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CHAPTER XI.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

Primary Education: Board of National Education; Education Act of 1860; Board of General Education; Education Act of 1875; Department of Public Instruction; Higher Education in Primary Schools; Itinerant Teachers; Status of Teachers; Statistics.—Private Schools.—Secondary Education: Grammar Schools Act; Endowments, Scholarships, and Bursaries; Success of Grammar Schools; Exhibitions to Universities; Expenditure.—Technical Education: Beginning of System; Board of Technical Instruction; Transfer of Control to Department of Public Instruction; Statistics; Technical Instruction Act; Continuation Classes; Schools of Arts and Reading Rooms.—University: Royal Commissions; University Bill; Standardised System of Education.

FROM 10th December, 1859, the date of the founding of Queensland, to 30th September, 1860, primary education was under the control of a Board of National Education appointed by the Governor in Council. That board consisted of Sir Charles Nicholson (chairman), Messrs. R. R. Mackenzie, William Thornton, George Raff, and D. R. Somerset; the secretary was William Henry Day. There were then only two national schools in the whole of Queensland—namely, one in Drayton and one in Warwick. The system of primary education obtaining in New South Wales was continued, but the subject of education was one of the earliest matters which received the consideration of the first Parliament of Queensland, and in 1860 an Act to provide for primary education was passed. The Bill was initiated in the Legislative Council by Captain O'Connell, and Mr. R. G. W. Herbert had charge of the measure in the Legislative Assembly. The object of the Bill was to provide primary education under one general and comprehensive system, and to afford facilities to persons of all denominations for the education of their children in the same school without prejudice to their religious beliefs.

PRIMARY EDUCATION.

The Act provided for the appointment of a Board of General Education to consist of five members, together with a Minister of the Crown who would, ex officio, act as chairman. The members of the first Board were:—Mr. R. R. Mackenzie (chairman), Dr. W. Hobbs (vice-chairman), and Messrs. W. H. Day, J. F. McDougall, W. J. Munce, and George Raff.

The scheme of primary education which the board framed was based generally upon the national system in operation in Ireland. Schools were divided into two classes—vested and non-vested. The vested schools were unsectarian in character. The aid granted by the board towards the establishment, equipment, and up-keep of schools varied from time to time, and ranged from one-half to two-thirds. The board appointed the teachers. The salaries of teachers were supplemented by school fees, ranging from 3d. to 1s. 6d. per week for each scholar according to his standard in the school work. When the board took office there were 10 teachers, 493 pupils, and 4 schools—Drayton, Warwick, Brisbane (boys), and Brisbane (girls). The total expenditure in 1860 was £1,615 2s. 3d. School fees were abolished by the Premier, Mr. Lilley, from the 1st of January, 1870, and since that date primary State education has been free, Queensland being the first of the Australian colonies to adopt the principle of free public education.

The Education Act of 1860 was superseded by the State Education Act of 1875, which came into operation on 1st January, 1876, and is still in force. When passed it was regarded as the most progressive Act in Australia. Its author was Mr. S. W. Griffith, the present Chief Justice of the Commonwealth, and he was the first Minister for Public Instruction. The first Under Secretary was Mr. C. J. Graham. On 31st December, 1875, there were 230 schools in operation, the aggregate enrolment for the year being 33,643, and the average attendance 16,887. The number of teachers employed was 595, and the total expenditure for the year was £83,219 14s. 9d.

The new Act provided that the whole system of public instruction in Queensland, formerly administered by the Board of General Education, should be transferred to a department of the public service, to be called the Department of Public Instruction.

The Act provided that one-fifth of the cost must be contributed locally in the first instance towards the purchase of a school site, the erection of the necessary buildings, and the providing of furniture; thereafter the State bore the whole expenditure. Thus the State defrayed the total cost of repairs and maintenance, renewals, additions, and the like. State aid to non-vested schools was withdrawn as from 31st December, 1880.

In 1895 a resolution was agreed to by the Legislative Assembly in favour of the establishment of superior State schools with a view to providing higher education for children in towns and populous centres where grammar schools did not exist. The ultimate result of this action was the passing of the State Education Act Amendment Act of 1897, which gave the Governor in Council power to prescribe that any subjects of
secular instruction might be subjects of instruction in primary schools.
The department immediately took advantage of this amending Act, and
provided for the teaching of mathematics, higher English, and science in
the fifth and sixth classes.

So far as the resources at its disposal have permitted, the Department
of Public Instruction has done what it could to bring primary education
within the reach of all the children of the State, and it may be safely
claimed that wherever twelve children can be gathered together there exists
a school. But where the children cannot be gathered into groups the depart-
ment goes to the homes of the pupils. Itinerant teachers, fully equipped with
buggies, camping outfits, school requisites, and other necessaries, traverse
the sparsely settled districts in the far West and North where the establish-
ment of schools is not possible. The travelling teachers look for the homes
of the pupils, be those homes rude wayside inns, log cabins, or even tents,
and an effort is made to visit each home not less than four times a year.
Under this system the little ones are at least taught to read, to write, and to
count. The itinerant teacher system was initiated in 1901, when one
teacher was appointed. There are now twelve of these teachers, and the
expenditure in this direction has risen from £411 per annum to £5,129 per
annum.

In 1906 the department began to appoint trained teachers to the charge
of all schools where the attendance exceeded twelve. By this process
properly qualified teachers will soon be in charge of 90 per cent. of the
schools of the State. One of the most difficult problems which has to be
faced in England, Scotland, America, and also in some of our sister States,
is the adequate staffing of small country schools by efficient teachers.
Queensland has solved that problem, and it is doubtful if any country has
done better in that respect.

Primary school teachers are officers of the State, and are not subject
to the caprices of boards or local committees; they enjoy the protection
and privileges of the Public Service Act, and the interests of no branch of
the public service are more zealously protected by Parliament. They stand
high in public estimation in Queensland, and that estimation is steadily
rising. The pay on the whole is good—particularly that of head teachers,
and the conditions of service are by no means unattractive.

In 1908 the total expenditure on education (including school build-
ings) was £393,378 1s. 8d.; the total number of departmental schools open
during that year was 1,141, the net enrolment of pupils being 94,193, and
the average daily attendance 67,309.
PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

The number of private schools in operation in Queensland during 1908 was 157, namely:—Church of England, 8; Roman Catholic, 61; Lutheran, 2; undenominational, 86. These schools are not subsidised by the State. The number of teachers employed in them during the year totalled 665. The total enrolment of scholars was 14,098—males, 5,934; females, 8,164. The total average number of scholars attending the schools was 11,928—males, 5,114; females, 6,814.

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

In 1860, that is within one year of the founding of Queensland as a separate State, an Act was passed to provide for the establishment of grammar schools, in which was to be given an education higher than that which could be given in the elementary schools. The following remarks made by Mr. R. G. W. Herbert, who introduced the bill in the Legislative Assembly, are very interesting. He said: “The question of education might be considered under three heads as primary, grammar school, and collegiate. The bill introduced into the other branch of the Legislature was intended to provide for primary education, principally under the national system, and would make adequate provision for imparting fundamental instruction at a cheap rate to all classes of youth without distinction of creed or religious profession. The bill he now introduced was intended to provide for a higher order of instruction of a useful and thoroughly practical character by establishing grammar schools easily accessible to the colonial youth of all denominations throughout the colony. . . . It was desirable that the instruction to be afforded in the grammar schools should be afforded at a cheap rate, so that as many as possible might avail themselves of it, and that it should be such as would best qualify the youth of the colony for discharging the duties that would devolve upon them in after life.”

Captain O'Connell, who had charge of the measure in the Legislative Council, said: “It was merely a sequel to the Primary Education Bill, and was designed to give those who might desire it a higher education than could be afforded by the primary schools. It was a matter of the greatest importance that a system of this kind should be established on a broad and permanent foundation, and therefore it was not difficult to perceive that the creation of primary schools such as were contemplated
under the other bill would be found extremely useful in carrying out the
great objects now proposed to be accomplished."

Under the provisions of the Grammar Schools Act a school may be
established in any locality where a sum of not less than £1,000 has been
raised locally, and the Governor in Council may grant towards the
erection of school buildings and a residence for the principal a subsidy
equal to twice the amount raised locally. An amending Act was passed in
1864 providing that when certain conditions had been complied with an
annual endowment of £1,000 might be granted to each grammar school.
Each school is governed by a board of seven trustees; of these, four are
appointed by the Government, and three are nominated by the subscribers
to the building fund; they hold office for three years.

There are ten grammar schools in the State—seven in Southern, two
in Central, and one in Northern Queensland. The Ipswich Boys' Grammar
School was the first to be established; it was erected in 1863. The last
established was the school for girls in Rockhampton, which was founded
in 1892.

Each of the schools has qualified for the annual endowment of £1,000;
of this amount the State pays £750 a year unconditionally, and £250 on the
understanding that the school will receive a certain number of State
scholars per annum, the scholarships held by these pupils being known as
district scholarships. Queensland has always been liberal in the granting of
scholarships, and at the present time no less than 102, including the district
scholarships, are granted every year; of these, 70 are available for boys, and
32 for girls. Each scholarship has a currency of three years. The State
also grants seven bursaries to boys and three to girls. A bursary entitles
the holder to free education at an approved secondary school for three
years, together with a cash allowance of £30 per annum. The trustees of
the various grammar schools also grant scholarships in addition to those
provided by the State. In 1908 the aggregate enrolment of pupils in
attendance at the grammar schools was 1,101, with an average daily attend-
ance of 970; and of these pupils fully one-third were the holders of
scholarships. Free railway passes to the nearest grammar school are
granted to the holders of scholarships.

To assist the children of poor parents to avail themselves of the
scholarships which they may win, the Government grant a living allowance
of £12 per annum to the winners of scholarships, provided that the income
of the parents does not exceed £3 per week, or £30 per annum for each

b%a fide member of the family. This rule came into operation on the 1st
of January, 1909.

It is generally recognised that the Queensland grammar schools do
good work; the success of their students in the junior and senior examina-
tions of the Sydney University abundantly justifies this conclusion. Each
school constructs its own programme, but, broadly speaking, the curriculum
of the several schools is designed to lead up to the Sydney University. As
each school practically shapes its own course, the success of the institution
depends very largely upon the personality, efficiency, and vigour of the
principal. In addition to the State-endowed grammar schools there are
several other secondary schools. Some of these are denominational, and
others are conducted by private persons. Schools of this class are not
endowed by the State, but the winners of State scholarships or bursaries
may attend these institutions if the Governor in Council is satisfied that
they are of a sufficiently high standard.

Queensland has not so far placed the coping-stone on her educational
system by establishing a University, but each year she grants three exhibi-
tions to Universities outside the State. The exhibitions are open to com-
petition, and the test examination is the senior examination of the Sydney
University. Each exhibition has a currency of three years, and is worth
£100 a year. The winners may attend any University approved by the
Governor in Council.

It will thus be seen that Queensland has been fairly liberal in providing
the means of higher education for her children. A comparison with her
sister States of New South Wales and Victoria emphasises this fact.
During the year 1906-7 New South Wales, with a population of 1,528,697,
and a revenue of £13,309,435, granted £12,945 towards secondary educa-
tion; Victoria, with a population of 1,231,940, and a revenue of £8,345,534,
granted £5,874; Queensland, with a population of 535,113, and a revenue
of £4,307,912, granted £12,909, this amount being exclusive of the £900 per
annum granted on account of exhibitions to Universities. In 1908 the
amount granted by the State towards secondary education in Queensland
was £14,272 11s. 11d.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

The system of technical education in Queensland is in its infancy, but
no branch is likely to make more rapid and lusty growth or to have a more
important bearing upon the industrial and commercial development of the
State.
The Brisbane Technical College has been in existence as a distinct institution since 1882. It is only since July, 1905, that the Education Department has been closely associated with the administration of technical education. Previous to 1902 technical colleges, with the exception of the Brisbane College, were carried on in connection with schools of arts under the control of local committees, the State subsidising the colleges to the extent of £1 for each £1 paid in fees or subscribed for technical college purposes.

In 1902 a Board of Technical Education was created; the board held office until 1905, when this branch of education was placed under the control of the department, and a special officer was appointed to supervise the work. Endowment is now paid upon a differential scale, the distribution being based on the general and practical utility of the subjects taught, the subsidy ranging from 10s. to £3 for every £1 collected in fees. There were seventeen colleges in operation during 1908. The progress which has been made during the past five years is shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Individual Students</th>
<th>Endowment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>£4,732 4 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>3,892</td>
<td>5,460 4 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>4,321</td>
<td>7,890 13 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>4,702</td>
<td>9,610 4 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>5,187</td>
<td>10,719 12 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The importance of a highly developed system of technical education has been fully realised in this State, and in 1908 a Technical Instruction Act was passed. It provides for the establishment of a central technical college in Brisbane which shall be maintained by, and be under the direct control of, the State. It is intended that this college shall be the recognised technical institute of Queensland, and it is hoped that it may ultimately be one of the most important institutions of the kind in Australia. The colleges outside the metropolis will be affiliated with the central college, but will remain under local control.

In addition to liberal assistance to technical education, provision has been made for evening continuation classes. These classes are to enable pupils who have left school before completing their primary education to continue their education; to assist persons to obtain instruction in special subjects relating to their employment; and to prepare students for the
technical colleges. The classes are liberally endowed by the State, and very comprehensive regulations have been framed for their administration, the system being probably the best of its kind in the Commonwealth.

Schools of arts and reading rooms are also fostered by the State. A grant of 10s. is made for each £1 of subscriptions or donations, but the grant to any one institution cannot exceed £150 per annum.

The State subsidises reading rooms at shearing sheds, sugar mills, and meat works to the extent of £1 for £1, with a view to assisting to provide reading matter, and such suitable recreation games as draughts, chess, &c., for the workers in those industries.

The amount contributed by the State towards schools of arts and reading rooms is £5,000 per annum, and in 1908 there were 181 of these institutions.

UNIVERSITY.

The question of establishing a University has been under consideration from time to time for the past thirty-five years, and more than one Royal Commission has been appointed to inquire into and report upon the subject. In 1874 a commission recommended the immediate foundation of a University. In 1891 another commission was appointed, and made a similar recommendation. For various reasons, however, but principally financial stringency, no action was taken until September, 1899, when the Government introduced a bill for the establishment of a University. Unfortunately the bill did not become law, and Queensland remained without a University for another decade.

The Government programme for the first session of 1909 included a University Bill, but owing to the untimely dissolution of the Assembly nothing was done in the matter. When Parliament met again on 2nd November, the bill was the first measure proceeded with. Both Houses being unanimously in favour of establishing a University on modern, democratic lines, it was speedily passed, and on 10th December, the jubilee of the foundation of Queensland, Government House was dedicated to the purposes of the University by His Excellency the Governor, Sir William MacGregor, in the presence of a large and representative gathering of citizens. With the State system of primary education established on a sound basis; technical education placed on a firm foundation and progressing steadily; secondary education linked to the other branches, and all leading towards the University, Queensland will have a system of education which will place her on a level with the most progressive of the nations.