frequently disposed of every particle of property they possessed in order to be able to pay their passage-money, calculating upon the privilege of disposing of their land order upon arrival to purchase the necessaries of life. He should like to have seen the Government come forward and take the land order at the same price they gave to the shipper. With regard to the repayment clause, he felt confident it would prove a dead letter. A similar principle had been enforced in New South Wales, only there the security was better, they took the security of the employer as well. He (Mr. Fitz) recollected reading a speech delivered by the Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, who stated that a very small per centage of the money was repaid. If then the security of the employer was insufficient how much worse would be the guarantee of the laborer only,—it would be so much worthless paper. He did not think the Government would receive five shillings in the pound. He should not, however, offer any objection to the Bill, but should be glad to see it pass in its present shape.

The Hon. G. HARRIS said he was glad to hear that the honorable member who had last spoken, although he objected to one or two of its clauses, did not intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill. For his part, he had carefully perused the Bill, and, although he should have approved of certain alterations, he was of opinion that it would prove a good workable Bill, and one which would have the effect of bringing a large population to our shores. He should, therefore, support it in its integrity. If the charge of sending out emigrants were placed in the hands of such an able person as Mr. Jordan, who, he had reason to believe, had decided upon

returning to England as Agent-General, he (Mr. Harris) felt convinced that the system would prove highly successful; and he should be glad to hear from the honorable gentleman who represented the Government, that it was his intention to move the suspension of the Standing Orders, so as to pass the Bill through its various stages with as little delay as possible, for delays were dangerous.

The Hon. W. WOOD expressed his satisfaction at the announcement which the honorable gentleman who had just sat down had made—that our late emigration agent had decided upon returning to England, and he trusted that gentleman would be as successful in carrying out the system of emigration as he had hitherto been. He did not, however, concur in the desirability of rushing the Bill through the House. It was a measure of which he entirely approved, but he thought there were some points which required consideration. He did not intend to say much about the different clauses at that stage, but would take an opportunity of doing so in committee. He was sorry to observe that the Bill did not embody a clause which was in the original draft Bill, limiting the operations of the Act to three years; because, although he believed it was necessary at present to hold out these inducements to emigrants, he thought the time was rapidly approaching when an abundance of emigrants could be obtained without these grants of land. He thought, also, that the immigrant who had paid his own passage should be permitted to convert his land order into cash, if he chose. £30 was, in his opinion, too large a land order to give, and he thought a land order for £18 would be quite sufficient.

The PRESIDENT said the question before the House was one of such vast importance to the Colony that he was desirous of expressing his opinions upon it. He quite concurred in the opinion expressed by the honorable gentleman, who had moved the second reading of the Bill, that a marked success had attended the immigration scheme originally instituted in this Colony. He thought no person would attempt to deny that we had been exceedingly fortunate in obtaining a supply of labor under that system. There had been occasional stoppages in the flow of immigration, but he believed that these stoppages had been caused by mismanagement in the details of the system. He was, therefore, glad to see this measure brought forward, as it would give stability to the system, and put a stop to those alterations which had militated against its success. So far, he was prepared to support the measure. But among the various clauses, there were some to which he should be compelled to dissent in committee. The first clause provided that the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth sections of the Act 24 Victoria, No. 15, should be repealed. Those were clauses which gave grants of land to military officers, and as the object of

the immigration system was to encourage the introduction, not only of labor, but of capital, he considered that alteration was in the wrong direction. There was no doubt that provision had the effect of introducing capital into the Colony; and those who came out with that inducement, invited their friends to come out, who, in their turn, become employers of labor. He was not prepared to give his assent to the clause which provided that the land orders should be non-transferable. If honorable gentlemen had witnessed the black looks of some of the immigrants upon learning that their orders were not convertible into money, they would perhaps hold the same opinion. Possibly, some of the immigrants had dealt recklessly with their land orders. But they would probably do the same with their land, and he did not think the State should provide against that. It was remarked by the honorable gentleman who introduced the measure, that this was a precaution to prevent other colonies from supplying themselves with labor at our expense. It was, no doubt, prudent to take such a precaution; but it must be recollected that up to the present moment, the balance of immigration had been very much in favor of this Colony, and that there was but little danger of persons leaving Queensland to seek a livelihood elsewhere. He had been much struck in reading the evidence taken by the Immigration Committee, at the exertions which had been made by the gentleman who had been appointed to initiate and carry out the system in England. He thought Mr. Jordan deserved great credit for the energy with which he had overcome the difficulties that beset him at the commencement of his undertaking. His labors required no ordinary amount of mental and bodily energy. He thought Mr. Jordan was fortunate in meeting with the shipping firm who became associated with him in carrying out the system, and he was glad to find that he had been enabled to keep faith with them, and to carry out the engagements he had made with them on behalf of this Colony. He trusted the effect of the Bill would be to place the immigration upon such a footing of stability, that no sudden changes could possibly be made to mar its success. He did not agree with the honorable member (Mr. Harris) who wished to see it rushed through the House, but he had little doubt that when it had passed the Council it would be a lasting and beneficial measure. He thought it should have all the consideration which its importance demanded, and be carefully and deliberately discussed. He should support the second reading.

The question was then put and passed, and the Bill read a second time.

PASTORAL LANDS ASSESSMENT BILL.

The Hon. J. BRAMSTON moved the second reading of the Pastoral Lands Assessment

Bill, which, he said, embodied only one principle, viz., that the occupant of a run need not of necessity pay the assessment of his run at the expiration of the fourth and ninth years of the lease under this Act. The second and third clauses were as follows:—

"2. In order to provide a fund to meet the cost of appraisal of rent of runs held under the provisions of the Unoccupied Crown Lands Occupation Act of 1860 or the Tenders for Crown Lands Act of 1860 or the Pastoral Leases Act of 1863 the lessee of every such run shall pay into the Treasury at Brisbane the sum of five pounds for each block of twenty-five square miles and a further sum of four shillings for every additional square mile of available area in excess thereof and such payment shall be made not less than three months prior to the expiration of the fourth and ninth years respectively of the term of the lease of such run.

"3. In default of payment being made as provided by the preceding clause then the rent to be paid for such run from the fifth to the ninth years of the lease thereof inclusively shall be at the fixed rate of twenty-seven pounds ten shillings for each block of twenty-five square miles together with a further sum of one pound two shillings for each square mile of available area in excess thereof and for the remaining five years of the lease thereof being from the tenth to the fourteenth years inclusively the rent shall be at the rate of thirty-five pounds for each block of twenty-five square miles together with a further sum of one pound fifteen shillings for each square mile of available area above that quantity. Provided that where a lessee shall have failed to make the payment during the fourth year of his lease towards the expense of assessing his run for the succeeding five years as hereinbefore provided he shall not thereby be debarred from claiming to be assessed for the period from the tenth to the fourteenth years of his lease upon making the payment required by and within the time mentioned in the second section of this Act."

The Honorable H. B. Fitz and the Honorable W. Wood supported the motion, which was put and passed without debate.

The Bill was then read a second time.