Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 18 AUGUST 1875

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 18 *August*, 1875.

Correction of Ruling.—State Education Bill.

CORRECTION OF RULING.

The SPEAKER said: I have to inform the House that I have reconsidered the ruling I gave last evening in variance to the one given by the Chairman of Committees. I have since been consulting authorities on the subject, and although they are not very clear, I have come to the conclusion that the Chairman was more nearly correct than I was, and I now wish to reverse my decision. As no alteration was made in the voting through the ruling I gave, all that it will be necessary to do is to have the correction of my previous decision placed on the records of the House.

Mr. MILES understood the honorable the Speaker to say, that since he had given his ruling on the previous evening, he had changed his opinion, and, therefore, he thought, it was very desirable that honorable members should know by what rules they were to be guided in future. He had been under the impression that £20,000 was the vote proposed, and that a motion was made to reduce it by £10,000, which was negatived; he now understood the ruling to be, that that motion having been negatived, no further amendment could be made.

The SPEAKER said that he did not think the present was a proper time to discuss the matter, but if the question arose again, he should give his ruling; but he might now say that, having looked up the authorities on the subject, he had come to the conclusion that the decision given by the Chairman was a more correct one.

Mr. PALMER said that the question which had been put was, that the item of £10,000 be omitted; but if it had been put in the other way, that the sum be reduced by £10,000, they could have gone on reducing.

The SPEAKER said that that was what had misled him at first, but he was now satisfied, from the authorities he had consulted, and their own Standing Orders, that the decision of the Chairman was more correct than his was.

STATE EDUCATION BILL.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—

That the Speaker leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, for the further consideration of this Bill.

The question was put and carried, and the House went into committee accordingly. On clause 5, as follows:—

"In State schools secular instruction only shall be given and no teacher shall give any other than secular instruction in any State school building

"But nothing herein contained shall prevent State school buildings from being used for the purpose of giving religious instruction or any other purpose permitted by the regulations at

such times (other than those set apart for giving secular instruction therein) and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by the regulations,"

the ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—

That after the word "schools," in line 52, the following words be inserted, "and provisional schools."

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted,—put and agreed to.

Mr. MACROSSAN said, that before the clause was passed, he thought a few words should be given in explanation of some of the terms used. He noticed that the honorable member who introduced the Bill had, in the interpretation clause, given a definition of the word "parent," which every one understood, but that no definition had been given of the word "secular," the meaning of which very few people agreed upon; he thought, therefore, the honorable gentleman should inform the committee what meaning was to be attached to that word. It might be that honorable members attached the proper meaning to the word, but every teacher might not do so; and, therefore, he thought that some definition of it should be given, so that no mistake could afterwards arise. They were frequently passing Acts which required Acts to be passed to interpret them, and he believed that, if the Bill now before the committee was passed without defining the meaning of the word "secular," they would very shortly be called upon to pass an interpretation Act. He did not wish to say more at present, but he would like to hear what the honorable mover of the Bill had to say upon the subject, as he considered it was a question of as great importance as any in the Bill, that the word "secular" should be properly defined.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that the word was one which had been used, from the beginning of the education battle, all over the world, and though the meaning of it had not been questioned, there was hardly, he thought, any one who did not really understand what it meant. He must confess that he was not prepared to give a philological definition of it. He thought it was generally understood that secular and religious instruction were two different things No honorable member doubted the meaning of the latter term, and most people, he thought, understood that secular was the opposite of that. It included a great many things, and excluded a very great variety of things also; but it was almost impossible to define the word, as much so as it was to define the word "governor" or "schools." He believed it was generally understood that secular instruction excluded from being taught in the schools what was commonly termed religious instruction or religious dogma, and every honorable member would know that it was impossible to teach religion without giving some dogmatic instruction.

Mr. IVORY said the honorable Attorney-General had confessed himself unable to define the meaning of the word "secular," but he thought, before proceeding further, it would be advisable to attach some meaning to it, as otherwise one administrator of the Bill, when it became law, might give one definition to it, and another another, and thus lead to confusion. He thought himself that "unsectarian" was a better word than "secular," and it was the word he generally used; but, if the honorable Attorney-General would define the word "secular," and insert the definition in the Bill, he should give it his support. He knew, as the honorable member had confessed, that people held different views upon the question, and that it was almost impossible to define it to please every one.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said, he should be very glad to find a word conveying the same idea, but he confessed that he was unable to do so. The word "unsectarian" would hardly do, as one Minister might hold the opinion that the views he held were common to others, whereas "secular" meant the opposite of religious teaching, or, rather, the exclusion of religious teaching.

Mr. PALMER thought that the word "secular" was generally understood, and that if the honorable Attorney-General attempted to go any farther in attempting to define it he would only get into deep water.

Mr. AMHURST apprehended that the word "secular" meant worldly education as apart from religious instruction: he did not see how it was possible to exclude all religious instruction, for children would ask about dates, such as the year of our Lord, &c., and some explanation would have to be given.

Mr. MACROSSAN: There was one reason especially that had made him anxious to have a proper definition of the word "secular," and it was this:—That, according to the Education Act in Victoria, secular instruction was only to be given; and yet, within the last three months, he noticed that a teacher had been discovered in that colony giving religious instruction and even attempting to proselytise. When discovered, the Minister for Education had imposed a fine of £1; but he thought that, if the teacher had understood that he was giving religious instruction, he would not have attempted it, and that if the Minister thought that he was intentionally giving that instruction, he would have dismissed him for life. He did not agree with the honorable member for Port Curtis that everybody understood the meaning of the word secular; they might all understand it in a worldly sense, but not in connection with education. In a book he held in his hand the definition given was, "Pertaining to this present world or to things not spiritual or holy; relating to things not immediately or primarily respecting the soul, but the body; worldly." He would ask, whether no

instruction was to be given as to a future state, or to the existence of a God; for the honorable the Attorney-General stated, that secular instruction was opposed to religious instruction, which could not be given without dogma. He thought they must have a better definition of the word before they could adopt it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, he agreed with the honorable member for Bowen that, if the definition given by the honorable Attorney-General was to be applied to the word secular, it would be necessary to alter the terms *Anno Domini*, as some children would be led to inquire the meaning of those words, and in regard to *Anno Mundi*, they might ask who made the world, and when it commenced; answers to both of those questions would be very difficult for a secular teacher to give. He approved of the proposition of the honorable member for the Burnett, that in the State schools "non-sectarian" instruction, and not "secular" instruction, should be given. If purely secular instruction was to be given, both teachers and children would get into all sorts of difficulties.

Mr. MCILWRAITH agreed that some of the supporters of the Bill considered secular and non-sectarian as synonymous terms. In reference to that subject, he had been looking at the report of the Commission, and he found the following addendum made to it by the honorable member for Maryborough, in regard to religious instruction :—

"That while deeming it necessary that the State, in deference to the present divided opinion on matters of religious obligation, should refrain from attempting to impart religious instruction, I think it is, nevertheless, extremely desirable that it should recognise the influence which religious teaching has had, and will have, on life and conduct. The distinct recognition of the ancient Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, which we call the Bible, would, therefore, I think, be desirable.

He did not see how that honorable member could go in for purely secular instruction after that expression of opinion. Another member of the commission, Mr. Hockings, also added a rider to a somewhat similar effect:—

"I approve of secular education in the sense in which the term is used in the report, as indicating a system free from the teaching of the distinctive doctrines of any religious sect. But I think that it would be inconsistent with, and discreditable to our profession of Christianity, to exclude the Bible from use in the public schools of the colony by legislative enactment. And I wish to record my opinion that either the Bible, or the selections now in use, called Scripture lessons, should continue to be read in the primary schools by all those children whose parents do not object."

He believed that many honorable members held with himself that "secular" meant "non-sectarian," and he thought that a definition should be given to it so as to detach it entirely from religion. He thought even the supporters of the Bill would agree that it was sectarian religion they had to guard again, and not Christian religion.

Mr. WALSH said that one of the greatest lights of the age had laid it down that secular instruction led to communism.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he quite agreed with the honorable Attorney-General that the word "secular" was quite distinct from the word "unsectarian," and he thought that if they omitted "secular," and inserted "unsectarian," they would be opening the way for religious instruction, and that was just the thing the promoters of the Bill were anxious to avoid in the State schools.

Mr. IVORY said that, as he had stated last session during the debate on the Bill for the abolition of the non-vested schools, he considered that no education worthy of the name could be imparted to a child without, in the course of that education, a certain amount of religious instruction being imparted also, as he held it, in contradistinction to dogmatic instruction. It was useless to try to exclude what he might term, according to his light, religious instruction; but, by using the word unsectarian, they at once specified that no religion belonging to known creeds or sects was to be taught in the State schools. There was no doubt that all the laws under which they lived were based upon the principles of Christianity; and, in imparting education to a child, it was impossible to do so without, at every turning of its career, trenching more or less upon one or other of those points. It was perfectly useless to think of imparting purely secular education; and, therefore, he thought it would be far better to adopt the word he had always made use of when speaking on the subject, namely, non-sectarian.

Mr. HODGKINSON was sorry to have to differ from the honorable member for the Kennedy; but he thought the word "secular" was well understood; it was impossible to define the meaning of it, but it was a word which took its meaning from the complexion of things around it.

Mr. MACROSSAN said they now found that there was some meaning attached to the word "secular;" they found that the honorable member for the Burnett, who meant to be a pure secularist, actually believed in a certain amount of religious instruction being given, as they also found that the honorable member for Maryborough, who was a secularist, went in for a certain amount of religious instruction. Another member of the Commission, Mr. Hockings, said, he "approved of secular instruction in the sense in which the term is used in the report." In what sense? he would ask. He thought that the honorable Attorney-General should define the sense in which the word was to be used. He believed that many of those in favor of the Bill were under the impression that some kind of religious instruction would be given in the schools; but he could assure them that if that was so, it would not be purely secular

instruction. Then again, if there was to be purely secular instruction it would be necessary to have an entirely new set of school books, and he would ask the honorable Attorney-General, if any steps had yet been taken to obtain new books?

Mr. IVORY said he had been looking at the list of subjects of instruction laid down in the Bill, as those which could be imparted to children in the primary schools, with the view of seeing which of them could be taught without any religious instruction being conveyed. Reading could be imparted in a purely secular manner, and there was very little religion in writing, or arithemetic, or English grammar, or geography; but when they came to history, he maintained that if any child was taught that, it was utterly impossible for it to be imparted without some religious bias being given. So that if the teaching was to be purely secular, they would have to eliminate history from the list—most undeniably so. When they arrived at that part of the Bill, he should ask, if the old Testament was to be eliminated, for that was supposed to be a history of the Jews. It was a very nice point, but he still believed that the word "secular" was not the proper one.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The honorable member for the Kennedy had asked, if any steps had been taken to procure a new set of school books? To that he might say that he was not aware that any had been, but that he had no doubt that the revision of the books now in use in the national schools, and the procuring of fresh ones, would be among the first and most serious duties of the new Minister for Education.

Mr. PALMER said that when he was on the Education Board, that question had occupied a great deal of attention; and whether the Bill was passed or not, a revision of the books would have to be made, as there was no doubt whatever, that many of them were completely out of date. On the question of secular instruction he thought there could not be any misunderstanding. He could not see how a child could be educated without hearing of different religions, of Mahometism, Judaism, or Christianity; but what he understood by secular instruction was, that a child was not to have any dogmatic instruction—there were to be no Scripture lessons. The idea that, because secular instruction only was to be given, the word God, or Christian, would be shut out from a child's hearing, was simply an absurdity.

Mr. DOUGLAS thought there was no doubt that the honorable member for Port Curtis was correct, and that that was the sense in which the word "secular" was generally used. Personally he preferred the word "unsectarian," and as a rule he used it; but he could not forget that the word "secular" was used by persons in reference to schools where no religious instruction was given. Strictly speaking, he believed that "secular" meant anything temporal as opposed to what was eternal; it meant teaching of things belonging to the world, and the antithesis to it was teaching of eternal truths. If they commenced to define those words they might get into difficulties; the very word "religion" would puzzle many honorable members, for it might mean paganism; it was, he believed, derived from the word *lex*, and it might be applied to our laws, which were religion to some extent, for when they were passed it was intended that they should be set up as an authority by which the people were to be guided, and in that sense children were taught religion. Just to illustrate that very difficult question, he would ask, what could be the definition of a word applied to him a few evenings back by the honorable member for the Kennedy? That honorable member said that he hoped to save him as a brand from the burning? meaning, that from the school to which he (Mr. Douglas) was supposed to belong, he might unfortunately lapse into atheism. But what was atheism? In days far back, that was actually a term applied to converts to Christianity from Paganism. The honorable member had applied the term to him as one rather of reprobation, but he looked upon it as one that might be applied to a man with great respect for him; so that in the matter of the definition of words they had to be very careful. As he had already said, he should personally prefer the word "unsectarian;" at the same time he had allied himself to the school of politicians which was identified with the non-teaching of any dogmatic theology; that, however, did not mean that they taught children to be disobedient to the laws. There was no doubt that one of the most necessary works of the new Minister for Education would be to make a proper revision of the school books, as the present books were unsuitable; it was a subject that was receiving consideration at the present time in Victoria, and would have to be considered here. In conclusion he might say that he did not think that any extreme ideas either of excluding religion altogether or of inculcating it, would be acceptable to the people at large.

Mr. HODGKINSON differed from the honorable member who had just spoken, as to the derivation of the word religion; it was not, he thought, derived from "*lex*," but from the verb *religo*, to bind; at the same time the word atheist meant, according to his ideas, a man who did not believe in another's faith.

Mr. MACROSSAN said that no doubt children might hear about the Mahometan, the Jewish, and other religions, but the question was whether they were to be taught about those things, or were the State teachers to impart a knowledge of those things? Under the purely secular system they could not. In looking for a definition of the word "secular" he found that in France a "vast number of ecclesiastics, secular and religious, lived upon the labor of others;" so that it would be seen the word was capable of being interpreted in a variety of ways. As to the word atheist, he

did not agree with the meaning given by the honorable member for Maryborough, as his idea was that an atheist was one who did not believe in a God, and not a Christian. As he had said before, it was most necessary that some definition of the word should be given, as "secular" instruction could only have reference to this world, and anything refering to a world to come was "religious."

Mr. KINGSFORD submitted that secular instruction might mean :—

"That this standard of common school instruction shall not in any way be associated with the beliefs and opinions of any religious sects, not that these beliefs may not be of inestimable value, but because they ought not to be taught at the public expense; and because true religion can be taught only by those who are truly religious, and that is a qualification of which the State can have no tests."

It appeared to him to be an altogether unnecessary waste of time to attempt to define the meaning of the word "secular." In the Bill it was plainly intended to stand out as distinct from religion, and not as antagonistic to it, for that would be an utter impossibility. The honorable member for the Warrego, in his address to the committee during the previous week, more than once or twice used the word "godless"—that if the Bill was passed into an Act, and only secular teaching in the State schools became the law of the land, children would be brought up in a godless way. He considered the charge a very severe one, and one that deserved considerable notice; because he might, without being offensive, say it was a species of clap-trap, used by the defenders of dogmatic teaching in their attempt to put in the shade that which those who took the opposite side termed "secular instruction." The education which those who were called "secularists" advocated was not deistical or atheistical, or in any way opposed to the interests of true religion—the religion of the Bible. He found in the Bill that "reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, geography, history, elementary mechanics, object lessons, drill, and vocal music" were to be taught; and they were not only not irreligious matters of instruction, but they were decidedly religious, in the highest sense of the word; because it was utterly impossible for a child to be taught those things which were right and true, and necessary to make them good members of society, and to enable them to take part in the affairs of the world—it was utterly impossible that their education should not be of a religious character. The religious teaching demanded by some in this discussion was not of a religious character in the highest and purest sense of the word. He maintained that everything that refined and elevated, and purified the mind and fitted an individual to fill a right and proper position in the world, was religious. And he maintained also, on the other hand, that those crude and old-fashioned doctrines and ceremonies and rites, that they understood by the term "ritualism," contained within them not a spark of the real religion of the Bible; and that it was as utterly impossible to convey true religious thought into the human mind by that symbolical teaching as it was to illustrate the brightness of the sun by a common kerosine lamp. And that was what the supporters of the Bill were contending for—not that they should be instructed in those things which would drive them from God to godlessness—but that their minds should be left free and unbiassed, so that when they arrived at years of maturity, they would be able to judge between right and wrong, and to choose their own way towards the unseen world. He considered it an insult to the mind of a child to warp and bend it—more particularly as the world swarmed with particular sects, every one having a different religion, and holding up a colored medium, through which the child was to view truth and right. He spoke with all due deference to those who differed from him; but, to his mind, their teaching was worse than nothing in the matter of education, because it tended rather to press and keep the mind down, instead of raising it up to God and godliness. He could not see that purely secular education, thoroughly free from dogmatic teaching, could end in anything but benefit to the future generation. Although there was nothing in his estimation like the Bible—he placed it infinitely higher than all books in the world beside—but yet so strongly did he feel with regard to the importance of keeping the mind free and unbiassed—he was speaking now with regard to State education—that he would exclude the Bible altogether from schools, and teach children only purely secular matters. Their great poet was wise when he said he could discover books in running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything; and there was a vast field and abundant resources for teachers to impart moral instruction without infringing on the dominion of the Bible, which was, after all, the great source of the discord and dissension which existed in the world—not because of its principles, but because men looked at it rather with perverted eyes than with a free and unbiassed mind. He should support the clause, because he was convinced purely secular education would accomplish all the State desired, which was, that the people of the country should be brought up free from all bias, and warp, and inclination to one side or the other in the matter of religion.

The clause, as amended, was then put and passed.

Clauses 6, 7, 8, and 9 were agreed to, after a few explanatory observations by the honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL, in moving clause 10—"Government may grant land for the purposes of this Act"—said the provision was similar to that which existed in many parts of the United States of America, where, he understood, on the formation of every

State, a certain fixed quantity of land was set apart by the Government for educational purposes within that State. He believed a third part of every sixteenth section—the land being divided into sections—was set apart wherever it came, and they took the chance whether the land was good, bad, or indifferent. The fund derived from that relieved the State, to a great extent, of the expense of education, and enabled it to extend its advantages. The clause was introduced in order that the Government might have power, upon a resolution of that House, to set apart the lands specified therein for the purposes of the Act. He saw no reason why the system should not work here as well as it did in America.

Mr. IVORY could see no reason why this matter should be left entirely to the Legislative Assembly; and moved, as an amendment, that the words "Legislative Council" be inserted before "Legislative Assembly."

Mr. DOUGLAS approved of the amendment, and stated that the Education Commission had placed themselves in communication with the head of the Education Department in the United States of America, and after their proceedings had closed, they received a letter from that gentleman, which he had in his possession, and which he regretted he had not with him. It drew attention to, and laid some stress upon, the necessity for endowments of land for educational purposes; and he thought it might be laid upon the table of the House. It dwelt almost entirely on that point; and it was a system he thought they should put into practice. Large grants of land had been made for railway purposes; and he thought it would be wise to set apart lands within those areas for educational purposes.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said there was no objection to the amendment of the honorable member for the Burnett; in fact, he thought it an improvement on the clause.

The amendment having been put and passed, the clause, as amended, was agreed to.

Clause 11—"Property and lands vested in the Board to vest in the Corporation"—was agreed to without discussion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved that clause 12—"Trustees of non-vested schools may with assent of Minister convey to the corporation—Fair value to be paid—Mode of assessment—Mode of application of purchase money"—stand part of the Bill. He desired to point out that this clause varied very considerably from the analogous clause in the Bill he introduced last year, which was strongly objected to by the honorable member for Warrego and other honorable members; and he confessed that, at the time, he did not see the force of the objection, but on further consideration, he admitted it was very objectionable in form or appearance. It might have given rise to litigation, which it was not desirable should arise. The present proposal was to give power to those persons in whom land was now vested for the purposes of education, to convey it to the Minister, at any time within two years from the commencement of the Act, if they thought proper. Honorable members would be aware that, if land were wanted for railway purposes, the commissioner would take it, and laugh at their trusts; the value would be assessed, and the amount would have to be applied as nearly as possible to the same purpose to which the land was originally dedicated. It was not proposed in this Bill to take away the land compulsorily from those in whom it was vested, but to give them—or the majority of them—an option, if they thought proper, within a limited time, to surrender the land to the department. They would still have the money, which would have to be applied, as nearly as possible, to the same trusts as they held the land, so that no injustice could be done to the persons who had subscribed the money; there would be nothing like spoliation, which was so strongly objected to in the analogous clause in the Bill of last year.

Mr. J. SCOTT wished to know what was the object of confining the time to two years from the commencement of the Act? Unless there was some particular object in it, he should move the omission of that part of the clause.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL explained that the provision was necessary, in order to arrive as nearly as possible at a uniform system throughout the colony within a reasonable time. As soon as the Act was passed, the Minister would take steps for the establishment of educational establishments where necessary; and, unless some time were fixed, just as he had caused a school to be erected in the same locality in which there was a non-vested school, the trustees might surrender theirs. It would, therefore, be far better to limit the time; and it was thought two years would be ample for the owners of those schools to determine upon what course they should pursue; and it would also give an opportunity of seeing how the Act worked.

MR. AMHURST thought two years was a great deal too short a period to allow; and moved, by way of amendment, that the word "two" be omitted, with the view of inserting "ten."

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put and carried; and the amendment was therefore negatived.

The clause was then put and passed.

Clause 13—"Property acquired by corporation to vest in it and be subject to sale"—was agreed to without discussion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved clause 14—

"The trustees committee of management teachers or other person now receiving aid from the Board in respect of any primary school the property wherein is not vested in the said Board shall be entitled to continue to receive the same aid and under and subject to the same conditions

as are now applicable thereto until the thirty-first day of December one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven Provided that the amount of aid given in any such case shall not be increased after the passing of this Act."

He said the principle of the clause was, that the non-vested schools should continue to receive aid until some definite time and not afterwards. The date proposed was the 31st of December, 1877—two complete years from the termination of this year, which, he thought, would be quite sufficient time to enable them to give their schools up to the Minister, or, if they did not intend to do so, to make arrangements for carrying them on. The important principle of the clause was to fix the time; and he trusted the committee would insist upon it. He should be sorry to see the time proposed by the clause altered.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he had stated, on the second reading of the Bill, that he thought the 14th clause, as it stood, was scarcely fair to those with whom it proposed more particularly to deal. The House last year decided to continue the aid to the non-vested schools until 1880; and he could not understand how those who were in favor of that should now support a clause continuing it only until 1877. He did not know how it was; and it seemed strange that, as soon as members got into office, they altered their views completely. Last year, the honorable the Attorney-General, in moving the second reading of the Non-vested Schools Abolition Bill, said:—

"It occurred to himself, and to a good many gentlemen whom he had consulted, that the hottest opposition offered to the measure introduced last session was upon the one small point of the abolition of the non-vested schools; and he now proposed to deal simply with that subject, and, if possible, wipe out these schools after some reasonable time. There could be no doubt that it would be practically impossible to carry through the Legislature any complete system of education until that difficulty was removed. That was the opinion of others, and he entertained a strong opinion upon it himself."

He believed what that honorable gentleman then said was still correct. He believed that so long as they attempted to deal with the question of non-vested schools and the whole question of education, at the same time, they would never carry any measure into practical operation. He thought the argument of the honorable the Attorney-General was then unanswerable, and that it was also unanswerable to-day. If he would consent to postpone the consideration of doing away with the non-vested schools, and be content to settle the whole question of education, he would, in all probability, succeed; but, if he attempted to deal with the two subjects at the one time, the Bill would assuredly fail to become law; and, if it were not to be carried into operation this session, how were they to improve their position twelve months hence? They would then find the same circumstances existing, the same difficulties would be before them, and the same intensity of feeling would exist with regard to this clause. They would not find any greater desire on the part of those honorable members who were opposed to the Bill, or on the part of the Upper House, to consent to doing away with these schools twelve months hence than there was at the present time, and their proceedings would end in precisely the same result. He thought, so long as the Ministry had a large majority in the House in favor of the Bill, they would never appeal to the constituencies upon it; and it would be unreasonable to ask them to do so. The second reading was carried this year by 25 to 13, and he had no doubt that majority would continue; and he could not see how, if they allowed the Bill to fall through this session, they could hope to improve their position in twelve months' time. The honorable the Attorney-General, when he (Mr. Buzacott) intimated his intention of proposing the amendment he was about to move, said it appeared to him that, by assenting to it, they would be conceding all they had been struggling for—that if they did not do away with the non-vested schools this year, they might as well allow the whole matter to go at once. The honorable gentleman did not appear to see any great advantage in establishing a uniform and complete system of education unless they also did away, at once, with the non-vested schools. That seemed to him (Mr. Buzacott) a very extraordinary argument. He thought there were a great many things in the measure which were extremely desirable. It contemplated doing away with the present irresponsible Board, that they had repeatedly heard had done so much harm, and had so scandalously expended the money placed at its disposal; and he thought if they could only abolish that Board, and place the management of the department in the hands of a responsible Minister, they should decidedly gain something worth having. They should also have their primary school system established upon a foundation which, he hoped, would enable it to last for all time, almost; and they should set at rest, for the time being, the agitation that had been productive of so much evil in the colony for a long time. Another thing they should gain was this:—Supposing the law remained as it was at present, and supposing they got the present Board dismissed, it was not at all improbable that they would get another Board in which sectarians might have a preponderance, and, instead of having thirty non-vested schools, they might have, perhaps, a hundred in the colony. They would get no security in the matter until the extension of the non-vested system was restricted by Act; and, if the honorable the Attorney-General accepted the amendment he was going to propose, they would, at all events, prevent the extension of that system; and that, he thought, would

be a very important object for them to attain. It appeared to him that honorable members, who were determined to at once do away with the non-vested system, did not really consider the opposition they had to contend against. It was a serious and a strong opposition; it was more than the opposition in that House; it was the opposition of the other House, over which they had no control or influence whatever. And if, last year, the Upper House refused to accept the Non-vested Schools Abolition Billl, although it had been carried through the Assembly by a large majority, it seemed to him hopeless to expect that they would accept a measure such as the present Bill, although it was passed in the Assembly by an equally large majority. He regarded it in that view; and he was satisfied that if the majority insisted upon carrying the clause as it stood, they would have no Education Act this session; and it was, therefore, a subject to which honorable members should give their most serious attention. He was most anxious to see the question disposed of once and for ever; and he maintained that the amendment which he should propose would really dispose of the non-vested schools question for ever, so far as that House was concerned. It would prevent any extension of the system; and a resolution of both Houses could afterwards be passed at any time, which would do away with all such schools for ever. If they could attain even that position, it would be something well worth having achieved. Honorable members should not lose sight of the fact that, however undesirable they might consider denominational schools, yet the teaching would remain precisely the same as in the State schools, so far as the teaching of religion during school hours was concerned. He quite agreed with honorable members that it was a most undesirable system, and a system they should endeavor to extinguish; but, at the same time, it would be absurd if they, through any determination to do away with it hurriedly, in the face of the strong opposition they had now to encounter, should find that all the time they had spent in dealing with educational reform this session had been utterly wasted. That was the seventh evening they had devoted to discussing this subject this session; and he asked honorable members if, because they thought they could insist upon carrying out the immediate abolition of these schools, they would be satisfied that all the work they had done during the present session should be allowed to have no ultimate end? He thought they should seriously consider the subject in that aspect; and if they did, they would see it was undesirable to insist upon the uncompromising mode of disposing of these schools which was proposed in the measure before them. He did not think he need detain the committee longer, because, no doubt, every honorable member must have given the subject a great deal of consideration, and was prepared, without much discussion, to decide one way or the other. He moved, as an amendment, that after the word "until," in the 16th line, the following words be inserted:—

"such aid shall be hereafter withdrawn in pursuance of a resolution passed by both Houses of Parliament,"

with a view to the omission of the words "the thirty-first day of December one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the honorable member for Rockhampton was quite right in stating that, last year, he (the Attorney-General) said it would be impossible to deal with the whole question of education until the non-vested school question had been disposed of; but if the honorable member had gone a little further, he would have found that he was not then treating it as a Government question. He was regarding it entirely as a private member's question, and he pointed out that it was impossible for a private member to deal with it in the same way that it could be dealt with if it were a Government measure. He then held that opinion, and he held it still; and he thought every honorable member who thought the education question needed dealing with at all would agree with him that, so long as the non-vested schools question remained unsettled, the general education question could not be settled. But the proposition of the honorable member for Rockhampton was, to leave that question unsettled, and to settle all the rest. Conceding that they could not settle the general question until the non-vested school question was settled, he proposed to leave that unsettled. If he even stopped there, it would not be so bad; but what the honorable member proposed to do was to settle the non-vested schools upon a different basis, and to give them important advantages which they did not now possess. He certainly thought the honorable member must be laboring under some misapprehension, and that if he seriously considered the effect of the amendment, he would not propose it. The present position of the non-vested schools was this: they received aid from the Board, and the Board got the money from that House. The Board could, if they pleased, refuse to grant aid to these schools, and stop it absolutely; and the Government had power—although no Government would think of exercising it—to dismiss the present Board, and appoint another who would stop the aid altogether. Of course, in such a case, the Government would be responsible to Parliament for its action. Another feature in connection with these schools was this: the money must be voted every year by that House, and it might be discontinued any year. It therefore appeared that the non-vested schools held their status under the Board, subject, in the first place, to the will of the House, and secondly, to that of the Government, either of whom

could, if they pleased, discontinue the aid. He understood a great many people in the colony considered that was a very good law, and wished it to remain so; but he thought the number of persons was very limited, and he trusted the number of members in that House was very limited, who alter that so as to place these schools upon an entirely different footing, and give them a recognised standing and a claim—a strong legal claim—upon the resources of the colony for an indefinite time, which was the effect of the amendment of the honorable member. At present they had no right whatever—nothing except a mere tenure at will, and the proposal of the honorable member was to continue the aid until both Houses of Parliament passed a resolution to stop it; that was, to give them the same tenure with respect to aid from the State that the owners of runs in the settled districts obtained under the Act of 1868; and the honorable member was, he presumed, quite aware that on almost every occasion on which it had been proposed to pass resolutions of both Houses under that Act it had been denounced, not perhaps in that House, but in another place, as spoliation and robbery; and he was quite certain that, if that House now altered the position of the non-vested schools for the better, they would have a very strong claim not to be interfered with for an indefinite time. The honorable member was, in fact, endeavoring to legislate especially for the non-vested schools, and to give them a fixed definite position; and, singularly enough, he proposed to alter the constitutional mode of proceeding by the Legislature. At present, the schools held their tenure to aid from that House, and he proposed to take away that constitutional function of the House and hand it over to the Legislative Council. By passing the amendment, that House would delegate to the Legislative Council the power of granting aid to them, because that House would not be required to vote the aid; it would be in the same position as the judges' salaries; whatever aid they were to receive would be paid year by year under the Act. He was speaking in this way because he wished the honorable member to understand the effect of his amendment, which he did not believe he did at present. At any rate, he had no excuse now for not understanding exactly what he was doing. He was seeking to improve the position of the non-vested schools—to place them in a very different position from what they were in now; and he (the Attorney-General) contended that, if the non-vested school question was to be dealt with at all, it must be dealt with first and not last. It was quite impossible to establish a system of education upon a solid and consistent basis so long as they had the non-vested schools an exception in that respect. There were other reasons which would commend themselves to the good sense of honorable members; and, for the reasons he had stated, he could not see his way to accept the amendment. He should be extremely surprised if a majority of the House, who had carried the second reading of the Bill, and who expressed in the most emphatic language that the time had arrived when aid to these schools should cease, should, on this occasion, consider they were so far wrong last year in coming to that conclusion, that they should now legislate in favor of these schools, and extend aid to them for an indefinite period.

Mr. PALMER said if the honorable the Attorney-General had been arguing against the clause altogether, he could understand him, but really he could not understand his argument as against the amendment. His argument was, that if the amendment were carried, it would give the non-vested schools an interest and a position they did not now possess. He stated they were, to a certain extent, now under the control of the House, because the House voted the money annually; and he (Mr. Palmer) supposed they would have the same control if the amendment were passed——

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. PALMER: As they would if the clause, as proposed, were passed, during the time it was limited to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Hear, hear.

Mr. PALMER: Then the honorable member himself proposed to give them a new vested right. He proposed to give them a vested right for two years; but the amendment did not give them that vested right. It might be taken away next session of Parliament, if the House should agree to it. As to the other matter, he did not see how, by adopting the amendment, they would be transferring any of these powers to the other House. That House had the same powers at present; they could stop the Appropriation Bill now, under the constitution; and, by carrying the amendment, the Assembly would in no way delegate their powers to the other Chamber. The honorable member might as well say they delegated their powers under the Land Act of 1868 to that House, with regard to land in the settled districts, and he could see no force in the argument against the amendment; but if the argument were used against the clause itself, he could understand it. This was a question which would bear a great deal of argument on both sides. He was as anxious as any honorable member to secure finality on the question; but, as had been said by the honorable member for Rockhampton, in the Bill introduced by the honorable member for Oxley, now the Attorney-General, last year, additional time was given for the abolition of the non-vested schools, and what was the objection to giving additional time now? The portion of the community who had put up these schools had gone to considerable expense in doing so, and he thought the House ought to take into consideration that they had a vested interest, and

it would, he thought, be unfair to stop them too suddenly. He did not think the amendment could do any harm. Before the end of the time to which it was proposed by this measure to limit the assistance to be given to these schools, there would, in all probability, be a new House of Assembly; there must, in all reason, be another Assembly before the 31st of December, 1877, and he thought it would be very fair to leave it an open question to that extent—to leave it to the new House to settle the question, whether the non-vested system should then cease at once, or whether it should be continued for another year or so. The amendment had, also, this additional advantage:—That instead of provoking the agitation which was sure to ensue if the Bill passed in its present form—instead of that, the question, with regard to time, would be left to a new House; and instead of the whole question of education being torn up again, as was almost certain to be the case at the next election, if the Bill passed as it now stood, the question would be narrowed down to the time the non-vested schools should exist. He thought a great deal might be said in favor of the amendment. If the Bill passed in its present form, he did not suppose the honorable the Attorney-General, or any one else, expected the question would be completely set at rest. However good the Bill might be, there would be agitation at the next election to do away with it entirely; but if the amendment were carried, the agitation would be confined to dealing with the resolutions of both Houses doing away with the system. He should certainly recommend the honorable gentleman in charge of the Bill to accept the amendment. If they came to a division upon it, and it were not carried, he should support extending the time when the aid should cease to 1880, giving the same terms as were agreed upon last year. No reason had been advanced why that should not be conceded. He believed the amendment would strengthen the Bill, and lessen the agitation that would be sure to arise. They would then establish a system of national education, under a responsible Minister, that would not be disturbed again, in all probability, and the agitation would be limited to endeavoring to get members to refuse to give State aid to those schools, or to support it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the principal objection to the amendment was, that it altered the present status of the non-vested schools, and there was no finality. No doubt, they had a vested interest, and it would be hard to take it away suddenly; but it was desirable that the interest they proposed to give should be fixed, and that it should be known when it was to determine. It was proposed by the clause to continue the right definitely for a certain time, in consideration of stopping them afterwards; but the amendment was entirely indefinite, and, probably, every time a proposition was made to pass a resolution of both Houses, it would be said that it should not be done too suddenly, that it was too soon, and one House might agree to it taking place this year, and the other next. He, again, contended that by passing the amendment, they would delegate their power with regard to voting the aid to the other House, because the money would be granted by the Act for an indefinite period, until the other House chose to pass a resolution to stop it. If the Assembly refused to vote the money, the other House would have the power to say, "Whether you vote it or not, it must be paid until we veto it, and we will not veto it." There was no doubt the Legislative Council would pass a Bill which had frequently passed that House, but when a direct vetoing power was conferred upon them expressly by an Act of the Legislature, they were in no way bound to pay any particular attention to a resolution of that House, no more than they would be to a resolution for the removal of a judge. That was the effect of the amendment.

Mr. THOMPSON said it appeared to him that the effect of the clause, as it stood, was simply to leave the question open and subject to agitation until the end of 1877; and to suppose that the question could be settled by limiting the period for the existence of those schools to a short term was quite out of the question. The clause was simply a temptation to continual agitation on the subject for two years, and he thought the amendment was far better in principle. It was not intended, as the honorable the Attorney-General had contended, to place the non-vested schools in a better position than they were now; and if his objection was simply to the wording of the amendment, that could easily be remedied by altering it to the effect that they might continue on the same footing they were on at present, and subject to the same conditions. The question was, whether it was better to leave the subject to be fought over until December, 1877, or to practically settle it in the simple manner proposed by the honorable member for Rockhampton, without apparently doing any damage to vested interests. That there were vested interests, no one attempted to deny. Under an Act of Parliament, or the interpretation of an Act of Parliament, certain rights were conceded, under which money had been expended in the erection of schools; teachers had been imported, and a system established, and they had a vested right to that extent, which was entitled to the protection of Parliament. He understood it was not the desire of the honorable member for Rockhampton to better the position of the schools, but simply to leave them in the position they now occupied, until a resolution was passed by both Houses declaring that the system must cease.

The COLONIAL TREASURER thought the debate had shown that there was a disposition on both sides of the House to come to a decision on the question. The principle of the clause was, that aid to the non-vested

schools should cease on the 31st of December, 1877—that the time should be fixed by Act of Parliament, and that it should not be left an open question for continual agitation every time an election took place. If the amendment were carried, every election, for some time to come, would turn upon the question. And they must not lose sight of the fact that, although the party represented by the honorable member for the Kennedy took great interest in the question, they were not the only party who did so. There were other parties who took a warm interest in it on the other side, and it was of no use attempting to meet the views of one section. Any satisfactory settlement must be one which both parties, by their representatives in that House, were prepared to accept as a final settlement of the question, so far as they could expect finality on a question of that kind. To leave it open in the way proposed by the amendment would be to furnish another source of discord between the two Houses, which would be very objectionable indeed. They knew, from circumstances he need not refer to, that the two Houses were not working harmoniously together; and it was very much to be deprecated that any new source of discord should be introduced. He thought, on that ground alone, the amendment should not be accepted. As to the exact date when the aid should cease, he would be inclined to deal liberally with them, so long as they kept in view some definite period, and that it should be agreed to by both parties to the controversy, and established by law when the aid should finally cease, so as not to leave it an open question for continual agitation to be carried on year after year.

Mr. BUZACOTT trusted the committee would not consent to a division until the amendment had been properly discussed, which it had not been up to the present time; and, moreover, he was sure there were several honorable members who desired to express their opinions on it. If they would dispense with the mere theory which had been put forward by the honorable the Colonial Treasurer—namely, that the Assembly had the thing entirely in its own hands—that evening: if the decision of the Assembly could be a final decision—if there was not another branch of the Legislature which had to be consulted, no one would side with the honorable gentleman sooner than he would. But he could not disguise from himself that there was another branch, and that whatever decision that committee might arrive at, they should first ask, what chance they had of obtaining the co-operation of that other branch? He did not believe there was one honorable member on the Government side of the committee, who thought really that if they passed the clause as originally intended, the Bill would be passed in another place. He thought the honorable Premier believed—and that other honorable members believed, that if the Bill went as it was, it would be thrown out by the Legislative Council, and if that was the case, they would have all the same excitement over again next session. He for one was most anxious on the subject, as he had taken great part in the agitation which had been going on in reference to it, and he was becoming weary of it. He thought that the Bill had been sufficiently discussed, and that honorable members having been returned to take action on the question, they ought to do what would have the effect of settling it for some time to come, at any rate. If the Bill went as proposed they would only have been losing their time; but if his amendment was carried he believed it would be as perfect a Bill as any that could be brought forward. In the previous session he remembered that the Attorney-General said that the abolition of the non-vested schools was after all only a very small thing; and he believed that the honorable gentleman said what every one who was not actuated by prejudice must say. It was a very small thing whether the non-vested schools, at a cost of £7,000 or £8,000 a-year, should be allowed for five years. He knew that it was in the power of a majority of the House to withdraw the aid to those schools at any time; but he would ask, if a majority would consent to such a thing being done suddenly? for, inasmuch as those schools had been established under an Act, they were entitled to fair consideration; he did not believe that a majority would ever agree to withdrawing the aid from them in a summary manner. He thought that if the aid was continued to them until a resolution of both Houses of Parliament said it should be withdrawn, that would be very fair. There would be one ground on which the Legislature could agree to that withdrawal, and that would be when, in consequence of the satisfactory working of the State schools, it was found that the education in the non-vested schools was not up to the standard—that they had not the teachers to educate their children up to the standard required by the Act. When that was the case, the Legislature could very easily decide upon withdrawing the aid altogether. He thought, however, that withdrawing the aid in 1877 would be stultifying that committee, and would be doing what the other Chamber would never consent to.

Mr. STEWART said it was the first time that he had ever heard the argument used that they should do certain things in order to have a measure passed by the other Chamber, and he certainly thought that such an argument should not have been brought forward. The other Chamber had a perfect right to do as they thought proper, but if the Assembly was to seek their advice before dealing with any measure, they had better leave off legislating altogether. He considered that they should put the Bill in that form which a majority of the committee believed to be the best, and leave the other Chamber to do as they thought proper with it afterwards. He was not aware that the honorable member

for Rockhampton was in the confidence of the other House, or that any guarantee had been given that the Bill would be accepted by it if the honorable member's amendment was agreed to. At the same time, he must say that he thought the time fixed by the Bill was not a proper one. Last session a later date had been fixed—certainly as a matter of compromise; but he thought that, as it had been then fixed at 1880, they should adopt that as a limit now. By that means they would give the trustees and those interested in the non-vested schools time to turn round and make other arrangements. He thought there was very little to be said on the clause, as it had been well discussed on the second reading; it had then been very properly put forward by the honorable the Attorney-General, and been dwelt upon at length by others who followed that honorable gentleman. He should support any reasonable limit, but should most decidedly object to its being left an open question, as it would be brought up every session. Even if the limit was fixed in some future session, some reasonable notice would have to be given, and thus great delay would be caused in bringing the matter to a settlement.

Mr. McIlwraith: The honorable member for North Brisbane stated that it was the first time he had ever heard the argument used that in discussing a measure they should consider what would be done in another place in regard to it; but he would remind the honorable member that the very same argument had been used by the honorable Colonial Treasurer in regard to the Land Bill.

Mr. Macrossan said the honorable member for North Brisbane seemed to think that it was greatly lowering the dignity of that committee to consider what might be done with the Bill in another place; and he thought that the honorable member must be ignorant of the practice in the House of Commons, because there, there was hardly a measure introduced which was not in its inception and modification when in committee, altered to suit the views known to exist in the House of Lords. He thought such an argument coming from a practical legislator and a shrewd man of business, was a very bad one, as they must always consider the other branch of the Legislature. There was one thing which it appeared to him very strange that the honorable Attorney-General had not thought fit to answer, namely the charge that, last session, when introducing a Bill for the abolition of non-vested schools, the honorable gentleman used the argument that he would

> "object to a Government being united to abolish or retain any particular kind of schools."

Yet, in the face of that, there was now a Government sitting on the Treasury benches agreeing to abolish a certain class of schools which the honorable gentleman had admitted to be very good schools. He would appeal to honorable members to consider the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton on its own merits, and not to allow themselves to be led away by any theories which had been advanced by either the honorable Colonial Treasurer, or his colleague, the honorable Attorney-General. What, after all, were the real merits of the question? They had been for years debating the question of education in that House, for there had been far more discussion upon it within the walls of that Chamber than outside of it, and yet it was still unsettled. And why? he would ask. Because there was a very large proportion of the people of the colony who were opposed to the total abolition of the non-vested school system. Honorable members of the Government need not think for one moment that the mere fact of their passing the Bill by a majority, obtained not on the very best of faith, would be a final settlement of the question. It would not be; and if they were practical men they should look around them, and see what had been done by the people in other colonies. He would only allude to people like themselves; people who spoke the same language as themselves, and who lived under the same constitution as themselves; he would allude to the colony of Victoria. The Ministry of that colony had introduced a similar Bill to that now before the committee, with the intention of settling the question. That Bill had been passed; but he would ask honorable members to say whether the question was settled in that colony? It was not; it was in a more unsettled state, in fact, than it was in this colony. There was no agitation on the question in this colony outside the walls of that House; but in Victoria there was an agitation going on which would soon make itself heard within the walls of the Parliament of that colony. If honorable members were wise, they would look at the question from a Victorian stand-point. The Roman Catholics had already made a compromise; they had given up religious teaching in their schools, and were willing to devote as many hours a day to secular instruction as were given to it in the State schools. But, in addition to that, there was another compromise: There was not a man amongst the advocates of denominationalism who did not believe that he had a perfect right, when he gave up his own ideas of religious instruction, and gave that time to secular instruction which was demanded by the State at its schools, and when he paid his share of taxation—to claim his proportionate share of the Education vote. Whilst the advocates of the non-vested system accepted that compromise, they were giving up at the same time their power of extending that system by giving up the one-third of the vote to which they were entitled—that right they believed they possessed, and it was the very right which the Roman Catholics and others in Victoria were agitating for. Honorable

members might have seen lately in the *Courier* newspaper a paragraph stating authoritatively what the Roman Catholics had demanded in Victoria, and that they were being assisted in their claims by other persons. They contended that when they had educated their children up to the standard required by the State, they had done their duty, and had a right to expect their fair share of the Education vote. Honorable members must not think that they could stamp out agitation by Act of Parliament, as long as the people, or any section of them imagined that they were suffering an injustice. He himself was most anxious to see the whole question settled, but he was thoroughly convinced that the settlement proposed by the honorable Attorney-General would not be a settlement at all, and that, on the other hand, the only thing approaching a settlement was contained in the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton. He hoped that the committee would not be led away by any theories put forward from the Treasury benches. In addition to the arguments he had put forward there was another one which had been touched upon by the honorable member for Port Curtis, namely, that the denominationalists had acquired a vested right. Now, how were they to deal with vested rights? He thought they could not do better than follow the example of the Imperial Parliament at the time of the disestablishment of the Irish Church, or at the time of the abolition of the College of Maynooth. Was that endowment taken away suddenly and without compensation? It was not; the right was purchased by the State at fifteen years purchase, and he would ask honorable members to mark the analogy between that college and non-vested schools of this colony. That college had been erected by the State, and yet the State, when abolishing it, recognized a vested claim, even after sixty or seventy years; and the people in this colony had built their schools with the idea that their vested claims would always be recognised by the State. He would ask the committee to deal with those schools in the same way that they would deal with any other business matter, and throw on one side all thoughts of any agitation which might exist respecting them. Let them consider that they were dealing not only with Roman Catholics, but with another portion of the community, who were equally sincere with the Catholics in their desire to maintain the non-vested schools. The average attendance of children at the Roman Catholic schools was one-third that of the attendance at the State schools, and of that one-third there was one-third who did not belong to the Roman Catholic church. He hoped honorable members would bear in mind that no matter whether the amendment was carried or not the Parliament had always the power to deal with any question; although, according to the arguments of the honorable Attorney-General, one would imagine that their laws were like those of the Medes and Persians, and could never be altered. The honorable member should also remember that no measure could become law by the power of that House alone; even if the other House could be ignored by honorable members in that Chamber, the people outside would never consent that it should be.

Mr. THOMPSON said it appeared to him that there were two principles involved in the question before the committee, one of which had been discussed, namely—that those who contributed towards a general fund for educational purposes should have a share or a voice in the expenditure of that fund; in other words, that if the advocates of the non-vested system contributed one-third towards the expense of education, they should be entitled to have the expenditure of that one-third. That question had been already argued, and an immense deal of the argument had been based upon the simple ground of right and wrong; but there was a still more serious principle involved, which was the question of vested interests. The Attorney-General had argued that the only objection to the amendment was that the present non-vested system must die; but he (Mr. Thompson) did not see that if a vested interest was not liable to die a natural death, they were bound to give it a violent death. If there were no vested interest, the clause was wrong; if there were any, it was a gross robbery. What, after all, was the question involved? The whole sum paid to those non-vested schools was probably some £7,000 or £8,000 a year—probably it might be only £6,000—and yet they had been told that that was to convulse the country for years to come. When it was seen that the advocates of the non-vested system had reduced their demands to a few thousands a year out of a contemplated expenditure of over a £100,000 a year, it appeared to him that if it were only as a question of politic compromise and expediency, it was one which could be satisfactorily settled; if it could only be viewed as a compromise, he really thought there could not be a more happy way of getting out of the difficulty.

Mr. AMHURST should have thought that the amendment would have been received by the committee with pleasure. He thought it was a miserable sop to propose that the non-vested schools should receive aid for only two years. If the advocates of the non-vested system had no vested rights, it would be nothing; but if they had those rights, they should have them in full. He did not see that the Government should be afraid of the amendment, and that, if it was passed, the next or some future Parliament would have the matter brought up again before it. They knew that there was a strong feeling outside of the Parliament that, if some honorable members had stuck to their principles, the Bill would never have passed its second reading.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE: There had been a great deal said about vested interests, and he would ask, when had those interests arisen, and how had they arisen? He could tell the committee when they had arisen. When the National Education Bill was passed by the Assembly of Queensland in 1860, it was passed as a purely national system, and the idea of non-vested schools being admitted to any share in the matter was utterly in the background; there was no intention that there should be any assistance given to them, or to any schools of any description, except those under a purely national system. He thought that that would be proved if honorable members would refer to the Act, as it would be seen that by it the Board of Education "may" give assistance; it was simply a permissive matter, and not a compulsory one —it was not that the Board "shall" give assistance. There was no intention whatever at that time to give denominational schools assistance, and it was only natural to suppose that it was so when it was borne in mind that only a week or two before the passing of the Education Act, a Bill had been passed doing away with all State aid to religion. A great deal of discussion took place at the time, and Mr. Herbert, who was then the leader of the House, was of opinion, and many other members agreed with him, that they should allow the Board to give assistance, if they saw occasion for so doing, to the denominational schools. Mr. Herbert then introduced the matter; and although it was argued against by all parties, it was at last determined that the word "may" should be inserted; so that, after all, it was merely a permission to the Board, if occasion arose. From that day to the present the aid to those schools had continued to grow—persons of various denominations went to the Board and applied for assistance, and hence had grown, what was now being called by honorable members, a vested interest. It was never the intention of Parliament that the non-vested system should grow; and he remembered, indeed, that it was said in those days that the permission given by that clause in the Act was the introduction of the thin end of the wedge, and that denominationalism would grow, as it had proved to have done, and was doing. He should be very glad, indeed, to see some compromise introduced which would satisfy the majority of parties. In reference to another matter, he might say that he did not like to see the rights and privileges of that Chamber transferred to another place; he thought they ought to maintain all their rights, and leave the other branch to exercise theirs. A compromise was, no doubt, very desirable; but how it was to be made he did not see, and he should certainly like to hear some honorable member make a suggestion which could be carried out; for, notwithstanding the very excellent suggestion of the honorable member for Rockhampton, and the ingenuity which had been shown in framing it, he was afraid it was not one which the committee could follow. It had been said that they were going into the matter not altogether in good faith, but he could not see how they could enter into it at a better time; and then again, with regard to the practical method of conducting the schools, he could not see that what was good for a large majority should not be good for the whole. Some observations had been made as to the conduct of the matter by the honorable Attorney-General, and as to the way in which he had treated the same question on a former occasion. Now, it was all very well to accuse that honorable member of having changed his tactics, by agreeing to a question being made now a Government question, which he had formerly argued should not be one; but, he would ask, how it would have been possible for the Government to have conducted the public business if they had not brought forward the Bill as a Government measure? They had been challenged by honorable members opposite in every possible way to make it a Government measure, and they would have been scouted from one end of the country to the other if they had been afraid to do so. It was time the matter should be settled, and he only hoped it would be so. As to the agitation on the question in this colony, or in Victoria, it was not going to last for ever; it was only natural that there should be some agitation got up under the circumstances; but he took the stand that the mode proposed by the Government was the only way of settling the question. He should support any good suggestion that might be made for a compromise; but at present he saw nothing else but to accept the clause as it stood.

Mr. PALMER said, the honorable member for Wickham seemed to be very anxious to know how, what were called the vested interests of the advocates of the non-vested system arose, and he would tell the honorable gentleman how they had arisen. How they had arisen was from the action of the honorable Colonial Secretary, who was, more than anyone else, responsible for the denominational system; and when they had arisen was when that honorable member dismissed a Board which was hostile to the exercise of the power given by the Act to aid that system, and had gazetted, as a Board, himself and others who were favorable to denominationalism. There was no contradicting that, as it was on record, and if any one was to blame for making—and he agreed with the honorable member for Wickham—what was intended to be a national system into a denominational system of education, it was the honorable member at the head of the Government. It was useless to ask how those vested interests arose, because they existed; the Roman Catholics had gone to very great expense in erecting and maintaining schools, and they considered that they had certain vested rights. What, he would ask, had been the action of the

English Parliament in regard to the disestablishment of the Irish Church? Had they not given fifteen years' purchase, and how had they behaved in regard to the abolition of the Maynooth College? Why, they had shown the same regard to vested interests. He hoped that the non-vested schools would be abolished, and that there would be only one system of education; but, in doing so, they must do justice, and on that ground he considered that the non-vested schools were entitled to every fair consideration, and that the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton was a very good one. At the same time he thought that a compromise by which aid to those schools should not cease until 1880, would be better for the schools than the honorable member's proposition. As, however, it was supposed that the honorable member's amendment was a fair one, and as it was a question which could be decided at any time, without breaking up the Education Bill in any way, and as, if they limited the aid to 1877 or 1880, there might be constant agitation, he thought it would be better to accept that amendment. He was sorry the honorable Attorney-General could not see his way clear to accept it; at the same time, he would not himself be understood as bound down not to support any resolution which might be brought forward next session. Unless the amendment was carried, he should support a proposition to extend the time to 1880. As to what had been said about delegating the powers of that committee to another Chamber, he looked upon it as ridiculous. The speech of the honorable Colonial Treasurer had contradicted that of his colleague, the honorable Attorney-General—the former had pointed out that it was in the power of the other Chamber to refuse Supply, if they considered that the Bill would work in a tyrannical manner. He (Mr. Palmer) contended that if the clause was passed in its integrity, the other House would not have the power of stopping the payment of the aid if they refused to pass the Appropriation Bill, as the non-vested schools would be the law of the land for a limited time, and the Minister for Education would, under the Act, be perfectly entitled to pay them their aid out of the Treasury so long as there was a shot in the locker; so that there was no force in the argument of the honorable member at all.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he was sorry that he could not support the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton, but he could not do so for the reasons he had already given. As to the proposition of the honorable member for Port Curtis, he thought that postponing the date would only be opening the way to agitation in the same way as the amendment before the committee would do. In regard to the other agitation they had heard about, for repealing the Bill, that was a matter which might be looked for; but he thought it was unwise to anticipate it before the Bill was passed.

Mr. J. SCOTT said that when he first read the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton, he had not liked it at all, nor could he say that he liked it very much at the present time, because it would leave the same difficulty as the clause in the Bill would leave, namely, that at the very first general election the cry would be raised that the Bill should be repealed, as they knew that the party opposed to the Bill was an aggressive one. The great recommendation of the amendment was that it might enable the Bill to pass another place, and that being the case, it would be a pity to jeopardise the whole Bill by refusing to accept the amendment. He was confident of one thing, which was, that whether it was decided that aid to the non-vested schools should cease at a limited time, or whether the amendment was carried, the agitation on the subject would continue.

Mr. MACROSSAN said that if the honorable member who had just spoken referred to those in favor of the non-vested system as being an aggressive party, he might state that there was not the slightest fear of any agitation from them. The honorable member had only to look at the action of the Board during the last four years, and yet there had been no agitation; the only agitation there had been was to keep the schools they had, and which they had been put to great expense in establishing. The honorable member need not be afraid of agitation so far as they were concerned.

Mr. THOMPSON would point out another consideration bearing upon the question. As he understood it, the Education Act of 1860 contained a clause which stated that their system should be, in its essence, as near to the national system of New South Wales as possible; and the consequence was, a claim was made that there should be aid granted to non-vested schools, or rather to denominational schools, which were something more than non-vested schools, and he understood that the system which took effect and was now in force, was the result of a deliberate compromise between the contending parties. That compromise was come to as a matter of bargain between Mr. Herbert on the one side, and the bishops on the other, and that being so, there was a distinct contract settling the question at that time. Out of that there arose an expenditure and a system involving considerations affecting fully one-third of the community, and now they were asked, because the system could not die a natural death, to give it a violent death at a certain time in the future. The fact that they could not fix the time showed that they had no right to touch it; because, if they had the right to do so at all, they had the right to do so now. He thought that was one of the strongest arguments in favor of the amendment. It was simply a matter of keeping faith, and not repudiating, and for that reason he supported it most strongly. That was simply the justice of the case, irrespective of politics or party

altogether; it was an equitable and final settlement of the question, at trifling cost to the country, for which expense the country would derive greater benefits than if the same money were expended under the vested system.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said, the idea of the honorable member for the Bremer, and other honorable members who supported the amendment, appeared to be that it would be a final settlement of the question, and on what assumption? That these schools were to continue for ever. That was exactly the effect of the amendment, as contended for, at any rate, by most honorable members who supported it. If it were not a permanent settlement of the question, it would, at any rate, be a postponement of the settlement for an indefinite time—until, as the honorable member for Kennedy had said, the youngest member of the House had grown grey.

Mr. THOMPSON said, if the schools made themselves a nuisance, there would be ample provision in the Bill to abolish them. It would simply require the passing of a joint resolution. But it had not been proved to him that they were a nuisance; on the contrary, he thought they were a very good thing. Before they were abolished, it should be shown that they were a nuisance, and that the £8,000 a-year was not spent so advantageously as it would be under the Board of Education.

Mr. MACROSSAN said the honorable the Attorney-General seemed to think that legislation should last for ever; but it was the opinion of the foremost men in England that legislation should be revised and modified once in every generation; and he asserted, and believed, that this would be a settlement of the question for one generation at least. What more could the honorable gentleman desire?

Mr. DOUGLAS said it was not to be expected that this question would be settled by the present Bill. It was to be hoped it never would be settled. They should always have something new to learn on the subject of education, and he hoped never to have his mind set at rest upon it, because he daily found new facts connected with it, and there were plenty more to acquire. He was glad to find that committee was in a frame of mind that the Bill should pass, and that the question had been narrowed down to that of the non-vested schools; and whether they considered the proposition of the honorable member for Rockhampton, or that of the Attorney-General, or that of the honorable member for Brisbane,—all these were comparatively insignificant. He should not support the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton, because he thought it would leave the question open, and he should be glad to see the question settled for a few years on the basis laid down in the Bill, although in some respects he thought the Bill imperfect. At the same time, if the amendment were carried, it would not break his heart. He believed they could better settle the question at once by coming to a final decision, and let them commence a new state of things from the time the Bill came into force. He would be willing to commute the annual payments to a sum to be paid at once, rather than keep the question open to the year named; he would sooner the amount should be capitalised and paid down at once, and have done with it. If they retained these schools, they must subject them to inspection, and that was objectionable. He believed they were sectarian schools; that while apparently national schools under the Board, they were in reality vehicles for denominational education. They were unanimous on that point, and the only thing they disagreed upon was the matter of a few thousand pounds, one-tenth part of the whole sum they now voted; so that he saw his way clear to the passing of the Bill without much difficulty, and the sooner they came to a division the better. If his views met with the concurrence of the Government, and a sufficient number of members, he should bring them forward as an amendment. He should prefer the money to be paid over at once; it should be applied to educational purposes, and not be otherwise trammelled in any way whatever.

Mr. WALSH said the question was:—When was it the right time to do an act of injustice? and he did not think they would ever arrive at a conclusion on that point.

Mr. DICKSON could not support the amendment, for these reasons:—First, because it would create a direct vested interest on behalf of the non-vested schools under an Act of Parliament, which, in the future, they might find considerable difficulty in removing; and secondly, because, by the amendment, they were virtually endeavoring to pass the Bill under false pretences. The honorable member for Port Curtis had informed them that he would not bind himself not to come to the House next session and vote for the withdrawal of aid from these schools. He thought that was not dealing fairly and straightforwardly with the advocates of the non-vested system; and if they carried an amendment recognising the interest these schools had, and, in fact, capitalising the annual amount they received, he should consider it incumbent upon himself in the future to support the continuance of that. He thought, if the amendment were carried, it would so disfigure the Bill that it would be better it should fall through entirely. He should be sorry to see it carried with the amendment, and he thought the suggestion of the honorable member for Brisbane had a great deal more to commend it, because it met, to some extent, the objection of the advocates of the non-vested system with regard to the time the system should be allowed to exist. But that was also objectionable, because agitation would arise for the continuance of the aid, and he should prefer adopting the views of the honorable member

for Maryborough, to bring the matter to a final settlement at the present time, by the immediate payment of a certain amount. That would be far more satisfactory than leaving the question open for a period, during which agitation would be maintained for a continuance of the aid.

Mr. KINGSFORD said the honorable member for Warrego had asked, when was it the right time to do an act of injustice, and he (Mr. Kingsford) contended it was always the right time to do an act of justice, and that this was the right time to do an act of justice to a large portion of the community, by abolishing the non-vested system. The honorable member for the Bremer had spoken about throwing the country into a state of agitation over the £8,000 which the Roman Catholic portion of the community claimed, when no principle was involved; but he thought there was a principle involved; there was the principle of the majority being compelled to submit to the minority—two-thirds of the population having to submit to one-third in regard to the abolition of this system. He pointed out that the Maynooth grant and the *regium donum* were not paralled cases to the present, because the moneys voted for the non-vested schools were in direct violation of the law of the colony, and for that reason they ought to be abolished. He was sorry to hear the honorable member for Kennedy talk about agitation. No doubt there would be agitation; and he suspected, if two-thirds were against one-third, the larger number would gain the day.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, speaking individually, he considered the honorable member for Maryborough had offered a practical solution of the difficulty. Their wisest plan was, if possible, to settle the question definitely this session, and not leave it open for years, and he thought they had better come to a division on the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton, and they could then proceed to discuss the amendment suggested by the honorable member for Maryborough.

Mr. LOW said he could not support the amendment. He had pledged himself to his constituents to support the continuance of the non-vested system, and he should carry out that pledge. He should never give a vote to leave the matter to another House to decide; he thought that House was quite able to decide it; and he was prepared to fulfil his pledge to maintain the non-vested schools.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE argued that those who had non-vested schools had no right whatever to consideration, because whatever right they had, had been obtained in total violation of the law He was willing, however, that a compromise should be made, and he thought the sooner the question was settled the better. As for leaving it open until the year 1880, and to become a joint question to be decided by the Assembly and Council, he thought that would be most injurious. The time had now come when the question should be settled, even if that settlement was to the disadvantage of a large portion of the community.

Mr. GROOM denied the statement that the aid now given to the non-vested schools was in direct violation of the law of the land, and quoted the seventh section of the Education Act of 1860, to show that they were quite within the scope of that statute. Under that Act they had been established and continued, and he contended there was therefore a vested interest, which they were bound to recognise and provide for. And, supposing a compromise were agreed to, he should not regard it as a final settlement of the question. There was no finality in compromises, as every one must know. He pointed out that, in South Australia, the Ministry were about introducing a measure on education; in Victoria, there was agitation, from one end of the colony to the other, on the same question, and it was admitted that the Act in force in that colony had been a failure; in New South Wales, there was agitation for the repeal of Mr. Parkes' Act, and the Legislature of that colony had decided, by a majority of 21 to 7, not to disturb the aid given to non-vested schools. In fact, in the four colonies, the education question was under discussion, and there was really no finality to such a question. There might be a temporary settlement of it, but it would be impossible for any member to to face his constituents without having it brought before him. He should support the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton, because it was the best solution of the difficulty that had been proposed. The honorable member for Maryborough had suggested that a lump sum of money should be given, and the honorable the Colonial Treasurer suggested the same thing some time ago, as the best compromise that could be made; but he (Mr. Groom) believed the parties interested in these claims would much prefer the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton, which, he thought, was the best proposal that had been brought forward; that, or an extension of the time to four, five, or ten years, as the case might be. His own impression was, that they should not overlook the fact that about one-third of the children of the colony, attending schools, attended the non-vested schools, and that was not a small number; and £8,500 was only a small sum compared with the total expenditure, and that amount would not be increased, but it was possible it would gradually decrease. He did not see any possibility of it increasing, because the Act would provide that it should not increase. He said, without hesitation, that so far as the Roman Catholic schools were concerned, the children attending them were educated quite as well as they were in the State schools, and, in proof of this, he mentioned an instance in which, when the boys attending the Boundary-street school came into competition with the boys of the

Normal school, they carried off more grammar school scholarships. Under these circumstances, he should be prepared to see the two systems going on side by side; he believed they worked well together, having heard nothing to convince him to the contrary. There were some portions of the Bill he should like to see carried, and if there were a compromise by which the Bill could be passed, he should support it.

Mr. FRASER was very anxious, in treating this matter, that he should do nothing which would inflict injustice on any portion of the community, and he had no doubt other honorable members were actuated in the same way. At the same time, he could not see his way clear to support the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton, because he believed it would have the effect of perpetuating agitation on the question. He should much prefer accepting the amendment suggested by the honorable members for Port Curtis and Brisbane, to extend the time, during which the non-vested schools should exist, to a definite period, somewhat commensurate with the vested interests that had been claimed for them. There was no question that under the present Act they had a vested interest. The honorable member for Rockhampton had said that if the teaching in the non-vested schools were inferior to that in the vested schools, that would be a ground for doing away with them, but he forgot that the teaching must be the same. The teachers were subject to the same classification, and control, and inspection, as those in the vested schools, and there was, therefore, no force in the argument. With regard to the statement of the honorable member for Toowoomba, that the instruction in those schools was superior, or equal, to that in the vested schools, and the instance he adduced, the facts were, that the pupils who came up for examination from the Boundary-street school were young men, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, and he was not sure that there was not one nineteen years of age, as against boys of thirteen and fourteen in the Normal school. He did not feel disposed to support the suggestion of the honorable member for Maryborough, because he thought it would be very difficult to arrive at an adjustment which would be satisfactory to all parties. He thought it would be more fair to the non-vested schools themselves to have a somewhat prolonged and definite period of existence set before them.

Mr. BUZACOTT said his only desire in moving the amendment was to settle the question, if possible, amicably. He had reason to believe, before he moved it, that it was one which the oppositionists to the measure before the House would be inclined to accept, although he had had no absolute undertaking from them to that effect. If he believed the amendment intended to be moved by the honorable member for Maryborough would be accepted—if he could be shown that it would be an actual settlement of the question, and that it would smooth the way of the Bill, not only through that House but also through the Upper House,—he would readily withdraw the amendment he had brought forward, and fall in with that of the honorable member. But he had reason to believe his amendment would be more acceptable, and a more satisfactory settlement of the question, and he should, therefore, adhere to it.

Mr. BELL understood the Government were opposing this amendment, and he should be glad to know what course they intended to take with regard to the amendment of the honorable member for Maryborough—whether they would accept it or stick to the Bill?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Government had no very strong objection to the amendment of the honorable member for Maryborough——

Mr. PALMER: Will you accept it?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: His own private feeling was against it, but he believed some of his colleagues were in favor of it. If they came to a division on the amendment now before the committee, they could discuss that afterwards.

Mr. MCILWRAITH would much rather see the Bill pass as it stood than accept the amendment of the honorable member for Maryborough. It made the matter worse than ever.

Mr. MACROSSAN strongly opposed the amendment of the honorable member for Maryborough as being most unjust to the supporters of non-vested schools, and pointed out that the effect would be to drive them into utter sectarianism.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put.

The committee divided:—

AYES, 10.

Messrs. Palmer, Thompson, McIlwraith, Buzacott, Walsh, Amhurst, Macrossan, Groom, J. Scott, and Miles.

NOES, 18.

Messrs. Low, Griffith, Bell, Hemmant, King, Macalister, Bailey, Fryar, Beattie, Kingsford, Stewart, Douglas, Fraser, Dickson, Foote, Hodgkinson, J. Thorn, and Edmondstone.

Mr. GROOM said he should now propose an amendment fixing the time at which the aid should cease. He would point out that last session, as a compromise, they agreed to extend the time to the 1st January 1880, and, as he understood, the honorable the Attorney-General was then prepared to accept that as a fair settlement of the question. Personally, he should be inclined to give ten years, and if an amendment to that effect were not agreed to, the time could be reduced. He should test the feeling of the committee by moving that the words "seventy-seven" be omitted, with the view of inserting "eighty-five."

Mr. DOUGLAS said he proposed, after the decision of the committee on the amendment of the honorable member for Toowoomba, to move his amendment as a new clause.

Mr. GROOM then altered his amendment to read as follows:—That after the words "one thousand eight and" the word "eighty," be inserted.

Question—That the word proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put.

The committee divided:—

AYES, 14.

Messrs. Palmer, Thompson, Bell, Buzacott, Stewart, Scott, Fraser, Amhurst, Macrossan, McIlwraith, Hodgkinson, Walsh, Groom, and Miles.

NOES, 13.

Messrs. Hemmant, Griffith, Macalister, King, Fryar, Dickson, Beattie, Bailey, Foote, Edmondstone, Kingsford, Douglas, and J. Thorn.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—

That the words "seventy-seven," in line 17, be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "eighty."

Question put and passed.

The clause, as amended, was agreed to.

On clause 15, as follows:—

"From and after the said thirty-first day of December one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven no aid shall except as hereinafter provided be given from the moneys of the State to any primary school not being a State school or to the teachers in any such primary school,"—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—

That the words "seventy-seven" be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "eighty."

Question put and passed.

Mr. DOUGLAS moved a new clause, to the effect that power should be given to trustees or other persons having title to land or other non-vested school property, who should apply within six months after the passing of the Act, to receive a sum equal to that paid by the Government to them during the three years previous to the passing of the Act, as a final payment from the Minister for Education. He did not know whether the clause would be acceptable to honorable members after having carried the last amendment, but it might be accepted, as the proprietors of some non-vested schools might be willing to commute for a lump sum.

Mr. PALMER confessed, that when last speaking upon the question, and referring to the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and the abolition of Maynooth College, an idea of the kind, contained in the honorable member's clause, had occurred to him for settling the question, but, on consideration, he found it would not do. They were there, at the present time, to pass an Education Bill, but, by the proposed clause, they would be legislating to quash education, as they would be offering a lump sum to trustees and others to close schools. He was quite willing to admit that the idea had, at first, struck him as possible, but now he thought the clause, which was very ambiguous—he did not think many honorable members understood it—would be giving a premium to people to close schools; and that was not the object of the Bill. He hoped the honorable member would withdraw it without wasting more time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL did not see his way to accept the clause, especially after the division which had just taken place. He did not think it would be advisable to pay a large sum of money—about £24,000—as a bribe to people to close their schools. He hoped the clause would not be inserted.

Mr. DOUGLAS confessed that the result of the last division had tended to shake his belief in his own amendment, but he still maintained that it would have been desirable to have had a final settlement in the matter, instead of keeping it open. He did not mean to say that any great harm would be done by keeping it open until 1880, but he would rather have seen it settled, and it appeared to him that the plan he proposed would have been preferable. Unless there was an expression of opinion in favor of the clause, he should withdraw it.

Mr. PALMER: Withdraw it.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that, with the permission of the committee, he would withdraw the clause.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 16, that "training and other schools may be established," was agreed to.

Clause 17, that "State schools may be discontinued," was agreed to.

Clause 18, "Fees to be paid into consolidated revenue," was agreed to.

On clause 19, as follows:—

"Primary schools shall be established in such places as shall from time to time be deemed expedient

"Provided that before the establishment of a primary school in a new locality such part of the estimated cost of erecting the same as shall be prescribed by the regulations (not being less than one-fourth nor more than one-half) shall be raised by subscription or donation and paid to the Minister to be applied by him towards the erection of such new school."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he believed the honorable member for Rockhampton had prepared an amendment on the clause; but he would remind honorable members that it was most necessary that there should be some check upon the establishment of new schools. Whoever filled the office of Minister of Education would find that there would be numerous applications for schools; and to prevent them being too numerous and unnecessarily so, and also to prevent pressure being brought to bear on the Government, it would be advisable to have some such test as that named in the clause. At the same time, he should be sorry that the test should be such as to discourage the establishment of schools where wanted. Probably a proportion of one-tenth

would be better, but he was sure that many honorable members who had considered the matter would agree with him that it was desirable that there should be some test.

Mr. THOMPSON objected to the proviso altogether, as it was only a pretext, and there would be no guarantee that there would not be the same preference shown for one locality over another in the future that there had been in the past. He found that, in Brisbane, a proportion of only one-fifteenth had been paid, and he considered that there should be some equalisation of accounts made before a regulation like that proposed was enacted.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Start afresh.

Mr. THOMPSON: They had been told a few days ago, that a school had been built in the Brisbane district at a cost of £7,000, towards which there had been no adequate contribution whatever on the part of the public. Then, again, the proviso would not be fair to the country districts, in many of which the people were very poor. If the rule were made a rigid one, well and good; but if it was so left that the Minister might do as he liked, he thought the same preference would be shown as hitherto, and that they had a right to demand an equalisation of accounts before they agreed to the clause.

Mr. PALMER said he should be sorry to be the Minister for Education unless there was some such clause as that proposed inserted in the Bill. He did not, in fact, believe that a Minister would be able to live, unless he had some safeguard of that sort. Why, every man who had one child would be making an application for a school. He did not like the wording of the clause, and he disliked the reference to regulations; he should, therefore, move as an amendment—

That the words from "same" to "regulations" be omitted, and also that the words "nor more than one-half" be omitted.

If the clause was carried in that way it would take off all pressure from the Minister, who would no doubt be obliged to use his own judgment, but would be able to see that there was a *bonâ fide* necessity for a school. He knew what pressure would be brought to bear, and he had had more experience than the honorable member for the Bremer on the subject; he also believed that he would be supported by the members of the Board in what he said. In respect to the way in which Brisbane had been provided for, although it had had the lion's share, if the clause was passed in the way he proposed, he would say let bye-gones be bye-gones, as they would not be able to have another school without complying with the terms of the clause.

HONORABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL would suggest to the honorable member that the most convenient way of making his amendment would be to insert, instead of the word "such," the words "one-fourth."

Mr. PALMER was quite willing to make his amendment in accordance with the suggestion of the honorable member.

Mr. BUZACOTT said he had an amendment to propose, but he had no desire to raise any discussion upon it. It had struck him on reading the clause that it imposed a false test altogether, as he had found in his experience that it was very hard to collect subscriptions where there were a large number of children to be educated, and that where there were a small number, one could collect any amount he liked; he would, therefore, propose that after the word "expedient" the following words be inserted:—

"And the cost of erecting school buildings shall be chargeable to the consolidated revenue at a uniform amount per head for each child of school age certified by a Government inspector to be at the time living in the neighborhood of a proposed new school and not within convenient distance of any existing primary school Such uniform amount per head to be based upon the ordinary cost of a model school affording the required accommodation as prescribed by the regulations.'

He thought that the amendment would ensure, at all events, that if a school was erected in any locality, there would be enough children to attend it; whereas, if it depended upon subscriptions only, it was impossible to ensure that there would be a sufficient attendance. He thought that if the State was prepared to educate children free of cost, it should be prepared to provide schools entirely free of expense. If fees were not charged—and he was one who had advocated the continuance of them—he did not see why, if there were a sufficient number of children in any locality, the people should be called upon to subscribe one-fourth of the cost of erecting a school. It would be seen by his amendment that the erection of a school would not depend upon the people themselves, but upon the report of a Government inspector, employed for that purpose; but if the people of the locality were not satisfied with the kind of building that the Board, or rather the Minister, was willing to supply, and wanted a more handsome school-house, and one calculated to hold a much larger number of children, then they would have to subscribe the difference of cost. The amendment he proposed would do one thing—it would secure to all parts of the colony, where children were collected, a school-house as soon as it was required.

Mr. DOUGLAS thought it was of the utmost importance that they should accept the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton. The objection which had been urged by the honorable member for Port Curtis to the clause was not, in his opinion, sufficient, namely, that the future Minister for Education would be wearied of his life, in consequence of the demands made upon him. He did not suppose, however, that that Minister would be subjected to greater pressure in a matter of that sort than the Minister for Works was in the matter of roads and bridges

and he certainly ought to be the best judge of where a school was necessary. By the amendment of the honorable member for Port Curtis, that power would be relegated to the people themselves; and it was well known that there had been very unsuitable sites selected by persons who had found the money for the purpose of having a school erected, but not because it was required by the wants of the district. There was another most serious objection to the clause, namely, that it proposed to give effect to a system less liberal than the one in existence. At the present time, the specified minimum rate of private contributions had not been enforced, and, although he was not an advocate of the system which had been departed from, still the necessities of certain cases had been taken into consideration. If he recollected aright, the committee would find that not more than one-sixth of the amount expended on schools had been subscribed; and by agreeing to the clause, they would, therefore, be limiting the power of the Minister to establish schools, and they would be rendering it less probable that schools would be established in districts where they were most necessary—districts where the people themselves might be careless on the subject of education. There was another point of view, on which he intended to speak plainly, for he knew it would exist after the passing of the Bill. They had now fixed upon a date, after which aid to the Roman Catholic organization would cease. Even at the present time those people did not hold out encouragement to persons in districts to subscribe towards the erection of State schools; for he had known instances where they had, by their agents, used the utmost influence to discourage subscriptions—where they had, in fact, thrown cold water on any efforts made in that direction. Now, if the clause was passed, they would be assisting those people to spread their schools wherever they could, and knowing that, they should to some extent be in a state of antagonism to that system; but if they attempted to establish a system less liberal than the present one, they would, as he said, assist that organization to which they were opposed: and for those reasons, and because he thought that, as they had gone so far as to adopt free education by the State, they should go still farther, and accept the liability of choosing localities where schools should be erected, and should charge themselves with their erection. For those reasons he should cordially support the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton as the most vital principle in the Bill.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that unfortunately he should have to oppose the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton. He thought that the argument which had been used by the honorable member for Maryborough was one which should not have been used; and he certainly had been rather surprised to hear from him that they had something to fear from the antagonism of the Roman Catholic Church.

Mr. DOUGLAS: Certainly you have.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: After they had given free education, if the Protestants could not afford, or were not willing to contribute one-fourth towards the erection of schools, they did not deserve to have them. Unless the clause was passed, it would be impossible for any Minister to resist the applications that would be made to him. He could not understand what the honorable member meant by limiting the resources of the Minister—did the honorable member wish the Minister to have *carte blanche?*

Mr. DOUGLAS: Unquestionably.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Well, he did not know what they were coming to, after that.

Mr. DOUGLAS: With the consent of the House, of course.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That would not be *carte blanche.* If the House voted an amount for the erection of schools, of course that amount would be at the disposal of the Minister. Political supporters of the Minister might ask him to establish a school in a certain place; and, though it was all very well to say that he should set his face against it, they knew that pressure was brought to bear upon a Minister which it was impossible he could sometimes stand against. It was, therefore, necessary that he should have some safeguard; and unless there was some such safeguard as that proposed, he maintained that there would be two or three schools put up in a locality where there was really only necessity for one. He thought there should be some absolute rule laid down to which the Minister could refer persons applying to him, and say—"Well, show your *bona fides* that there is a necessity for a school, and your subscription list; and if they are according to the rule laid down, there will be no objection to your having a school."

Mr. DOUGLAS thought the arguments of the honorable member would not apply to free education at all. He contended that, having given free education, it was unwise if it was not applied in one of its most vital and essential points. If a Minister was not capable of performing the responsibilities entrusted to him, what was he worth to the House? If they adopted a system of local government, by which they insisted that every locality must contribute a proportion towards the erection of school buildings—if they adopted such a system in respect to schools, it ought to be extended to court houses, and gaols, and police; those were necessities involved by the law, and schools, he affirmed, were equally a necessity to be provided by the State. It was only on those grounds that the principle of free education could be justified, and having accepted that justification, they must give schools where

necessary. To say that that involved a dangerous system was to say that the whole system of government was a fallacy.

Mr. McIlwraith said he should like to see the clause omitted altogether, as it would not be a test of the necessity of a school in any locality, as poor localities where schools were most required would not be able or willing to get them under such a system. He had been astonished to hear his honorable friend, the member for Port Curtis, talk about the amount of pressure that would be brought to bear upon a Minister for Education by different localities; for what had been the pressure? It had not been to have schools built, but to have them built for nothing. If that difficulty was removed, there would be no pressure.

Mr. Macrossan said the honorable member for Maryborough seemed to have Roman Catholic on the brain, and had endeavored to try to persuade the committee that if the Government did not build schools at their own cost, Roman Catholics would come into competition with the State schools, which the honorable gentleman seemed to think would be a dreadful thing. He thought the honorable member should not be always talking about the Roman Catholics, because his arguments, if they could be so called, only tended to raise up feelings which did not at present exist. Why, the honorable member had only told him that very day that he had been trying to get subscriptions towards a school, and that the majority of them had been given by Roman Catholics. He had himself frequently given subscriptions towards vested schools. There was another thing, namely, that Roman Catholics had given free education in Queensland long before it was the law of the land, and he had a list by which it appeared that, in four years, a sum of upwards of £3,400 had been spent in and around Brisbane, in giving instruction to children whose parents could not afford to pay for it. But the so-called free education of the State, was not free education; for, by the Bill, it would be educating one portion of the community at the expense of another; as the Roman Catholics were liberal enough, not only to pay for the education of their own children, but also for those of others. He hoped that the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton would not be passed, as, if they did not make a stand somewhere, they would be soon in the same position as they were in Victoria, where there were school buildings in one locality quite deserted, whilst others were being put up close to them.

Mr. Thompson said the amendments of the honorable member for Port Curtis met his views as nearly as possible, as he had no hope of getting the proviso omitted altogether. He thought the only thing required was the absolute check proposed by the honorable member.

Mr. Groom said the difficulty referred to by the honorable member for the Bremer had occurred to his mind. He knew of localities on the Downs where the inhabitants were unable to raise the amount of contributions required by the Board. In one locality, which he knew well, the people, being desirous of having a school, had deposited £53 and £14 in the Savings Bank for that purpose. They were a number of struggling, hard-working farmers, who had been driven to an agricultural reserve which ought never to have been proclaimed an agricultural reserve, and the cost of clearing and preparing the land for cultivation was very considerable. They had raised the amount he had mentioned, and they could not possibly do more; and, in connection with this, he would like to ask, if the subscriptions were also to include a proportion of the cost of the teacher's residence? The amount contributed in this instance would, he believed, be sufficient to warrant the Board in building a school; but there would be nothing for the teacher's residence. In another locality—the Clifton Homestead Area, where they could muster about forty or fifty children—the people were struggling in the early initiation of their farms, and they were quite unable to subscribe sufficient for the erection of a school, so that their children were entirely deprived of the advantages of education. He believed State schools should be perfectly free; and he could not understand the observations of the honorable member for Kennedy with reference to the position of schools in Victoria; because Mr. Service, in his budget speech, stated that £600,000 was to be devoted to school buildings. In New South Wales, Mr. Parkes recently carried a resolution in the Parliament of that colony to the effect that contributions by subscribers should be abolished, and, in future, all schools would be built free by the Council of Education in that colony. In the new Education Act in South Australia, it was proposed that all schools should be free, and yet Queensland, the youngest colony, where there was a large number of struggling settlers, and where it was very necessary that no such restrictions should be placed on education, singled itself out to impose a condition of this kind. Under these circumstances, he would support the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton, although he should prefer to see the proviso eliminated from the Bill altogether.

Mr. Palmer objected to the amendment, because he considered it utterly unworkable. They would be completely lost in calculations, and any member of the Board would know that it was utterly impossible to carry it out. With respect to the amendment he should propose after this was negatived, as he hoped it would be, he did not want to insist upon one-fourth; and if the committee agreed to one-sixth, he would be quite satisfied. As long as there was a specific sum put down, he would be content; but he was certain it would be impossible to carry the system out

satisfactorily unless they fixed the sum so that the Minister could not get out of it. With regard to the cases mentioned by the honorable member for Toowoomba, of districts where the residents were unable to subscribe a sufficient amount for a school building and teacher's residence—without which the school was of no use—he supposed on the Darling Downs, the difficulty did not arise so much from the inability of the people to subscribe, as from the uncertainty of the amount required The liberty the Board had taken in the matter of contributions, in demanding one-third from some, less from others, and nothing at all from others, had induced people to hang back with regard to subscriptions, in consequence of the uncertainty. Where there was an actual inability to subscribe, it was met by the Bill, which provided for the establishment of provisional schools in such cases. He was sure the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton could not be worked, and he should vote against it.

Mr. STEWART said he had been prepared to support the abolition of local subscriptions altogether, but after what he had heard from Ministers and ex-Ministers, who understood the working of the Board, he could see that it was impossible to carry out the system with anything like fairness, unless some amount was required to be subscribed. He could not support the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton, because it was ambiguous, and could not be worked in any way; and he should support the amendment of the honorable member for Port Curtis.

Mr. BUZACOTT said, with the permission of the committee, he would withdraw his amendment; but before doing so, he might state that he remembered the honorable member for Port Curtis stating in the House that the Board of Education had found it utterly impossible to provide for the education of the children of Brisbane, unless the people put up schools at their own expense, and they would not subscribe. He thought, by his amendment, to meet that, because it appeared to him that if the people in Brisbane were unable to subscribe, those in the country ought not to be expected to do so.

Mr. PALMER said he had added, that if there had been a fixed system adopted by the Board, it would have been a very different matter.

Mr. FRASER said, as the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton was to be withdrawn, it was unnecessary to make any observations upon it; and the only point that remained was the proposal of the honorable member for Port Curtis. He admitted it was very desirable that a contribution should be obtained from almost every locality, and especially from those at a distance, if only as a test of *bona fides;* but however desirable it might be to get subscriptions, they should look at the plain facts of the question, which resolved themselves into this:—They had taken in hand the education of the rising generation, and it now became a question, were they to put an embargo upon the progress of education? He need only refer to facts to prove that, if they insisted upon one-fourth, it would, in many instances, be tantamount to denying the privilege of education entirely. It was true, as the honorable member for Port Curtis knew, that the Board of Education had been lax in enforcing the regulation on that point, but recently, they had insisted more stringently upon it, and the result had been that, in several cases, such as those mentioned by the honorable member for Toowoomba, where the inhabitants of the locality had been unable to subscribe a sufficient amount, they were deprived of the advantages of education. The honorable member referred to several instances of the kind which had come under his notice, and said, that while he was in favor of local subscriptions, he would suggest to the honorable member for Port Curtis to reduce the amount to one-sixth or one-eighth. Let it be a sum that could reasonably be expected from any locality, however poor.

Mr. EDMONDSTONE thought the amount might be reasonably fixed at one-sixth, which he believed could be obtained in every district. He was afraid, if they made it larger, they would limit the number of schools actually required.

Mr. BAILEY was of the same opinion; and pointed out that in country places, in many instances, provisional schools would be preferable to primary schools, because the people would then be able to use the building for religious worship, which would not be the case if they were primary schools. He was more in favor of provisional schools, in the country districts, than primary schools, and he should support the next clause with great pleasure.

Mr. DICKSON thought it would be well to place this matter on a broad basis, and, in that light, he was doubtful whether it would not be wiser to do away with the proviso altogether. A reduction to one-sixth might meet the difficulty to some extent, but, at the same time, he considered it was virtually interfering with the principle of free education. He pointed out that many practical inconveniences arose from the present system, which acted oppressively upon poor localities; and stated, that, taking all the circumstances into consideration, he was inclined to vote against the proviso.

Mr. J. SCOTT supported a reduction to one-fifth or one-sixth, because he believed, if it were larger, the poorer localities would be deprived of the advantages of education.

Mr. PALMER had no objection to make it one-sixth or one-fifth, which, he thought, would be a fair thing.

Mr. WALSH pointed out that the vested school system was drying up people's hearts, and they would not subscribe for the erection of schools, while the contrary was the case with regard to the non-vested schools. He trusted the Government would insist upon a fair pro-

portion, say one-fifth, being contributed by the locality requiring a school.

Mr. DOUGLAS said, if the amendment of the honorable member for Rockhampton were withdrawn, he should take a division on the omission of the proviso altogether. He looked upon it as a retrograde movement, and thought it was desirable to have an expression of opinion upon it.

Mr. Buzacott's amendment having been withdrawn,—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved, as an amendment, that after the word "expedient," in the second line of the clause, the words "by the Governor in Council" be added.

Agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL suggested to the honorable member for Maryborough that he should move the omission of the word "provided;" because, if he moved the omission of the whole proviso, and the committee decided against the amendment, no further amendment could be made.

Mr. DOUGLAS then moved, that the word "provided," in the 36th line, be omitted.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the question,—put.

The committee divided:—

AYES, 17.

Messrs. Palmer, Macalister, Griffith, King, Thompson, Hemmant, Bailey, Miles, Foote, Beattie, Amhurst, Macrossan, J. Scott, Fraser, Stewart, Kingsford, and Fryar.

NOES, 7.

Messrs. Groom, Low, McIlwraith, Douglas, Dickson, Buzacott, and J. Thorn.

Mr. PALMER moved, that the word "such," in the 38th line, be omitted, with the view of inserting "one-fifth."

Amendment agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved further amendments, which were agreed to without discussion, and the clause, as amended, was put and passed, as follows:—

"Primary schools shall be established in such places as shall from time to time be deemed expedient by the Governor in Council Provided that before the establishment of a primary school in a new locality one-fifth part of the estimated cost of erecting or purchasing the necessary school buildings shall be raised by subscription or donation and paid to the Minister to be applied by him towards such erection or purchase."

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the Chairman left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.