

MR. RANDELL moved, That after "wine, per gallon, 4s." the words "wine, sparkling, 6s.," be inserted.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL thought this would entail a great deal of trouble upon the Custom House officers, without resulting in any corresponding advantage.

Motion negatived on the voices.

Item: "Salt:"

MR. PEARSE suggested that the duty on salt be removed, or, at any rate, reduced. It was altogether excessive at present, being fifty per cent. on the prime cost of the article.

The suggestion elicited no remark, and the first schedule was agreed to as amended.

Second Schedule—Goods Free of Duty:

Item: "Alkali, Crystal:"

MR. RANDELL moved, That "crystal" be struck out.

Agreed to.

Item: "Flour, bran, and pollard:"

MR. MARMION moved, That "meal" be added to this item.

Agreed to.

Item: "Machinery for Agricultural purposes, &c.:"

MR. MARMION moved, That "chaff-cutters and corn-crushers" be added. They were not exactly machinery for agricultural purposes, strictly speaking, but he thought they should be included in this list.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL thought they would come under the denomination of "machinery for agricultural purposes."

MR. RANDELL: Corn-cutters, at any rate, are not considered so, by the Customs authorities at present; nor do I see why they should be imported duty free, although they are used for other purposes than agriculture.

Motion negatived, on a division. [*Vide* "Votes and Proceedings p. 81.]

Item: "Sails, ready-made:"

MR. MARMION moved, That the item be struck out.

Motion affirmed, on the voices.

Item: "Sheep and Bullock Tongues, in tins:"

MR. RANDELL moved, That this item be struck out.

Motion negatived, without a division.

Item: "Sewing Machines:"

MR. SHENTON moved, That "sewing machines" be added to the schedule.

Motion negatived, on the voices.

Second schedule, as amended, agreed to; as also third schedule without discussion or amendment.

Bill reported.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

*Wednesday, 30th August, 1876.*

High School Bill: second reading—Municipal Institutions' Bill: in committee (resumed).

### THE HIGH SCHOOL BILL, 1876.

#### SECOND READING.

THE ACTING COLONIAL SECRETARY, in moving the second reading of a Bill to provide for the higher education of boys, said it would be in the recollection of hon. members that a measure somewhat similar in character had been introduced last session, and that such Bill passed through its various stages in the House, and was reserved by His Excellency the Governor for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure thereon. A despatch from Her Majesty's Secretary of State had been laid upon the table, from which hon. members would have observed that although his lordship considered the Bill of last session open to objection on certain grounds, and that for that reason he had advised Her Majesty to disallow it, still, his lordship added, if another measure, framed on somewhat similar principles, but having the same laudable object in view, were passed by the Legislature, he would be prepared to advise the Queen to assent to it. The noble lord approved of the fundamental principle of the Bill of last session, which, hon. members would recollect, provided that the education to be given in the proposed High School should be of an exclusively secular character, and his lordship did not refrain from expressing the satisfaction with which he had noticed this very

praiseworthy movement in favor of providing public education of a higher class. His lordship's main objections to the Bill passed last session were, that it imposed upon the Government a responsibility for an undefined amount of expenditure in connection with the proposed school, and, further, that by placing the institution directly under Government management and control, it made the Government not only responsible for the quality of the secular education given, but liable to be called to account in that House and elsewhere upon the allegation of any religious grievance. These were the special objections which the Secretary of State urged against the Bill, and, in a measure now before the House, it was proposed to remove those objections. The noble lord went further, and recommended that any new bill which should be introduced for the purpose of providing public education of a higher class, should be based on the principles of the Queensland "Grammar School Act," which had worked successfully in that Colony, and which his lordship thought might, therefore, not unreasonably be accepted here as a guide in this class of legislation. The Bill now before the House followed the principle of the Queensland Act as closely as local circumstances would permit. Hon. members would observe that, in accordance with the suggestion of the Secretary of State—and the House would no doubt recognise the advisability of adopting the suggestion—it was proposed that the management and control of the school should not be exclusively in the hands of the Government, but that the responsibility should be shared by the Legislature, or, in other words, by the public through their representatives in that House. He trusted this would meet with general approval. The Government had further followed out the recommendation of Her Majesty's Secretary of State by introducing into the Bill a clause providing that the public expenditure in the proposed school should be limited to a certain defined amount—another very wholesome provision. It was contemplated that when the corporate body to whom it was proposed to delegate the management of the school—four of whom were to be nominated and appointed by the Governor and three by the Legislature—reported to His Excellency that

they had secured possession of a suitable building and premises for the purpose, and that they would be ready, from a day to be named by them, or from the day of their obtaining a head master, to open the school, and to give thereat an exclusively secular education at a cost not to exceed £9 a year for each pupil; when these conditions were fulfilled, then the Bill provided that the Governor-in-Council should direct to be paid to the board of management, for the purposes of the school, a sum not exceeding £700 (out of the general revenue of the Colony) for the first year, £600 for the second year, and £500 for the third year, from the day of the actual opening of the school. From and after the expiration of three years, it was provided that the sum to be paid to the governors of the school should be a sum equal to double the school fees received by them in any year—provided always that such sum did not exceed £500 in any year. He thought this provision, for basing the subsidy to be granted to the school upon the amount of the school fees earned, a very wholesome provision, inasmuch as it gave the teachers a direct interest in rendering the school a success. It was, in fact, extending to the high school a very incitive principle in operation in connection with our elementary system of education. These were the most prominent features of the Bill before the House, and he trusted that they were such as would meet with the approval of the hon. members, and that the measure in its present shape would be received with even more favorable consideration than had the Bill of last session. No one could doubt the necessity there existed for the introduction of such a measure; there was a feeling, he believed, abroad, that it would be productive of many advantages to the Colony that there should be within the reach, and within the means, of the rising generation, a superior class of education to that available at the existing scholastic establishments, so as to enable them to take up that position in the future which would not only be productive of benefit to themselves but redound to the credit and to the advantage of the Colony at large. For this reason, he had much pleasure in moving that the Bill before the House should now be read a second time.

MR. CROWTHER said he had felt it his duty to oppose the Bill introduced last session to provide for the higher education of boys, and he was now more convinced than ever that this movement was not—to use an expression which hon. members may have heard before—a step in the right direction. The House, it appeared to him, was now legislating for a class, and for a class which ought to be able to get on without any such a movement being started in its behalf. The great mass of the people of this Colony, and particularly in the rural districts, were now deprived of the elementary rudiments of education, consequent upon the inadequacy of the aid from public funds extended to the majority of teachers. Now he thought that the laws of every country ought first to be made to meet the requirements of the masses; when that were done, and if the public resources admitted of it, then the Legislature might possibly be justified in turning its attention to the requirements of particular sections, or classes, of the community. Had the Government, in framing this measure, adopted the suggestions embodied in Lord Carnarvon's despatch, and based it on the principles of the Queensland Act referred to in his lordship's communication, he (Mr. Crowther) would have been inclined to give his adhesion to the Bill. But the measure now before the House was a mere skeleton of the Queensland Act, and could not be said to follow it in any shape or form. He had that very day been in conversation with a gentleman thoroughly conversant with the Grammar School Act in operation in Queensland, and from him he learnt that according to the provisions of that Act it is rendered incumbent upon the people of the Colony themselves—in order to entitle them to any grant-in-aid from the Government—to subscribe £2,000, and to invest it in the necessary school-buildings, masters' residences, and school appliances. Then the Government very properly came forward to subsidize the private enterprise—on the good old principle of helping those who were prepared to help themselves. When the promoters of the school further guaranteed salaries to the extent of £500 annually, for the first three years, the Government then made them a grant, he believed, of £1,000 a year to supple-

ment the amount raised by private liberality; or, if the public guaranteed £250 per annum in the shape of fees, for the stipends of teachers, the Treasury gave double the amount so subscribed. Provision, however, was made that upon the amount guaranteed by the public, as well as on the amount of the Government subsidy, ten per cent. should be reserved, and devoted to the foundation of scholarships in connection with each school so established. Now, however applicable such a system might be to a Colony like Queensland, and however commendable the principle upon which it was based, it was a very different thing when sought to be introduced in a struggling Colony like this. Queensland, with its fine resources, its ever increasing wealth, calculating its population by hundreds of thousands, and its imports and exports by millions, had pre-eminently distinguished itself in the work of public instruction, even beyond any other colony of the group. Had this Colony possessed the same resources, were our population as numerous, and were our material prosperity equal to Queensland, then, indeed, might there be some reason for the introduction of the Bill before the House. The maximum fee payable in respect of every pupil attending the proposed school was fixed at £9, so that, if twenty scholars—which he apprehended was a fair estimate of the probable number of pupils who would avail themselves of such a school—attended, the income from school fees would be £180 a year. Now at the end of three years it was proposed that the Government grant should be at the rate of double the school fees, and that being the case it did not require any great power of prevision to see what would be the result. Possibly, with the view of increasing the number of scholars, it might be deemed advisable to reduce the annual school fee to £4, and he would like to know what sort of “higher education” could be produced at that rate. Would the attainments of the youth attending such a school be any higher when they left it than were the attainments of many a youth who had received his education at the schools now existing in the Colony? He believed not. His principal objection to this scheme was based on the simple and the undeniable fact that the Colony could not

afford it; and he thought it would have been prudent for the Government, and he thought it would be prudent for that House, to wait until the Estimates came under consideration, before committing themselves to spending any money upon any visionary schemes of this character. If, after going into committee upon ways and means, it were found that there was any surplus available for educational purposes, then, in his opinion, such surplus might be more advantageously expended in ameliorating the status of country teachers, and in disseminating the rudimentary elements of education among the great mass of the people, rather than in a fancy project of this kind. The Bill made no provision for the management of the proposed school; that was left entirely in the hands of a corporate body, who would be empowered to make by-laws for the regulation of their own proceedings, and for determining the course of studies to be pursued. The House was left in utter ignorance of the proposed curriculum, and the only limit placed upon the powers of the governors of the schools in this respect was that the principle of the education to be given shall be exclusively secular. The Bill was one which, like many involving a large expenditure of public money, should have been placed in the hands of honorable members some time before they were asked to affirm the principle involved. For these and other reasons he would move, as an amendment upon the motion for the second reading, that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

MR. MARMION rose, with much pleasure, to second the amendment. He said he seconded it with pleasure; but it was a pleasure tinged with regret that the question of higher education had been renewed, in the face of the course adopted by the Home authorities towards a previous measure of a similar character to the one now before the House. The present Bill, it was true, did somewhat resemble the Bill of last session, but the framers had removed some of the drapey which had been thrown around the previous Bill to conceal its native deformity. He could only characterise it, as he had characterised its predecessor, as an attempt to perpetuate what he trusted the House would excuse him in calling by its

right name—a job. This High School had never been sought for by the public at large; there had been no general demand for a higher education. The idea was simply an emanation from the brain of His Excellency the Governor, and some two or three gentlemen in Perth. There had been no agitation outside for such a measure, either on the part of the public or the Press; indeed the movement had been strenuously opposed by the united Press of the Colony. He therefore failed to see what reason there could exist for reintroducing the Bill, especially after the rebuff which the previous proposal had received at the hands of the Secretary of State. Had an opportunity been afforded the country to express an opinion as to the necessity or expediency of this movement, the people at large would soon have lifted up their voices to show the noble lord and to show the Government that the effort to establish a high school in this Colony, at public expense, was premature and uncalled for. He could only think that the Government in reopening the question had made a mistake, calculated as it was to create discussion, ill-feeling, and agitation among a community where such dissensions were very injurious. A large section of the community, it must have been known to the Government, felt that they could not conscientiously avail themselves of the kind of education proposed to be imparted at this school, but who, nevertheless, would have to contribute towards its support. His impression was that the object in view was simply—by means of a Government subsidy—to prop up an existing private institution, which, he assumed, had failed to carry out what was the original intention of its promoters, namely, the establishment of a high-class school. Let hon. members look at the Bill before the House; what was there in it? It was a mere skeleton, a mere framework of bone, brought there for the House to add flesh and muscle, and to instil it with vitality, or else leave the whole affair entirely in the hands of those gentlemen who were to be entrusted with public funds to carry out the scheme, in accordance with their own sweet will. As the hon. member for Greenough had said, and as he himself had intended to have pointed out, the Bill bore no similarity whatever to the Queensland Act. It was all very well for

the hon. gentleman who introduced the Bill to say that it followed the principle of the Queensland Act as closely as local circumstances permitted; but even in this respect he did not think such a statement was correct or well-founded, although possibly the hon. gentleman himself may have thought so. He regarded the movement as a mere attempt to subsidise a day-school, for the special benefit of some half a dozen parents resident in Perth and its vicinity; it could not possibly be of general benefit to the colonists at large. The proposed institution would possess none of the features of a collegiate establishment, where children from the country could be accommodated as boarders. The school, in fact, was intended merely for the benefit of a few gentlemen who possibly were too proud to send their children to the existing scholastic institutions, but who, at the same time, were not too proud, but, rather too happy, to send them to an establishment maintained by the taxes wrung out of the pockets of the poorer classes of the community. How many children were likely to avail themselves of this school? Say, thirty. Supposing, then, the maximum school fee was charged—namely, £9 per annum for each pupil—what then? Why, the public of this Colony would be called upon to pay towards the education of these thirty children, the offspring of probably not more than twenty or twenty-five families, about £20 per head. This he regarded as a crying shame; it was scandalous that a poor struggling Colony like this should be taxed to this extent in order to afford a higher education to the “curled darlings” of a few parents who were too niggardly to provide their children with such education. The Bill would receive his strenuous opposition.

MR. PADBURY said no one would be gladder than himself to see a school of this character established, still he felt bound to vote against the second reading of the Bill, on principle. It was well known by hon. members that their good old bishop, Dr. Hale, tried such a school to his utmost, and at one time he (Mr. Padbury) had been one of the governors of the Bishop's School. Everything that could be done was done to ensure the success of that institution, and some few parents took advantage of it. But for

some considerable time it was supported—not by the Government out of public funds, but mainly out of the pockets of the directors or governors, until at last the Bishop would not allow them to support it out of their own private means any longer, and, with characteristic liberality, his lordship defrayed the expenses out of his own pocket. He believed that Bishop Hale had stated that the failure of this school had been one of the causes which had driven him out of the Colony. He did not think that, were the school now proposed to be established started to-morrow, one half the parents who desire to give their children superior education would avail themselves of it: but would continue, as they have done hitherto, and as they do now, to send them to the other colonies, or elsewhere, for their educational training. It was not alone because they got a higher education there than here, but also that children there might have an opportunity of seeing the world. In his opinion, were this High School started, it would prove a failure, as had the kindred institution established by Bishop Hale, to render which a success every effort was made by that excellent man. Was not the Rev. Mr. Sweeting a good teacher?—were not Mr. Tayler and Mr. Hare good teachers? The school did not languish for want of capable teachers; it failed because parents would not support it. And the same would occur again, with regard to this school. Moreover, he objected to the proposed school on the ground that the education proposed to be given was to be exclusively of a secular character. If they wanted to establish a high school let it be a denominational school, where children should be trained in religion as well as taught reading and writing. The world yet would have to go back to denominational education. A high school of that character he would willingly help to support out of his own pocket, were it established. But to take away from the money extracted from the taxpayers of the Colony to support such a school as that contemplated in the Bill before the House, was what he would always protest against, so long as there were scores of what he might call “gutter” children who were not receiving any education at all. He fully endorsed what had been said by the hon. member for Greenough

on this point. If it were found possible, when they came to consider the Estimates, to screw out any more money for the purpose of public education, let it be expended upon those who could not afford to pay for it themselves. He questioned if the Colony were not spending too much money in this direction now; there were scores of parents who sent their children to the public schools who could well afford to pay for their instruction, without any assistance from the State.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL, notwithstanding what had fallen from the hon. members who had supported the amendment, would vote for the motion for the second reading of the Bill, in the hope that in its passage through committee such alterations might be made in it as would render it more suitable to our necessities. As the hon. member for Fremantle had said, the Bill was a mere skeleton; it did not provide for the establishment of a high-school so much as for the appointment of a governing body. The House was altogether in the dark as to what sort of school it was proposed to establish by that body; all that was required of the Council was to assist in appointing these gentlemen, and voting them the necessary funds to carry out the project. That, the hon. baronet considered, would be a most unsatisfactory state of things—a state of things in which he could not acquiesce at all. But, as he had said, he would vote for the second reading in the hope that the Bill might be afterwards licked into shape. On the motion for going into committee upon it, he thought he would be inclined to vote, as an amendment, that the Bill should be first of all referred to a select committee. He could scarcely understand how it could be argued that the Bill savoured of class legislation, nor could he understand the state of mind of those who did not consider higher education essential in a Colony like this, and who attached no importance to the training of the higher faculties. Talk about a poor Colony, a rudimental Colony, why that was the very reason why the Government should come forward and undertake to provide education of a high standard for those who could not otherwise afford such a boon to their children. As to those parents who were in the position to send

their children out of the Colony to be educated, they were very few and far between; but there was a large number of parents who while unable to bear the expenses of so providing for the education of their children were yet most anxious to secure for them, at a cost within their means, a higher class of education than is now available for them in this Colony. As to the alleged failure of the Bishop's School, there were many reasons why that institution should not have succeeded, none more so perhaps than that it was a purely denominational school, intended for the Church of England, and for that reason a large number of parents scrupled sending their children there. That it had effected much good, none would deny; that it had not proved an unqualified success was not to be wondered at. With reference to the Queensland Act, it might suit a rich Colony like Queensland very well, but he did not think it would be possible to establish a high school in this Colony on the same principles. On the understanding, however, that the Bill did not pass into law in its present shape—and the hon. baronet thought there was no fear of that—he intended to vote for the second reading.

MR. SHENTON expressed his intention of doing the same. He did not think the Bill in its present shape reflected much credit upon its draftsman, but no doubt, with the combined assistance of the collective wisdom of the House, it might be so improved as to render it more suitable to the requirements of the Colony. There were other provisions which ought to be in the Bill, besides those it now embodied. He thought, in the first place, that it should be provided that the governors of the proposed school be nominated from among members of different religious denominations likely to avail themselves of the institution; also that the head master should be a layman. Provision should also be made, as in the Queensland Act, for founding scholarships in connection with the school. As to the school fees proposed to be charged, he believed that the maximum was too low altogether; and that, instead of £9, it should not be less than £12 for a single scholar; but, where more than one child in a family attended, a reduction might be made. In his opinion there

should be a different scale of fees payable for country and town scholars, respectively. Another very necessary provision which, in his opinion, ought to be embodied in the Bill, was that the by-laws framed by the governors of the school should be laid on the table of that House.

MR. STEERE intended to support the Bill. Hon. members were well aware that when, in his opinion, the Government were deserving of censure, he did not hesitate casting censure upon them; on the other hand, when they deserved commendation, he was equally ready to accord them their meed of praise. So far as regarded this particular Bill, so far from any blame attaching to the Government in the matter, he thought they deserved every credit for introducing such a measure. The hon. member for Fremantle had stated that such a measure had not been demanded by the public, or by the press of the Colony. As to the Press, he acknowledged that the movement had met with no support from that quarter; but he believed that in many cases the Press in this Colony did not express public opinion. As to the public not having demanded such a measure, he had received numerous letters from country and other settlers expressing a hope that he would support the Bill. He dared say other hon. members had also received similar communications—from the respectable portion of their constituents, at any rate. He had stated it before, and he would say it again, that the measure was more of a poor man's Bill than a rich man's Bill. He considered that the section of the community who would derive most benefit from it would be the children of parents of the middle-class of society, who, while anxious that their boys should receive a higher education than is now available for them in the Colony, cannot afford to send them out of the Colony for that education. The existing elementary schools were very useful institutions so far as they went, but it must be admitted that they did not afford that class of education which many parents were desirous their children should receive—parents animated by a praiseworthy ambition that their offspring should be able to raise themselves to a higher position than their parents had been

enabled to do, both socially and intellectually. As bearing upon this point, he had been particularly struck by a passage in a paragraph contained in the report of the Central Board of Education relating to pupil teachers. The Board attributed the non-success of the pupil-teacher system to the fact that the candidates who qualified themselves for the office of country teachers have no intention whatever of pursuing the profession of teaching, but merely made use of their positions as stepping-stones to more lucrative offices in other departments of the Government service, or in connection with mercantile firms; thus showing the necessity felt for acquirements other than those which fall to the lot of pupils who merely receive the ordinary school teaching. As to the proposed high school, he had been only afraid, when he read Lord Carnarvon's despatch, that the Government would have brought in a bill closely following the provisions of the Queensland Act, and, that for that very reason, it would have been a failure. The hon. member for Fremantle had said that the proposed school would only benefit a few boys in Perth, and would be of no use to country lads, who would never avail themselves of the institution. The hon. member, when he said that, could not have made much inquiry as to the class of boys who attend the so-called "Bishop's School," or he would have found that more than one-half of the pupils are from the country. [MR. MARMION: How many are there altogether attending the school?] There were about twenty scholars attending the school at present, and at least ten of these were country lads. He did not mean to say that the Bill was likely to pass in its present shape; he thought it required amending. But he did not consider it would be wise to embody in it all the rules and regulations which should guide the governors in the management of the school. The great drawback of introducing such details into a Bill of this character would be that, when any alteration in the rules or regulations was deemed necessary or expedient, the alteration could not be effected without having resort to legislation. He trusted the majority of hon. members would support the motion for the second reading of the Bill.

MR. RANDELL said it was well known to hon. members on which side his vote should go with regard to this measure, and if he had a hundred votes they should go in favor of the motion for the second reading. In his opinion this movement in the direction of establishing a high school was a progressive movement, and one calculated to be of great benefit to the Colony, not only within its own bounds, but outside its limits. It would be an inducement to intending settlers to make the Colony their adopted home, when they found that they could obtain for their children facilities for education of a higher order than the merely elementary instruction imparted in the existing schools. It was to be expected that the hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Marmion) would have made a dead set, as on a former occasion, against the Bill; it was very well known that it was a measure which did not suit his purpose, nor that of the religious denomination to which he belonged, or at any rate the leaders of that denomination in this city. Their object was to get the educational training of the young into their own hands, and that was the real secret of their opposition to the Bill. This effort to secure for themselves the whole control of the education of the rising generation was not peculiar to the Roman Catholic priesthood of this Colony; it was the universal practice among that body, and it behoved the members of other denominations to set their face against this sort of priestly aggression. He did not think that denominational education should have existence either in their hands, or in the hands of any other religious body. He considered it the obvious duty, as it was the true policy, of the State to provide facilities for the education of the young. The progress of events slowly but surely tended in that direction in all the neighboring colonies, as well as in the mother country, and the same principle—that of exclusively secular education—had been approved by the Secretary of State in his lordship's despatch relating to the very Bill before the House. In all the sister colonies the State regarded it an imperative duty to assist in providing facilities for education of a higher order than the elementary standard taught at the primary schools. In South Australia, wherever forty

children could be gathered together, the Government of that colony were willing—and were in the habit of doing so—to establish what were designated “advanced schools,” where, upon payment of £8 per annum, children were not merely placed in possession, so to speak, of the keys of knowledge, but enabled to attain a higher standard of intellectual culture, such as was contemplated in the measure before the House. We, in this Colony, had no doubt done well to lay the foundations of a national system of primary schools, and it did appear to him we should do well to widen those foundations. This end could not be more properly attained than by means of State interference and State aid. This principle was in operation in the mother country. The Universities were national property, and were subsidised by the State, thus affording an opportunity for the sons of parents of moderate means, such as clergymen, whose stipends in many cases did not exceed £100, to obtain a collegiate training, which without this assistance from the State they could not avail themselves of. It appeared to him that the object of the Government of this Colony—and a very laudable object it was—in introducing the measure before the House, was of the same character. There were many parents here, such as civil servants in receipt of salaries of £150, or £200, or £300, who could not afford to send their children to be educated out of the Colony, and had therefore, perforce, to put up with the class of education which their sons could obtain at existing schools. Then, as to those parents who could afford to send their children to the other colonies to be educated, and who did so simply because the class of education they were desirous their children should obtain was not available for them here, he thought it was sound policy on the part of the Government to do away with the necessity of parents having to send their sons abroad, to be educated. If only on economic grounds this necessity should be obviated, for a good deal of money would thus be saved to the Colony. It afforded him much pleasure to support the principle of the Bill before the House; but he did not pledge himself to its details. He thought that in this respect it required amending, as the hon. member for Toodyay had suggested. When the Bill

came to be considered in committee, he trusted it might be rendered a practical and useful measure, and that, once the proposed school were established, it would be supported and patronised by country parents as well as the residents of Perth. There was a large number of parents who were in a position to enable their children to avail themselves of the benefits of such a school, and who, he had no doubt, would only be too glad to do so.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL was glad to find that the Bill was likely to be read a second time; nevertheless, he had been very sorry to hear one or two of the arguments urged against it. Some hon. members seemed to think that the existing primary schools answered all the purposes of education in a Colony like this, and that there was no necessity for providing facilities for attaining a higher standard of intellectual culture. This, it appeared to him, was a most mistaken notion. In the present stage of the world's history, the community that did not keep itself fairly abreast of the intellectual progress of the times, could not think of holding its own in the general competition. In affirming that primary schools should be scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land, the State had acknowledged a pressing obligation, and this proposal to set up a system of efficient secondary education, supported partly by public funds, and partly by the moderate payments of those who took advantage of it, was but another step towards the fulfilment of that obligation. One of the most praiseworthy features in connection with the other Australian colonies was the great stress and importance laid upon this question of higher education, which, in time, would undoubtedly bear fruit. Melbourne and Sydney boasted, and he believed justly boasted, of Universities that would compare favorably with those of Oxford and Cambridge, and each of the other colonies fully recognised the soundness of the policy of providing every possible facility for education of a higher order than was available at the primary or elementary schools. In this Colony, in its present rudimental state, the idea of a University was, of course, out of the question; but, when they found that there were absolutely no means in the Colony whereby a higher standard of intellectual culture than that to be

attained at the elementary schools could be reached by our colonial youth, he did think that the movement contemplated by the Government was a most desirable step. It had been said that a previous attempt to establish such a school by private enterprise had proved to a certain extent a failure; but surely that was no reason why they should sit down contentedly, fold their hands, and make no further effort in the matter. That, certainly, was anything but a progressive or go-ahead policy, and it appeared to him a very absurd argument to urge against the adoption of the Bill under consideration. The House, last session, affirmed the principle involved, and passed a Bill of a similar character, which, for certain reasons, the Secretary of State had advised Her Majesty to disallow. One of the reasons urged by the noble lord for adopting this course towards the measure was, that it cast upon the Government the responsibility for an undefined amount of expenditure in connection with the proposed school. With all due respect for the Secretary of State, he (the Attorney General) could not help thinking that this was somewhat of a delusion on the part of the noble lord; he could not see that the Bill in question did cast any such responsibility upon the Government. The second objection was a more substantial one, namely, that, by placing the school directly under Government management and control, it made the Government not only responsible for the quality of the secular education given, but liable to be called to account upon the allegation of any legal grievances. These two objections it was proposed in the Bill before the House to steer clear of. Hon. members had objected to the Bill because it was a mere skeleton. So far, he admitted it was. It did not purport to establish a school, but rather to confer powers, under certain conditions, upon a corporate body to do so. The Bill did not pretend to go so far as to lay down the rules and regulations under which the school should be carried on. It was not intended to legislate that the boys attending it should get up at eight o'clock, and should have their faces washed and their hair combed before coming down to breakfast. The object of the Bill was to appoint a governing body, who should

manage the institution, and see that the public funds voted for its support were properly expended. All the great public schools in England, such as Eton, and Rugby, and Harrow, were managed in the same way, by a board of governors. True, those schools were not subsidised by the State, but they had large private incomes at their disposal, and the governing body was not fettered at all by Act of Parliament in the control of the schools. This was just what was proposed to do here. That House, after all, would have an indirect control over the proposed institution, for it voted the funds for its support, and should it be found that the school was mismanaged there would no doubt be such an outcry against the governing body that the Act would probably have to be repealed, or, at any rate, the system of management altered. After all, it was not in contemplation to grant the school any fixed subsidy after the first three years of its existence; it would then have to shift for itself. It was an experiment. With respect to the suggestion that the rules and regulations of the school, as framed by the governors, should be laid on the table of the House, he thought it was a very good suggestion, and, had he thought of it, he would have embodied such a provision in the Bill. This, however, might be done in committee.

The amendment—"That the Bill be read a second time that day six months"—was then put, and negatived on a division, by a majority of five.

Bill read a second time.

#### MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS' BILL.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

Schedules A, B, C, D, F, and G agreed to; also Schedules H and I; without discussion.

Progress reported, and leave obtained to sit again on Thursday, the 31st August.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

*Thursday, 31st August, 1876.*

The business transacted was of a formal character, the orders of the day being postponed. (*Vide* "Votes and Proceedings," p. 87).

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

*Friday, 1st September, 1876.*

Proxy Voting—Financial Statement—Punishment of Masters of Vessels for taking certain Passengers Bill: second reading—Land Regulations: Report of Select Committee; motion for adoption of Municipal Institutions' Bill: re-committed.

#### PROXY VOTING.

Mr. RANDELL moved, That an address be presented to His Excellency, praying him to introduce, at the next session of the Council, a Bill to limit proxy voting for members to serve in the Legislative Council to voters residing more than fifteen miles from a polling place, and to such persons who produce a medical certificate of their inability to attend such polling place through sickness or infirmity. Two candidates, the hon. member said, were not equally weighted, under present circumstances, in running the race for legislative honors, and there was a very general feeling adverse to the continuance of the system of proxy-voting, under which a voter living only a stone's throw from a polling place gave his vote by proxy to the candidate calling upon him, instead of attending personally to record his vote. The system was liable to great abuse, and in many cases operated very unfairly towards candidates. He was not at all pledged to the distance of fifteen miles, mentioned in the motion before the House, but he thought there should be some limit fixed. He would have asked the Government to have introduced the system of ballot-voting, but he thought that if the existing system, as it was