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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 26 *June*, 1874.

Statute Day for Labor Bill.—Brisbane Incorporation Bill.—Warwick Chapel Land Sale Bill.—Board of Education Scholarships.

STATUTE DAY FOR LABOR BILL.

Mr. BUZACOTT, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he would briefly explain its object. It was an exceedingly simple measure—any one could understand it, and it professed to deal with evils which he thought were undeniable. It had been said that this Bill was not required; that the people of the colony had so far managed to get along very well without it, and that it would interfere in the arrangements between employers and the employed. But he maintained that it did not interfere in that way at all; it simply provided that where there was no arrangement between the employer and the employed as to the hours of labor, the standard should be eight hours; and if an employer, in engaging a number of men, stated that he would require them to work a certain number of hours, this law would be inoperative so far as they were concerned. He thought every honorable member would agree with him that when a man in Queensland worked eight hours a day for six days in the week, he did as much work as any ordinary man could be expected to do; and if he were asked to do more, the result would probably be that he would work five days and go on the spree on the sixth and perhaps longer. He had observed during his experience that it was chiefly in those trades and occupations in which the hours were most excessive that they found the greatest amount of intemperance and unhappiness in the homes of persons so employed; and that if they wished them to be steady and thoroughly reliable, they must not be required to work excessive hours. In a climate like that of Queensland, and especially northern Queensland, of which he had had most experience, eight hours' work a day in the hot sun, was as much as any ordinary workman could stand; and many instances had occurred—particularly during the last twelve months—where men employed on the Northern Railway were taken ill and had to be carried home, owing to undue exposure and excessive work in the heat. This Bill did not contemplate binding anybody down as to the number of hours' work to be done in the day; it was simply intended as an expression of opinion by the Legislature that eight hours a day was a fair day's work, and he thought the Legislature, without going out of its way, might well give expression to a principle of that sort. There was a further important matter to be considered; if they desired that men should improve themselves by setting apart a portion of their time for study, they must give them time to do it; they must give them some time every day. It would not do to make a man work excessive hours for several days and then give him a holiday; because, in all probability, instead of spending it in improving himself, he would become demoralised, and go into one excess, which almost always led to another. He therefore thought he was not asking anything unreasonable when he asked that the Legislature should give expression of its opinion that eight hours a day was sufficient for a man to work in Queensland. In Sydney and Melbourne, in all mechanical trades, they had already adopted the eight hour system; but in Rockhampton and in places further north, men worked considerably more than eight hours a day; and he thought it would, therefore, be well if the principle of this Bill were assented to. He thought honorable members would easily see the necessity for

the next portion of the Bill. There was nothing fresh in it; similar provisions had formed the subject of legislation in England for many years. He found that the law there was very intricate with regard to the employment of children between the age of eight and eighteen years, and there were numerous restrictions on the selfishness of those who employed them in factories of various kinds. In the year 1867, the Factory Acts were considerably extended; their application was extended to any workshop where there were a number of persons employed; and he found that no female over the age of eighteen could be employed in some places, except when in charge of children. Then, during certain hours in each day, the children had to attend school; and there were also a great many regulations which it would not be desirable to have in force in this colony. He thought the measure he had introduced went as far in that direction as was desirable at present. The fourth clause provided—

"Every person who during the hours set apart for secular instruction in the primary schools of the colony shall employ any child under the age of twelve years in any workshop whether for hire or not shall for every such offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen days at the discretion of the court."

The next clause provided that every person who should employ any child or young person under the age of sixteen years in any workshop, whether for hire or not—he inserted these words so that the law should not be evaded by making a present or anything of that sort—during the hours between eight o'clock in the evening and five o'clock in the morning, should be liable to a similar penalty. Clause 6 was to the effect that, upon complaint in writing by any householder that children or young persons were unlawfully employed in any workshop, it should be lawful for any magistrate, or inspector of police, to enter such workshop at any hour of the day or night, and take such further proceedings as the circumstances might require. With regard to the words "inspector of police," he would prefer that they should be "police officer," because, although he had an objection to the police collecting electoral rolls, he had not the slightest objection to their assisting to preserve the community from excessive work, and to prevent children from being worked to an extent which might seriously affect their health. He did not think it necessary to detain the House longer; the Bill was a very simple one, and he thought no further arguments were necessary to induce honorable members to support it. He therefore moved—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. MORGAN said he must oppose the second reading of this Bill. Although there was no member of the House more willing to legislate in order to ameliorate and improve the condition of the working classes than himself, he could not see how they could arrive at any practical benefit by adopting the Bill. So much depended upon the manner in which different industries were carried on in a young colony like this that he did not see how any kind of legislation they could adopt would improve matters. Even in connection with a daily newspaper office, the requirements were such that, in the event of pressing intelligence of great public importance arriving at a late hour, the proprietor was almost compelled to insist upon his employés working over office hours in order to circulate that intelligence. That was no doubt an exceptional case, but others might be mentioned which he was not prepared to enter into just now. He, therefore, thought this was a kind of legislation that House had no right to undertake, considering the circumstances of the colony; and he should, though with some reluctance, oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. PALMER said, although he did not see any great necessity for the first part of the Bill becoming law, he did not think it would do any harm, because the arrangements between master and servant would not be interfered with in any way; they could make any arrangement they pleased with regard to the hours of labor, and perhaps the provision might set at rest a great many disputes. But on looking further down the Bill, he could see a great deal of reason why the House should pass the fourth clause. He thought it was a clause which ought to be supported by every honorable member who had the cause of education at heart. He sincerely believed that that clause would do a very great deal of good; and the fifth clause, he thought, was even more important. He believed that in the city alone there were parties with large sewing establishments who kept young girls up to all hours of the night, and they were turned out in the streets to find their way home as best they could at any hour. He thought it was their duty to legislate upon such matters. Similar legislation had been in force in England for years, with very good effect, although it met with strenuous opposition from those interested. In fact, he was of opinion that if the Bill contained clause 5 alone, it was well worthy of the consideration of that House, and that it was their duty to pass it. He thought it was monstrous that young girls should be kept up working at sewing machines, and in shops, till very late hours of the night, and then be turned out to find their way home in the best way they could. He considered it was the duty of the House to give great attention to the Bill, and let the second reading go, at all events; and, if it were not everything they wished, they could amend it in committee, although, for his own part, he did not see any necessity for amending it. He maintained that girls ought not to be kept at work until after eight o'clock at night, and he

hoped the Bill would pass the second reading, go through committee, and become law.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he hoped the Bill would meet with a very different fate—that it would find its way into the waste paper basket. He thought the first argument of the honorable member for Port Curtis was not worthy of the consideration of the House. He had never heard of a Bill being pressed on the consideration of that House merely upon the ground that it could do no harm; and he thought they ought not to pass measures upon such grounds. He considered it was a ridiculous Bill; the whole of the principles contained in it could be rendered inoperative by a mutual arrangement between master and servant. Then, again, look at the invidious manner in which it was framed; there was a proviso that it should not apply to persons employed on piece-work and contracts, or to domestic servants, or persons entrusted with the care of horses, horned cattle, sheep, or other live stock. The latter portion of this proviso, he had no doubt, was intended to secure the support of the pastoral tenants. The farm laborer, who at critical seasons of the year was absolutely required to work eleven or twelve hours a-day, came under this Bill; while a man engaged in shepherding or looking after cattle was exempted from it. He thought they ought not to encourage such specious class legislation. With regard to the fourth clause, he thought it was a very good one; but that was not the proper place for it. The proper place for such a provision was in the Education Act; but even in that Act it would be of no use, because it was notorious that in rural districts children of tender years were employed during school hours. The returns of the Board of Education showed that it was not in the towns that there was any difficulty in getting children to attend school, but in the country parts where they were employed in weeding and other similar occupations. If the clause were inserted in the Education Act it would, therefore, be wholly inoperative, so far as the principal object it had in view was concerned—the persons it was intended to benefit from its operation, namely, children employed upon farms, being excluded from its operation. Then the definition of the word "workshop" was very vague. He would like to know whether a printing office was a workshop; because, if it were, and this Bill were passed, those engaged in that business would have to increase the number of their printers considerably, and practically it would prevent boys from learning that trade, because a large amount of newspaper work was necessarily carried on at night, and unless boys were allowed to work at night, they would not be taken as apprentices. The honorable member for Port Curtis had advanced a great deal about the fifth clause, and about the dreadful dangers to which girls under sixteen years of age were exposed by being detained late in sewing establishments, and then turned out to find their way home as best they could; but he thought girls over sixteen years would be quite as much exposed to the temptation the honorable member described. If they were to legislate for the protection of the virtue of young females, they ought not to stop at sixteen years; but his experience was that where there was one girl under sixteen employed at sewing and similar occupations, there were ninety-nine over that age, and they ought not to legislate for one without the other. The sixth clause also gave a very objectionable power to magistrates. There were many magistrates whom he did not think it would be advisable to invest with power to enter "any workshop by day or by night."

Mr. BUZACOTT: On complaint.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It would be possible for any person who had a quarrel with an employer of labor to lodge a complaint against him, and any magistrate would then have power to enter his premises at any time he pleased. He did not think such a measure was at all required, and if it did pass the second reading, it would be so amended in committee that the honorable member who introduced it would not recognize it.

Mr. MILES looked upon the Bill as one of the most mischievous measures ever presented to that House. Like most of the matters introduced by the honorable member for Rockhampton, it overshot the mark. No one could be inclined to do more to protect the working man than he was, but he thought it monstrous to introduce such a Bill in a young colony like this, where there was such a thirst for labor that every man could dictate his own terms and regulate his own hours of labor. The honorable member for Rockhampton appeared to think the Bill was necessary because the working man was oppressed; but the only oppression he had ever heard of in this colony was where a man was working for a mortgagor and the mortgagee took possession of the property and turned him about his business without paying him his wages. He thought such a Bill in a colony like this was altogether unnecessary and perfectly preposterous. He did not think there was much chance of the second reading being carried, and he could assure the honorable member for Rockhampton that he would not support it. It only applied to certain classes in the community, and his strongest objection to it was that it was class legislation which would have a very mischievous effect.

Mr. STEWART thought the colony was scarcely ripe enough for a measure of this sort. In fact, in Queensland, at present, servants had rather the upper hand, and could dictate almost any terms they pleased. With regard to girls being employed at sewing machines, he could give his experience of one establishment where work of that kind was carried on, and the girls there came on the days that suited them—they did not attend

the six days in the week; if there were races or anything of that sort going on they would refuse to attend at all; and as for keeping them until late hours, they would not do anything of the sort unless they were well paid for it, and it suited their own purposes.

Mr. WIENHOLT believed the Bill was quite uncalled for; that there was not the slightest demand for such a measure by any section of the community. The working classes in this colony were well able to take care of themselves, and did not want any protection. They heard honorable members on all sides of the House call out for immigration—they wanted more people, because wages were so high, and men were so scarce; and, under these circumstances, the idea of bringing in a Bill of this sort was simply ridiculous. The idea of girls being left unprotected after a certain hour was also ridiculous, and he was surprised to hear the remarks of the honorable member for Port Curtis on the subject. There were plenty of opportunities for the employment of young girls in this colony, and there was no fear about them in any way. He looked upon this Bill as another step in that State parental scheme of education—another step in the scheme of the honorable member for Port Curtis and other honorable members, by which, by-and-bye, they would have all the control of children taken from their parents. In fact, by-and-bye, a parent would not be able to say his child was his own—that would be the end of their education scheme; and he maintained it was perfectly monstrous that the State should take from parents the control of their children. In fact, it appeared that they were going to say that no one in this colony should be able to say that he could do anything of his own free will; it must be all laid down by law. He hoped the House would not consent to pass such a Bill.

Mr. NIND was inclined to think that this was a specimen of over-legislation, about which they had heard so much this session. It would, no doubt, be a very good thing that children of a certain age should be protected in some such way as that proposed; but when he came to look at clause 3 of the Bill, he saw that every employer of labor would have to make a special arrangement with the laborer he wanted to work on his plantation or farm as to the number of hours he should work, and if no such arrangement were made the laborer could not be required to work more than eight hours a day. He believed this plan had been tried in other countries; in the State of Ohio a similar measure was passed declaring that eight hours should be the day's labor for every man throughout the State, but as soon as it became law special agreements were made, and it became a dead letter—he did not know whether it had been repealed, but if it had not, it was certainly a dead letter, and he believed this Bill would be the same. He held in his hand an extract from the Supervising Architect of the United States' Treasury, which he would take the liberty of quoting a few sentences from. In reporting upon the progress of the public works in his charge, he made the following statement:—

"I desire once more to call attention to the eight-hour law, believing it to be alike injurious to the best interests of the Government and to the workmen themselves. It frequently happens that mechanics and laborers employed by the Government and those employed by private contractors are required to work on the same building and at the same time. Those employed by the Government work but eight hours, while those employed by the contractors work ten hours per diem. This causes much feeling, and it needs no argument to prove that it is unjust, and that the mechanic who performs ten hours' work is taxed for the benefit of the more favored workman who has friends and influence sufficient to obtain employment for him on Government work. The law has been fully and fairly tested; the experience of this department, as well as of private establishments, has shown that it is not only impossible for a man to perform as much labor in eight hours as in ten, but that he absolutely performs less work per hour under the eight-hour system."

That was very strong evidence, and he believed there had been a great deal of claptrap about the eight hours system. They all knew that those employed in head work and farming worked far more than eight hours a-day; mechanics he did not know so much about; but if men wanted to work only eight hours they should make a special agreement to that effect. He did not see any necessity whatever for the Bill, and especially the third clause; he was opposed to the principle of it.

Mr. MACROSSAN said he would vote for the second reading of the Bill. He considered eight hours was quite sufficient for men to work in this colony, and he knew that if the majority of working men were left to themselves they would not work more than eight hours a-day. On the gold fields eight hours was usually considered a day's labor, but whether the law should be applied to farmers or not, he was not in a position to say. He looked upon the Bill as a step in the right direction, and as an effort to prevent the evils which existed in England for many years from arising in this colony—evils which the last generation of statesmen tried to subdue and ameliorate; and he thought the honorable member for Rockhampton deserved the thanks of the country for having endeavored to establish a law of this kind. There might be some amendments made in committee, but he should vote for the second reading in the hope that the Bill would be carried.

Mr. FRYAR thought there was no necessity whatever to interfere with the present arrangements between employers and employed. It appeared to him that the proviso to the third clause excluded the very men who required most of all to be looked after. A man working horses might be required to work ten or fifteen hours a-day, but a man

attending a steam engine was not to work more than eight hours, although in such a case he presumed that man would be nearly as well off as if he were out of doors, because factories here were not so confined for space and air as in the old country. With regard to clause 4, it might be necessary, and if it were embodied in the Education Act he would have no objection to it. The fifth clause he did not think there was any necessity for; and, altogether, he thought the Bill was a piece of over-legislation, and he would have no hesitation in voting against the second reading.

The question was then put and negatived.

BRISBANE INCORPORATION BILL.

Mr. STEWART, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said its object was to give the citizens of Brisbane power to enforce certain necessary provisions in respect of buildings, the alignment of streets, sewage, nuisances, goats, pigs, and other matters of that sort, which had become necessary from the increase of population, and which might not be applicable to smaller towns in the colony. It also provided for the continuation of the endowment which they had had for the last five years on the smallest scale under the Municipalities Act, and which would expire on the 7th September next. It was considered desirable that that should be renewed, at least so far as the citizens were concerned; they were anxious to have it, and he thought he could show very fair reasons why they should get it. He had information from the City Surveyor to the effect that there were 566 chains, or more than seven miles, of streets fronting Government buildings, parks, and reserves, which were kept in order by the Corporation, and for which, after the 7th September, they would receive nothing from the Government to recompense them for the outlay. And when he stated that the City of Sydney received a sum equal to about £10,000 a-year, as endowment, he thought Brisbane was entitled to a fair sum for keeping these roads fronting Government property in order. He held in his hand an assessment of Government property in the city, which had been made by a surveyor of great experience, and which he believed was very fairly and correctly taken down; and this showed the value of Government property to be £39,095, or, exclusive of schools, £36,070, which, at one shilling in the pound, gave £1,951 15s. and £1,803 10s. respectively. Now, the endowment for last year was £1,500, so that it was really under the actual assessed value of Government property at the lowest rate. He thought, therefore, they were perfectly entitled to this endowment clause. The main part of the Bill he might state was taken from the present Municipalities Act, and such alterations and additions were made as were considered necessary to meet the requirements of the case. There were one or two new features in the Bill, but he believed there was only one to which objection would be taken—the thirty-sixth clause, providing for the establishment of a city court—and as it was a clause he was not in favor of himself, he would ask the House, when in committee, to strike it out. He believed, if that were done, there could be very little objection to the Bill.

The honorable member was proceeding to give a *résumé* of the different parts of the Bill, when

The SPEAKER said: I must call attention to an incorrect practice that has arisen in this House, which is not the practice in the House of Commons—that of describing each clause of a Bill on the second reading. The principles of a Bill only should be discussed on the second reading, and dealing with each clause at the second reading is doing that which ought to be done when the Bill is in committee.

Mr. PALMER: It may save time if I ask your ruling, sir, as to whether the Bill has been properly introduced. I believe it ought to be introduced as a private Bill. I find in "May," page 627:—

"Bills concerning the city of London only have generally been private bills, having been solicited by the Corporation itself, which desired special legislation affecting its own property, interests, and jurisdiction. Thus, even the bill for establishing a police force within the city was brought in on petition, and passed as a private bill. And in 1863, when it was sought to repeal that Act by a public bill for the amalgamation of the city and metropolitan police, without the required notices, the Standing Orders Committee refused to allow the bill to be proceeded with. Again, the Corporation and others sought, by means of private bills, to improve Smithfield market, or otherwise provide a suitable market for cattle; while the metropolitan cattle market was ultimately established by a public bill, brought in by the Government, but otherwise treated as a private or 'bybrid bill.'"

It may save time, perhaps, if you give your ruling on the subject at once.

The SPEAKER: My attention has been called to this matter, and I have not the slightest doubt the Bill should have been introduced as a private Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not intend to dispute your ruling, sir, but I scarcely think the cases quoted by the honorable member for Port Curtis bear him out. The Bills he referred to were introduced on behalf of the Corporation of London; but this Bill proposes to create a Corporation.

Mr. PALMER: It is created already.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is created already, but I believe this is a new creation altogether, which embodies all that was created before. That seems to me to be the distinction between this case and the cases quoted by the honorable member for Port Curtis.

Mr. PALMER: My only object is to save the time of the House; I have no objection to the Bill being introduced, but if it goes on a few stages more, and it is then found that it was improperly introduced it will be so much time lost.

Mr. STEWART: If the honorable Speaker ruled he was out of order, he must, of course, withdraw his motion.

The SPEAKER: This is a Bill promulgated by an incorporated body to alter their constitution; hence I consider from the evidence that I have before me, that it is a private Bill, and ought to be introduced as such.

Mr. STEWART: I understand, sir, that the object sought by the Bill is that they may be incorporated as a Corporation.

The SPEAKER: My opinion is that the Bill must be introduced as a private Bill.

Mr. STEWART: Do I understand, sir, that I cannot go on with the Bill? If there is no motion made that the Order of the Day be discharged, I can go on with it.

The SPEAKER: Having given my decision that the Bill is a private Bill, I cannot allow the honorable member to go on.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I recommend the honorable member to withdraw the Bill, and introduce it in Committee of the Whole House.

Mr. STEWART then moved, that the Order of the Day be discharged from the paper.

Motion carried.

WARWICK CHAPEL LAND SALE BILL.

Mr. MORGAN, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he did not think it necessary to detain the House at any length. The allegations in the preamble were perfectly true. The Wesleyans of Warwick were the proprietors of certain land there, which, some time ago, was centrally situated, but, in consequence of the increase of population and the extension of the town, it was not so now; and having purchased other land in a more suitable position for a church, they wished to dispose of the land referred to in the Bill and apply the proceeds to the building of a church on the new ground. That could not be done without legislative enactment, and he thought honorable members would see the advisability of allowing the Bill to pass. He moved—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The question having been put and passed, the House went into committee on the Bill.

BOARD OF EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS.

On the Order of the Day being read for the consideration of the Legislative Council's message on Board of Education Scholarships, the same was read by the Clerk at length.

Mr. GRIFFITH then said that this message had now been before the House for about three months, and he thought it was time it was taken into consideration. He therefore moved—

1. That the opinion of the Legislative Council "that the recent action of the Board of Education in granting Scholarships of £50 to scholars of Primary Schools, is unadvisable, and should not be continued," as conveyed by their Message of date 8th April last, be concurred in by this House.

2. That such concurrence be communicated to the Legislative Council by Message in the usual way.

Honorable members might not be familiar with the nature of the action of the Board of Education, which he would therefore briefly explain. The ninth section of the Education Act provided:—

"It shall be lawful for the Board to set apart from the funds at their disposal a proportion not exceeding five per cent. upon the whole annual amount for the purpose of granting exhibitions at some one or other of the Grammar schools of the colony to such scholars in any Primary schools as shall have been proved by competitive examination to be entitled thereto."

Honorable members would perceive that they might set apart not more than five per cent. of the whole annual amount. Now he understood that the whole annual amount for this year was about £60,000, so that the total sum that could be set apart was £3,000 for the year; but as these scholarships had, he believed, always been held for three years—and it of course was only reasonable that they should be held for some period like that—the actual amount available for one year was one-third of five per cent., or £1,000. These scholarships, up to a short time ago, were only of the amount of the Grammar School fees, but on the 3rd November last, it was notified in the *Government Gazette*—no doubt in consequence of some action on the part of the Board—

"That exhibitions to the Grammar schools, gained by Primary school boys, shall be of the value of fifty pounds per annum, including school fees; the increase to date from 1st January, 1873."

Therefore, as there was only £1,000 available, that had the effect of reducing the number of scholarships to twenty for the whole of the primary schools of the colony; and it was obvious that such a system as that could not be carried on. Apart from the question of expediency, it was impossible for the Board of Education to grant scholarships at that rate, because 5 per cent. on the endowment would not stand such extravagance. It seemed to him also to be very extravagant to give a boy living in Brisbane £50 a-year for three years to go to the Grammar School; it was not encouraging education, but merely giving a premium to the boy's parents. In the case of scholarships to a university, where there would be the expense of maintenance in a university town, £50 a-year would be reasonable; but to give a boy, residing in Brisbane, that amount, was not an encouragement to him, but, as he said before, a reward

to his parents, and he could not approve of it. Besides, the system worked very unfairly with regard to boys in the country. If the Board chose to pay the charges for those boys boarding at the Grammar School, that would put all on the same footing; but at present, in the case of a boy living in the country, all he would receive would not be sufficient to support him at school, while the amount would pay the school fees of the boy residing in Brisbane and leave some £30 or £40 to his parents, or for the boy's pocket money. He entirely concurred in the opinion of the Legislative Council, that the action of the Board was inadvisable and should not be continued. But, at the same time, he admitted that the scholarships already granted should not be withdrawn; the boys who had taken advantage of this liberal but inadvisable provision —though, no doubt, it was made with the best intention—ought to be allowed the three years to receive it. He knew, in some instances, parents who had sent their boys for the scholarships had made arrangements for their board in town, and he did not mean that the scholarships should be withdrawn. But he objected to fixing the amount at £50 in the town where the Grammar School was.

Mr. DICKSON seconded the motion.

Mr. PALMER said he did not consider that he was exactly the proper person to defend the action of the Board of Education, of which he had ceased to be a member, particularly as there were members of the Board present; but he was not disposed to allow the question to pass unchallenged. If he understood the honorable member for Oxley correctly, in bringing forward this resolution, he maintained that the Board had gone beyond their powers. He denied that *in toto*. He maintained that the Board acted entirely within their powers;—the Education Act gave them power to grant five per cent. of the total income for the purposes of scholarships of this description, or any other sort they pleased, in order to give boys superior education. He had tried to follow the figures of the honorable member, but he must confess that he had failed most miserably—at least, so far as those figures in any way carried out that honorable member's assertions. If he followed him correctly, he said the Board had considerably exceeded the funds at their disposal for the purposes of scholarships.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I said they would exceed the amount if continued.

Mr. PALMER: Well, taking the gross income of the Board at £50,000—and of course it was considerably more this year, and would be still more next year—five per cent. on that would be £2,500, which was available for expenditure in scholarships, or in any other way the Board thought fit under the Act. The honorable member stated that if they granted twenty scholarships that would be £1,000 a year for three years; but he had forgotten to take into account the increase in the income of the Board for next year, and the year after that also. Of course, if the Board had gone beyond their income, they had exceeded their duties; but, as far as he was aware, they had not exceeded their income;—they had not gone to one-half or one-third the extent they were entitled to go. As to the opinion of the Legislative Council on the subject, although he was inclined to place reliance upon their opinion sometimes—especially when it agreed with his own—he thought this was a matter they had interfered where they had no right to interfere at all. The law gave the Board power to make these regulations; the Board had done so, and it was all very well for the Council to say they did not like them; but they had no right to interfere with them, and if he were a member of the Board he should care very little about a resolution of either House so long as he was supported by law. As to the advisability of granting these scholarships, that was a matter for the Board —and the Board alone—to consider; and if they thought it was right to grant them, they did what was perfectly correct. It was a matter seriously considered by the Board, as to whether they should make a sliding scale to meet the cases of boys living at a distance from the grammar schools and boys residing in town; and he believed it was partly on his recommendation that that system was not adopted. For, after giving the matter serious consideration, and looking at these scholarships as a premium for children who were at the head of their classes, and exhibited superior attainments in learning, he could not see the justice of making a sliding scale or any distinction between the children of Brisbane or Ipswich or any other place. There was a good deal of difficulty about the matter, and it was very seriously considered by the Board, and with the exception of one dissentient voice—the honorable the Secretary for Public Lands—he believed——

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Two.

Mr. PALMER: At all events the majority, and he believed all, with the exception of the honorable member for South Brisbane, were agreed on the question, and he believed they acted very properly. These premiums were not given to the parents, but to the children themselves, and he was still of opinion that that was the only way in which these scholarships should be granted. Otherwise there must be very invidious distinctions, and very great difficulty in drawing the line in connection with a scale allowance. With regard to what had been said about scholarships to a University, he had never heard of any distinctions being made between the amount granted to a person residing in town and a person residing in the country; it was so much a year, and had nothing whatever to do with where the parties resided. He sincerely hoped the Board would maintain the present principle; he believed it was a very good one, and, although it was only in

its infancy, it had even now done a great deal of good. It had led to emulation amongst the children attending the primary schools throughout the colony, and scholarships had been granted to children from Bowen, and he believed even further out—at Copperfield. He believed that the Board never made a better regulation, or one that tended more to incite children in the primary schools to rivalry, emulation, and good progress in knowledge than this very regulation which had been found fault with by the Legislative Council. He sincerely hoped the House would not endorse the opinion of the Council.

Mr. J. SCOTT said he quite agreed with what had fallen from the honorable member who had last spoken; and he only wished the system was carried a little further. By the Act quoted by the honorable member for Oxley it appeared that five per cent. could be set apart out of the annual income of the Board for scholarships; and he found that by clause 4 of the Grammar Schools Act ten per cent. could be granted for scholarships or exhibitions to universities. He would like to know why that had never been brought into operation; he believed it would have been a very good thing indeed if that clause of the Act had been brought into operation long ago. He tabled a motion a short time ago providing for scholarships to be competed for by grammar school boys; but, if this 10 per cent. had been reserved out of the income of the grammar schools, there would have been no necessity for further legislative action on the matter. He looked upon these scholarships as most valuable; they caused emulation and competition throughout the colony, and tended to raise the tone of the schools considerably; and he believed, if these university scholarships were once fairly established, the benefits arising from them would be almost invaluable.

Mr. MORGAN said, without entering into the rights and the powers of the Board of Education, or questioning the right of the other branch of the Legislature to deal with this matter, he would venture to say that, so far as these scholarships were concerned, they did not disseminate the benefits throughout the colony which were attributed to them. From his own experience, two boys in his own neighborhood who obtained the sufficient number of marks—one, he believed, the highest number—were sent down here at very great expense to their parents; and he agreed with the honorable member for Oxley that these scholarships given to children who resided in the vicinity of Brisbane and Ipswich, were simply premiums to their parents. He thought the message of the Legislative Council ought to be concurred in.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS said that, as had been correctly stated by the honorable member for Port Curtis, when the matter had been under discussion by the Board of Education, he was opposed to it. Six months previously to the present system being adopted, the matter had been fully discussed by the Board, and the scholarships were fixed at the amount of the school fees, namely, sixteen guineas per annum, or four guineas a quarter. They were fixed at that amount preparatory to the last examination at Christmas, when the question was raised, that as in the case of parents residing at a distance from a grammar school the tax of keeping their boys at that school was very great, the amount should be altered. He then still held the opinion that the scholarships should be the amount of the school fees; but that, in the case of boys coming from a distance, such as Maryborough, Rockhampton, Townsville, and other places, the boarding expenses ought also to be paid. His intention was, that the following limit should be fixed: the furthest distance from which any boy at present attended an existing grammar school; so that in each case it would be made of actual benefit to the grammar school. That he then considered, and still was of opinion, was the fairest way of dealing with the question. Out of twenty-three successful candidates for scholarships he found that fourteen were resident in Brisbane and Ipswich, and nine in other parts of the colony—that was, that fourteen were resident in the two grammar school towns, and in those cases sixteen guineas per annum had been paid as school fees, and double that amount to parents for the cost of keeping their children. It seemed to him, however, that when the House voted a certain amount of money for education, it was not intended that any portion of that money should go to the parents for keeping their children at school. He admitted all the advantages which would be derived from having the present system of scholarships, but he could not get rid of the fact he had just stated, that £33 was too large a sum to be paid to the parents. He thought it would be a great deal better, and would act more fairly and evenly, if the exhibition was simply confined to the payment of the fees necessary to keep a boy at a grammar school, at the same time making provision for the board fees of those boys who came from a distance. He had strongly disapproved of the action taken by the Board in the matter, although he did not think that he should have spoken on the present occasion, as he did not wish to find fault with the action of the Board; but being a member of the Board he felt it was due to the House that he should give any information he had in his power. The Board were by law entitled to expend the money entrusted to them for educational purposes, and according to the Act they had a right to devote a sum not exceeding five per cent. in scholarships; but if they spent it in the manner they were doing—by giving £50 scholarships—they would reduce the number of boys whom they could send to the grammar schools. He thought, therefore, it would be a great deal better if the amount at the disposal of

the Board was distributed over a larger number, which would be the case if the Board simply paid the school fees. He quite agreed with the resolutions.

Mr. DICKSON was of opinion, that if the primary and secondary systems of education had been on the same free basis, the exhibitions would have been very useful; but when it was considered that under the regulations of the Board in November last, all candidates for scholarships could remain at the primary school until they were fourteen years of age, the tendency of such a scheme was simply to impoverish the grammar schools, as parents would not send their children to the secondary schools when they could keep them up to that age at the primary schools. He believed that the action of the Board was not approved of by the country, and he should vote for the motion of the honorable member for Oxley. At the same time, he should be the last to interfere in any way with those scholars who expected a continuance of the present system for the next two years. He thought the general feeling of the public was in favor of discontinuing the present system.

Mr. FRASER said that the matter had been so well put by the honorable member for Port Curtis, who was intimately acquainted with the whole facts of the case, that it was almost unnecessary for him to say anything; but, as a member of the Board at the time the scholarships were discussed, he did not feel justified in giving a silent vote. He should have arisen to reply to the honorable member for Oxley at once, were it not that the honorable member for Port Curtis was chairman of the Board at the time, and consequently was better up in the matter than he was. He was perfectly aware that that step on the part of the Board of Education had not given general satisfaction; but he thought that was more, perhaps, in consequence of persons not being conversant with all the facts, and the considerations which led to it, than anything else. The question was not one which had been decided hastily, but had been fully discussed, and had received the deepest consideration from members of the Board. In the first place, he would deal with the five per cent. of their income, which, by the Act, the Board had a right to devote to scholarships, and he maintained that it was not a consideration with the Board what they might have next year. They had a right to spend five per cent. of their income, and so long as they did that, there was no fault to be found with them. As he had said before, the matter was most fully discussed by the Board, and full weight had been given to the objections which had been raised that evening; and, as in all other matters, there were difficulties, the Board felt that they should have to draw some line of demarcation. It was all very well to say that boys living in Clermont should not be treated in the same way as boys residing in Brisbane, but it must be remembered that there were parents in Brisbane whose children were successful candidates, and who would have been utterly unable to keep them at the grammar school if they only received the amount of the fees. He maintained that those persons were as much entitled to the full amount as the parents of those boys who came from a distance. He believed it was owing to the Board finding that difficulty, that they drew a line which led to the present arrangement. It was simply a matter of experiment, and if it proved unsatisfactory to the country, he did not suppose there would be any desire on the part of the Board to set that feeling at defiance. He might say that the result had been so far satisfactory, that whilst for the July examination there was only one candidate outside of Brisbane and Ipswich, at the last examination, in December, under the present arrangement, there were thirty-nine competitors for the scholarships, of the successful ones of whom, nine came from the country. Some were from Bowen, Clermont, and Mackay, and two from Warwick. In reference to the last mentioned place, he might, in reply to the remarks made by the honorable member representing it, say that the Board had nothing whatever to do with what the honorable member complained of, as, if parents did not find it to their advantage to send their children from a distance, they were the best judges as to what they should do. There was another matter to be considered. Supposing the resolution was carried, it must be remembered that it could in no way control the action of the Board, although he had no doubt it would have due weight with them. But provided it did influence the Board, the result would be that, at any future examinations, the candidates would be strictly confined to Brisbane and Ipswich (where there were grammar schools), where their parents or friends resided; as it was a very sweeping resolution, making no distinction between town and country boys. That he thought was worthy of the consideration of the House. He could say most emphatically that although motives might have been attributed to the Board in dealing with the question, the matter had been most fully and fairly discussed, and dealt with impartially according to the evidence before them, and solely from a desire to promote the best interests of education in the colony. As to the remarks of the honorable member for Enoggera, he could hardly agee with him, even after the slight explanation that honorable member had given; for he believed that instead of it being possible that any impoverishment to the grammar schools could accrue from the present system, it was the greatest advantage those schools could have. Moreover, anyone listening to the address annually delivered by the Head Master of the Brisbane Grammar School, must have noticed how much he complained of children being sent there without

receiving the primary education to fit them for going there; whereas, the pupils sent from the primary schools during the last twelve months, were not only well grounded in all the rudiments of education, but many of them had taken nearly the highest position in the grammar schools on entering them. Thus, instead of impoverishing those schools, there had been a downright benefit conferred upon them, as they were then in a position to show whether they could be of use to the colony. He should feel bound to vote against the resolution, because, so far, the matter was an experiment, and it had hitherto worked well, both as regarded the grammar schools and the interests of education generally.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the honorable member who had just spoken, and also the honorable member Port Curtis, had pointed out that the adoption of the resolution now before the House could not control the action of the Board of Education. He had no doubt himself that that was practically right, in the strictest sense of the term, but the same remarks were applicable to the Board, which were used on the previous evening, when they were discussing the conduct of the Registrar-General, namely, that an opinion expressed by that House should carry some weight with it. He did not think that if a majority of the House expressed their disapproval of the action of the Board, the Board would continue to act in opposition to that expression of opinion. It would not be a vote censuring the Board if the resolution was carried, but it would simply be an expression of opinion different to that entertained by the Board. He must say that he thought the question of scholarships was brought forward by the Board at a very unfortunate time, because it was a time when the whole colony was agitated on the subject of education, and when the honorable member for Port Curtis had a Bill before the House on the subject. He was of opinion that a difference should be made between boys whose parents resided in the towns where the grammar schools were, and those who resided in the country districts; and, if the scholarships were to be continued, the fairest way of arranging the matter would be that the country pupils should have their board paid, in addition to the school fees. He thought, however, that the question was getting far too large a one for the management of any Board, considering that the expenditure now nearly amounted to £100,000 annually, which was a larger sum than any responsible Minister, except the Minister for Works, had to deal with. He thought it was full time that all matters connected with education were taken from the Board and were placed under the control of a responsible Minister. He believed that the time was not far distant when the country would insist upon education being placed under a responsible Minister, who would go in and out with the Government.

Mr. PALMER: Hear, hear.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: He also thought it was a rotten principle to allow any member of the Board to be re-appointed on retirement; he had pointed that out two years ago, and, he believed, it was then said that the Government would not re-appoint anybody; but they had done so, simply, he supposed, because it had been the custom, and because if a gentleman was not re-appointed it might be considered a reflection upon him. He believed there should be an infusion of fresh blood into the Board. He hoped, in voting for the resolution, as he should feel himself bound to do, it would be distinctly understood that he was not in any way censuring the past action of the Board, but was merely expressing an opinion that that action should not be continued.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he felt some hesitation in rising to support the resolution, because, as he understood it, if the resolution was passed, it might have the effect of putting a stop to the scholarships altogether. Although he quite agreed with all that had been said about the benefit that would be derived from those scholarships, he thought it was not desirable to give such a large amount as £50 to boys whose parents resided in Brisbane. He considered that it was advisable to give some help to boys residing in the country districts; for, otherwise, the scholarships would, in many cases, be of no value to them, as they would be obliged to remain at home. With the view of giving some member of the Board an opportunity of giving more information on the matter, he would move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. GRIFFITH said there was nothing further from his intention, in moving the resolution, than to discontinue the scholarships, as he believed them to be of a very beneficial character. But what he objected to was that they should be made the same amount all over the colony. He did not suppose that the effect of the resolution would be to do away with the scholarships, but would be considered merely as an expression of opinion that the conduct of the Board in giving £50 scholarships was inadvisable. It was no part of the duty of that House to prescribe to the Board of Education what they should do, but they said that they did not approve of the Board granting the £50 scholarships indiscriminately, or in giving them to boys residing in Ipswich or Brisbane. He thought that, if the resolution was passed, it might, without doing away with the scholarships, get rid of the most objectionable part of the system. He was sorry that the honorable member for Port Curtis had not been able to follow him with his figures. What he argued was, that by the £50 scholarships the Board would be exhausting in one year the whole of their available income, so that scholarships could be only granted once in three years; but that, if they only devoted a third of their income the first year, they

would then make provision for an increased number of scholarships the next year, and so on. He trusted the honorable member for Rockhampton was satisfied that there was no intention to do away with the scholarships, but only to make them more numerous, and, consequently, of more general benefit.

Mr. PALMER said he would, in a few words, repeat what he had said before, that he never yet heard of any difference being made in the value of scholarships for a University simply because the parents of some boys lived in the country. He looked upon it that a scholarship was conferred upon a boy for being head of his class and for his general efficiency, and he maintained that that had nothing to do with where the parents of that boy lived.

Mr. J. SCOTT thought the resolution was so vague that it was very difficult to vote for it. It did not say whether the amount was too large or too small—whether more than £100 or less than £50 should be given.

The amendment, by leave, was withdrawn.

The question was then put, and the House divided with the following result:—

Ayes, 10.	Noes 5.
Mr. Hemmant	Mr. Palmer
„ Stephens	„ Fraser
„ Morgan	„ Moreton
„ Low	„ Beattie
„ Edmondstone	„ Buzacott.
„ Macrossan	
„ Fryar	
„ Fitzgerald	
„ Dickson	
„ Griffith.	

There not being a quorum of members present, the House was adjourned.