

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**WEDNESDAY, 7 AUGUST 1889**

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**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

*Wednesday, 7 August, 1889.*

Federal Council Address.—Motion for Adjournment—  
correction of statistics.—Temperance Hall Bill—  
committee.—Brisbane Water Supply Bill—com-  
mittee.—Adjournment.

**FEDERAL COUNCIL ADDRESS.**

The PRESIDENT: I beg to inform the House that I have received the following letter from the private secretary to His Excellency the Governor:—

“ Government House,  
“ Brisbane, 6th August, 1889.

“ SIR,

“ I am directed by the Governor to acknowledge the receipt from the Legislative Council of an address to Her Majesty the Queen, which has been forwarded by this day's mail.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Yours obediently,

“ (Signed) RICHARD OWEN,

“ Private Secretary.

“ The Honourable the President, Legislative Council.”

**MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.**

**CORRECTION OF STATISTICS.**

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—With your permission I would like to offer some explanation with respect to certain statistics which I endeavoured to quote yesterday—

The PRESIDENT: There is no business before the House,

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR: I will speak with the permission of hon. members.

The PRESIDENT: You will have to move the adjournment of the House. There is no business before the House.

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR: I can give an explanation?

The PRESIDENT: You can conclude with a motion.

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR: Well, hon. gentlemen, I shall conclude my remarks by a motion for the adjournment of the House. The statistics which I quoted yesterday were those which were referred to by Dr. McLaurin, at the Intercolonial Medical Congress, held in Melbourne in January last. The typhoid fever deaths for the year 1885 amounted, in New South Wales, to a total of 503; in Victoria, to a total of 424; and in Queensland, to a total of 541. The rate per 100,000 of the population was, in New South Wales, 53·06; in Victoria, 43·48; and in Queensland, 169·9. The percentage of deaths in New South Wales was 3·29; in Victoria, 2·95; and in Queensland, 8·68:—

"From this table it will be seen that Queensland is by far the greatest sufferer from this disease of any of the colonies. In that tropical province typhoid occupies the second place in the list of fatality, causing 541 deaths in the year, an absolutely greater number than in any other colony; the relative mortality was at the rate of 169·9 per 100,000 of the population, and the percentage of deaths from all causes was 8·68. Taking the other years in my tables, it appears that in 1884 the results were rather worse, and in 1886 rather better; we may therefore assume that the results of 1885 give not an unfair idea of the mortality from typhoid fever in Queensland. It is certainly very high, quite sufficiently so, I think, to attract the attention of sanitary inquirers in that colony."

Then it goes on to refer to another disease, which is very prevalent here, and which is also a preventable disease to a great extent, and that is diphtheria:—

"The last disease, with a notice of which I shall trouble you to-day, is one which has always attracted great attention in the different parts of Australia—viz., diphtheria."

The total number of deaths from diphtheria in New South Wales was 582; in Victoria, 332; in Queensland, 208. The rate per 100,000 of population in New South Wales was 61·33; in Victoria, 34·05; and in Queensland, 65·32. The percentage of deaths in New South Wales was 3·76; in Victoria, 2·31; and in Queensland, 3·34

"From this it appears that, if whole colonies be taken, Queensland has again a bad pre-eminence, heading the list with a death-rate of 65·32 per 100,000, to which New South Wales comes, as a very close second, with 61·33."

This, hon. gentlemen, is taken from an English journal—*The Practitioner*. I may mention that other medical journals have already discussed the matter very thoroughly and fully; the *Lancet* in particular, and also the *British Medical Journal*. So that the unhealthy condition of Queensland has obtained a very wide notoriety throughout the world. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

Question put and negatived.

## TEMPERANCE HALL BILL.

### COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the HON. P. MACPHERSON, the President left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider this Bill.

Preamble postponed.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed as printed.

On clause 3, as follows:—

"Every sale made in pursuance of the powers aforesaid may be in one or more lot or lots, and shall be by public auction, and upon payment of the purchase money to the society they shall convey the land so sold to the purchaser or purchasers thereof, and such conveyance shall be valid and effectual in law and equity for all purposes whatsoever."

The HON. P. MACPHERSON said he had certain amendments to propose in that clause, which had already been circulated amongst hon. members. By the clause as it stood now the society was restricted to the sale by public auction only. He proposed to insert such words as would empower them to sell by private contract, subject to a certain limitation. He proposed, in line 7, to omit the words "shall be" with the view of inserting the word "either"; and, on the same line, after the word "auction" to insert the words "private contract," and, at the end of the clause, a proviso, as follows:—

Provided that, if any such land is offered for sale by public auction and not sold, the same may be sold by private contract at a price not less than the highest price offered for the same at the auction, or if no price was offered, then not less than the reserve subject to which the same was so offered.

He was not aware of the reason which led to the restriction of the powers of sale, but he thought it would be rather difficult to get a good price for the land if everybody knew that the only mode of sale was by public auction. He trusted the House would agree to the amendments which he would propose, and he therefore moved, first, that on line 7 the words "shall be" be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "either."

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he thought the amendments would be a great improvement, and they should have his hearty support. In a case of that sort, the parties interested would take very good care that their interests were protected, and if a little extra flexibility would give facility of action to the parties interested in the measure, then he thought they ought to agree to the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

The HON. P. MACPHERSON moved, by way of further amendment, the insertion of the words "or private contract" after the word "auction," on the 7th line.

The HON. W. GRAHAM said he should like to deal with the two last amendments together. He believed the Bill had been drafted by a very able man, but he thought the effect of those two alterations would be to enable the society to sell, either by public auction or private contract. The last amendment was intended to be a saving clause, but he did not see where the saving clause came in. It said: "Provided that any such land is offered for sale by public auction." Then it went on to say that the price to be taken by private contract should not be less than the highest price offered at auction. There was nothing to compel the society to first offer the land by auction. By those two amendments it would be quite possible for a private contract to be made at once, which would open the door to jobbery. He might be wrong in his reading of the amendments, but that was the conclusion he had come to.

The HON. P. MACPHERSON said he admitted the force of the hon. gentleman's objection. He thought it might be met by an alteration in the proviso to this effect:—

Provided that any such land shall be first offered for sale by public auction.

Amendment agreed to.

The HON. P. MACPHERSON moved that at the end of the clause the following proviso be added :—

Provided that any such land shall be first offered for sale by public auction, and, if not sold, the same may be sold by private contract, at a price not less than the highest price offered for the same at the auction; or, if no price was offered, then not less than the reserve subject to which the same was offered.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said it occurred to him that that proviso might block the sale in every way. He thought the latter part of the proposed amendment had better be left out, and allow the sale to be made by private contract at such price as the trustees might decide. A price might be named as a reserve, and that might be absolutely prohibitive, or there were other circumstances which might affect the price. Thus the intentions of those who sought for the Bill might be entirely frustrated. Those who held the land now had held it for many years, and they might fairly be trusted with a property of that kind to do their very best with it. He thought the amendment would very seriously hamper the objects that these people had in view, because they could not go back upon the Bill, no matter what reserve might be fixed, or however unwisely they might have acted. They could not go back. That was the way he read the proposed amendment. The land was to be sold for a price not less than the reserve at the time the property was first submitted for public auction.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said there was nothing to prevent them offering the land for public auction a second time at a lower reserve.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that might be so. He had not taken that view of the subject.

The HON. W. GRAHAM said the proposed amendment was a dangerous one. The land might be put up at auction at a very bad time, and only a small price might be offered for it; and if the amendment was carried, the trustees would be permitted to sell at that very low figure. He thought the proposed proviso should be made to read :—

Provided that if such land is offered for sale by public auction, and not sold, the same may be sold by private contract at a price not less than the reserve, subject to which the same was so offered.

He proposed to omit the words "not less than the highest price offered for the same at the auction, or if no price was offered, then."

The HON. SIR A. H. PALMER: You had better leave it to the trustees.

The HON. W. GRAHAM: The trustees can alter the reserve. However, he would not move the amendment he had suggested, as it would go to the other extreme and tie the hands of the trustees too much.

The proviso was agreed to in the amended form proposed by the Hon. P. Macpherson; and the clause, as amended, put and passed.

The remaining clauses of the Bill and the preamble, were passed as printed.

On the motion of the HON. P. MACPHERSON, the House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

The report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

BRISBANE WATER SUPPLY BILL.  
COMMITTEE.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE, in moving that the President leave the chair, and the House go into committee to consider the Bill, said:

Hon. gentlemen,—I think I ought to take advantage of this opportunity to call attention to the figures which the Hon. Dr. Taylor quoted in the earlier part of the afternoon, in respect to certain health statistics which appear to have a very injurious effect upon the reputation of this colony for health. The hon. gentleman quoted from a book called the *Practitioner*, and on page 317, of number 222 of that periodical, Queensland is put down as having a death-rate from typhoid fever of 169'90 for every 100,000 people in the population. It shows that the total number of deaths from this disease in Queensland was 541. I was very much struck with the extraordinary disproportion which those statistics show, in relation to the general health of Queensland, as compared with returns from the other colonies. Since the Hon. Dr. Taylor referred to the matter, I have given a few moments to try and ascertain how far he is correct. I find that there is a gross exaggeration in the figures, through, probably, some great blunder in the calculations. I have before me the statistical report for the year 1885, and in table 20 of the Registrar-General's report I find that the total number of deaths in the colony during that year from typhoid fever was 197. I regret very much that such a mistake as this should have occurred in a publication of this character in Great Britain, as it must have a very injurious effect upon the reputation of the country. The compilers of papers on subjects of this kind ought to be a little more careful in checking their figures. I am very sorry to see this paper is by an Australian writer, Dr. McLaurin, who is President of the Board of Health of New South Wales, and the remarks that have been quoted are contained in his address at the Inter-colonial Medical Congress, held on the 10th of January last. This, as hon. gentlemen will see, reduces the proportion of deaths from fever in this colony to less than that of Sydney and its suburbs. I think there is a further element to be considered in ascertaining the value of even our own statistics, because I have no doubt that in many districts in the colony there are many fevers which are really not typhoid fever, but which are classed, by people reporting the deaths, as typhoid fever. However, I think it is my duty, at the first opportunity offered to me, to at once point out the serious mistake which has been made, one which must do great injury to the colony. I trust that those who have done the harm in making those statements will at least take steps for making the *amende honorable* to Queensland. I move that the President leave the chair, and the House go into committee to consider the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1 passed as printed.

On clause 2—"Definition clause"—the last paragraph was amended, on the motion of the MINISTER OF JUSTICE, to read as follows :—

"The term 'domestic purposes' includes all the purposes for which water is ordinarily used in a dwelling-house, or the premises attached thereto, or in a ship, but does not include the washing of decks, or boats."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 8, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 9, as follows :—

"It shall be lawful for the board to obtain from the Brisbane River at the point shown on and fixed by the plans submitted to and approved by Parliament, as hereinafter mentioned, and also from existing reservoirs, an adequate supply of water for the city of Brisbane and the suburbs thereof."

On the motion of the MINISTER OF JUSTICE, the words "to be" were inserted after the word "plans," on the 3rd line; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 10—"Plans, etc., to be deposited"—

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE moved that the word "specifications" be omitted. The necessity for including the word was not very apparent, and the board, or their engineers, might find themselves tied down by specifications which could not be altered in accordance with any altered circumstances with which they might have to deal.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 11—"Minister may cause plans, etc., to be examined"—was similarly amended by the omission of the word "specifications."

On clause 12—"On approval by Parliament, Governor in Council may authorise construction of works"—

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE moved that the word "specifications" be omitted.

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR said he should like to know why it was proposed to omit the word. Was it superfluous?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said he had explained that; in the first place, he did not see the usefulness of including the word "specification" in the clause because its usefulness was not very apparent; and in the second place, its inclusion might have the effect of so hampering the board or their engineers in dealing with difficulties which were unforeseen, that they might find themselves unable to depart from the specifications in a satisfactory way. It was not likely that members of Parliament would enter into and study carefully all the terms which might be contained in a specification, and it was less likely that their doing so would be practically of very much good either to themselves or the specification. Specifications were so purely technical that a large majority of hon. members would not devote their time, or be expected to devote their time, to studying them, nor were they likely to be judges of the specifications in any way.

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR said he presumed that the term specification merely included the material which might be used in the construction of any works.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said it applied not only to material, but to the mode of carrying out the whole of the works. In that House they had always looked closely to the construction of railways, but it had never been the practice to expect specifications to be submitted for approval. In fact, it would be practically impossible to do so without running a great deal of risk of injury. Specifications were changed day by day according to the experience gained by engineers, especially on new works.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 13, as follows:—

"Subject to the provisions and restrictions herein contained, the board may, as the case requires, do or continue each of the following acts, and may execute or complete such of the following works as may be necessary or expedient for constructing the works authorised by this Act, or extending and maintaining the same or the works now existing, and supplying water under this Act, that is to say,—

- (1) It may, without a previous agreement with the owner or occupier, enter upon any lands and other places shown or delineated on the plans and sections, and described in the books of reference deposited as aforesaid, which it may be necessary to enter upon, take, or use for the purposes of the works; and may take levels

of the same, and set out such parts thereof as the board or its officer deems necessary, and may dig and break up the soil of such lands, and trench and fence-in the same, and remove or use any earth, stones, minerals, trees, and other things taken therefrom;

- (2) It may, under and subject to the provisions of the Public Works Lands Resumption Acts, take any lands which are required for the purposes of the works or of this Act;
- (3) It may construct and maintain in and across any lands, any ditches, aqueducts, flumes, or other works necessary for conveying water;
- (4) It may, for the purpose of augmenting the supply of wholesome water under this Act, from time to time sink or acquire wells or shafts, erect buildings, and make, alter, or discontinue streams, reservoirs, drains, culverts, filter beds, or other waterworks, upon the lands hereby authorised to be taken;
- (5) It may from time to time divert and intercept for that purpose the water from the watercourses mentioned in the plans of the works, alter the course of any such watercourse, and take any water found under or on the lands taken for constructing the works:

"Provided that, in the exercise of the powers conferred by this section, the board shall do as little damage as may be, and shall, when reasonably practicable, provide other watering places, drains, and channels for the use of adjoining lands in place of those taken away or interrupted, and shall make to every person interested full compensation for all damage actually sustained by him through the exercise of those powers; and such compensation, if not agreed upon between the parties thereto, shall be made in the manner provided in the Public Works Lands Resumption Acts for the settlement of disputed claims for compensation in respect of land taken under that Act.

"But no such compensation shall be payable in respect of any diminution of the quantity of water in the Brisbane River or any part thereof.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said he would move as an amendment, in line 22, the insertion of the word "pipes" between the words "in" and "ditches." Pipes came under the head of works necessary for conveying water. The insertion of the word would be an improvement, and would make the clause more distinct.

The HON. J. SCOTT said before that amendment was put he would like a little information about subsection 1. The clause was a very stringent one indeed. He did not know whether it was only to come into operation after the parliamentary plans were passed, and after the route the main pipes were to take was absolutely laid out or not, but it said:—

"It may, without a previous agreement with the owner or occupier, enter upon any lands and other places shown or delineated on the plans and sections, and described in the books of reference deposited as aforesaid, which it may be necessary to enter upon, take, or use for the purposes of the works; and may take levels of the same, and set out such parts thereof as the board or its officer deems necessary, and may dig and break up the soil of such lands, and trench and fence-in the same, and remove or use any earth, stones, minerals, trees, and other things taken therefrom."

That was to say, that surveyors might go upon neighbouring property which was not absolutely required and destroy a man's place without any object. If the clause only applied after the line of pipes was laid out it was all right, but it looked as if property might be trespassed upon without any hindrance whatever.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said the plans and sections had to be prepared and submitted to the Minister, and approved of by Parliament, and then section 13 gave power to the board to enter upon any land delineated on the plans and sections. That was the ordinary form of power which was given under the Railway Acts and under general Acts for the construction of public works, and the proviso covered compensation for injury. As a matter of fact, he could inform the Committee that plans and sections of the proposed line of water

pipes and works were already prepared. There would, therefore, be no need to enter upon any land except that included in the parliamentary plans.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 15 to 19, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 20, as follows:—

"The board shall, as far as practicable, afford and distribute to all persons entitled to receive it under this Act, a constant supply of water for domestic purposes, in the prescribed manner:

"Provided that the board shall not be bound to supply water for any domestic purpose whatever unless the fittings used, and the mode and arrangement thereof, are, in the judgment of the board, such as are prescribed in that behalf by this Act and the by-laws."

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR moved as an amendment on line 45, after the word "of," the insertion of the word "filtered." He thought hon. members would agree with him that it was very desirable that as pure and wholesome a supply of water as possible should be supplied to the consumers. He was aware that the preamble of the Bill stated that its object was to supply the city and suburbs with a pure and wholesome supply of water, but it did not say how that pure and wholesome supply was to be brought about. They all knew the condition of the water which had been supplied to consumers hitherto, and they also knew that no practical steps had been taken to render the condition of the water better. He need not detain hon. members by going over the ground gone over yesterday; but he would ask them to take into consideration the opinion of an authority he had quoted before—the late Metropolitan Water Examiner of London, Colonel Francis Bolton, C.E., who said—

"The purity of a domestic water supply is undoubtedly a matter of the utmost importance; but what is pure water is a question which, in the absence of any recognised standard of purity, does not admit at present of any precise definition, inasmuch as different authorities on the subject hold different, and in some respects contradictory, theories regarding it. This much, however, is admitted—that efficient filtration is, in most cases, essential to purity."

He knew no means of rendering the water supply of Brisbane in any degree purer excepting by filtration in some form or another. He was aware that many people held the opinion that it was impossible to filter the Enoggera water, and he did not know what the Brisbane River water might be. He said yesterday that he had no analysis of that water, but he thought they might come to this conclusion, that it would partake of the character of most river waters, and that if there was anything like heavy rain it would be in a very muddy condition. In point of fact, it would be very little better than the Enoggera or Gold Creek water, and consequently it would be almost as necessary to filter it as the water used from Enoggera or Gold Creek. He was aware that the effect of raising the water by pumping would, to a certain extent, so aerate it that that very act alone would purify it, but that remained to be seen. The water, in his opinion, must first be allowed to subside in subsidence tanks, and then any filtration which might be necessary might be introduced. They had had on the previous day the opinion of the Hon. Mr. Gregory to the effect that it was impossible to filter the Enoggera water—that experiments had been tried some years ago, and it was found that the filter beds rapidly clogged up in consequence of the gelatinous matter which the water contained. They were not informed by the hon. gentleman what that gelatinous matter was, how the filter

beds were constructed, or what was the physical character of the water admitted into the filter beds. It was very easy to conceive that if water after a very heavy storm was taken from the Enoggera reservoir, it must contain a large amount of suspended matter, and that that would be sufficient to clog almost any filter; but that was not the way that those who had any knowledge of the matter, dealt with it. They allowed the water first to subside in tanks constructed for the purpose. Then when it had reached a certain condition of clearness it was filtered. He questioned very much whether the experiment referred to was carried out according to the principles which were now understood to regulate the process of filtration, either through gravel and sand or through any of the other different filtration materials. The hon. gentleman had also informed them that our water supply was so totally different from that of London that no parallel could be drawn between the two, and he had said if they wished for a parallel they must go to Antwerp. They had been informed that the water there was very similar to that which had to be dealt with here. They had been also informed that in Antwerp there was the very greatest difficulty in filtering the water, and that it was necessary to run it through six or seven miles of piping before it was fit to be filtered, but they had not been told how it was filtered. He was in a position to say that the filtration material for the water supplied to about 150,000 inhabitants of Antwerp was spongy iron, and the hon. gentleman did not tell them what the filtration material was, but that it was necessary to send the water through iron pipes for a certain distance. If water could not be filtered by the ordinary sand and gravel process, surely there were a great many other different processes available. There was spongy iron which had both a mechanical and chemical effect. It gave off no phosphate and water filtered through it was quite free from fungi. The iron destroyed the fungi, which were the gelatinous substances referred to by the Hon. Mr. Gregory, and they therefore did not clog up the filtering medium. The hon. gentleman made a statement to the effect that they ought to be exceedingly glad that the water stank, because it was all the better when it stank. That was a very extreme statement to make. It certainly was not more pleasing for being stinking, and the hon. gentleman must entirely misunderstand how it was that the stinking process was brought about. The water contained a certain quantity of dissolved oxygen, otherwise it would decompose rapidly. As long as that quantity was sufficient to supply oxygen to the foreign organic matter suspended or dissolved in the water, no putrefaction could take place. The ordinary bacteria, the active agents of putrefaction, did not live in the free atmosphere of oxygen, and, consequently, putrefaction did not take place if there was sufficient dissolved oxygen in the water. It was only after the organic constituents dissolved in the water had taken up all the dissolved oxygen, that the evolution of this noxious gas—hydrogen sulphide—took place; but that by no means proved that the water was any better when it smelt strongly. It simply proved that all the oxygen was dissolved, and the putrefaction of the organic constituents was the result. In the case of any organic constituents composed of carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, and oxygen, if the oxygen and carbon united into carbonic acid gas, instead of the water being made noxious thereby it was exceedingly pleasing. It gave a sparkling appearance to the water, and made it look like sodawater. The nitrogen which might be united with the hydrogen formed ammonia, which created a sort of stimulant to the water, so that it was proved that oxygenation was really

the only process by which the water could be efficiently purified. As a practical experience of what could be done, he might say that he had had placed in his hands that afternoon a letter from Messrs. Clarke and Fauset, which he would read:—

“Brisbane, 7th August, 1889.

“The Hon. Sir A. H. Palmer, K.C.M.G., Brisbane.

“Sir,

“In accordance with our Mr. W. T. Clarke’s promise, we now have pleasure in submitting for your perusal specification and drawing of an efficient filtering plant, suitable for filtering the Brisbane water supply. We also enclose a pamphlet on “Pure Water,” etc., from which useful information can be obtained, and, on referring to page 20, you will therein observe the conditions on which the company will guarantee any appliance supplied by them.

“We are, Sir,

“Yours faithfully,

“CLARKE AND FAUSET.”

“210 Queen Street,

“Brisbane, 7th August, 1889.

“Particulars of Filtering Plant for Town’s Water Supply.

“The filtering apparatus, which we should recommend for 1,500,000 gallons of water in twenty-four hours, would consist of an area of charcoal bed of 1,500 square feet, by 1 foot in thickness, contained in cast-iron tanks, specially constructed for the purpose. The disposition of these tanks could be in degree modified to suit the place into which they would have to go. We should, by preference, arrange them as shown in the accompanying drawing, but the shape is not essential.

“The charcoal (animal) rests upon brass wire gauze, and a screen of the same material is placed above the charcoal, about 12 inches intervening. The water is admitted from above, and becomes quite bright by passing through the charcoal. In the course of from twelve to twenty-four hours, according to the quality of the water, the charcoal will become charged with the impurities which it has been removing. This patent consists in the means of removing these impurities and making the charcoal as clean as at first. Whilst the water still covers the charcoal, air is forced upwards through properly arranged openings, and the result is that the water which is admitted from below, during this process, carries off with it, in a very short space of time, all the dirt which has been, in a remarkable way, loosened from every part of the charcoal by the action of the air. The iron tanks are covered with a waterproof varnish inside to prevent rust. The charcoal will last for a long time; in fact, the loss appears to be exceedingly small and hardly noticeable. The cost of the apparatus is £4,500 (four thousand five hundred pounds) complete, with vertical boiler, air pump, and steam cylinder, pipes, etc., in England. The cost of filter beds for the same quantity would be rather more than £8,000 in England, and, doubtless, far more in this colony. The operation of cleaning is, of course, far less by this process, and its simplicity must commend it.

“We are, Sir,

“Yours obediently,

“CLARKE AND FAUSET.

“To the Hon. Sir A. H. Palmer, K.C.M.G.,

“Parliamentary Buildings, Brisbane.”

He had a sample of water which those people had treated in the manner described in the letter he had quoted, and it appeared to be remarkably clear. He did not know whether it contained any dissolved organic matter to any appreciable extent; but it did not smell like it. In fact, it might be taken as being as pure as any water required to be. He wished to impress upon hon. gentlemen that in using the term “filter” he did not necessarily mean any filtering medium should be used; but that the water should be delivered to the consumer in a condition as clear as that of the sample he produced, and he considered that the consumers had a right to expect that that should be done. The justice of the demand of consumers in England, that they should be supplied with wholesome water when they paid for it, had always been conceded. He held in his hand a little book called a “Handy

Guide to Public Health,” which gave the various Health Acts in force in England, and in which he found the following:—

“A local authority shall provide and keep in any waterworks constructed or purchased by them a supply of pure and wholesome water.

“A corporation supplying water would be responsible for damage done by unwholesome water. The case of *Milne versus the Corporation of Huddersfield* raised this important question. The Corporation of Huddersfield is bound under its special Act to supply pure and wholesome water. Plaintiff’s house was supplied with water by them through leaden service pipes. After using it for six years, without apparent bad effects, plaintiff showed signs of lead poisoning. It was proved lead was the best material for service pipes, and experts were unable to account for the deleterious effects of the water, though it was admitted to be the cause of plaintiff’s malady. At the assizes, plaintiff was awarded heavy damages.”

He did not see why in a community like this they should be hampered with conditions and restrictions, and be obliged to pay for whatever water was supplied to them. He had proved that the bugbear of filtration was a very simple matter to those who understood it, and it was understood thoroughly by modern sanitarians and engineers, and others who had been in the old country or in other civilised centres where water was required to be filtered, and where a supply of pure water was looked upon as essential and necessary to health and comfort. He did not see why the existing state of affairs in Brisbane should be tolerated for one moment.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said he thought the hon. gentleman might have gone a little further and have provided for the mode and frequency with which those filter beds must be cleaned. A provision inserting the word the hon. gentleman had proposed was incomplete without some such other provision dealing with the mode of filtering. If the board did not take the trouble to look after their work properly, as the Hon. Mr. Gregory pointed out, the filtering might be more injurious than beneficial.

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR: There ought to be a water examiner.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said he was glad the hon. gentleman had pointed out the consequences which must ensue upon the adoption of his amendment. The Bill when passed would be administered by a local body, which would have to be dealt with on the principle upon which all local bodies had to be dealt with. They would be a representative body, appointed for a certain specific purpose, and if they did not do their duty properly the people would have the remedy in their own hands, and could make a change, if filtering beds were not supplied, or neglected if they were. He was afraid the hon. gentleman was not a believer in popular institutions. He might point out another difficulty. The hon. gentleman proposed to make it compulsory at once upon the Board of Waterworks to supply filtered water; but he must know that that was impracticable; it was impossible to do it. It was no use saying the board should supply filtered water unless they were compelled to supply filter beds. They could not be proceeded against for not supplying filtered water, because without filter beds it would be impossible to do so. If the hon. gentleman carried his amendment, the whole Bill would have to be framed afresh or at least a great portion of it. The object he aimed at had been provided for, so far as they could do so, by giving the board power to establish filter beds, and if they went beyond that they would be doing what would not be right or judicious, and be placing the board in a position in which he did not think hon. gentlemen would wish them to be placed. He would not discuss the chemical aspect of the question, beyond saying that, with all due respect to the Hon. Dr.

Taylor, and all the the chemical scientists, he held a very strong feeling that up to the present the chemists and chemical scientists knew very little indeed on the subject of the healthiness or otherwise of water. They were only on the threshold of knowledge on the subject, and it was too soon for them to attempt to dictate in any way as to what were the conditions upon which pure water might be obtained. It was a well-known fact that, in Queensland, water which appeared to be the purest and the most tempting to drink was often the most injurious to health. Every experienced bushmen would always take the clayey, dirty-looking water from the waterholes, in preference to the bright, sparkling water that had been referred to. They were not living under the same circumstances in Queensland which obtained in Europe, and notwithstanding all the Hon. Dr. Taylor alleged in regard to the purity of the water which was obtained by the companies at present existing in Great Britain, he had been informed by an hon. member of that Committee that he had recently observed an advertisement of a company which had pure water for sale in bottles. Pure water must be very scarce in that part of the world when it had to be actually carried in bottles. He pointed that out to show that the scientific attainments of all those companies that were guided by those notable scientists had apparently failed hitherto in providing a complete quantity of pure water. He thought they were rather premature in endeavouring to force those ideas upon any institution which was proposed to be established for the purpose of providing a supply of wholesome water in a measure which proposed to give them all the powers that were necessary for the purpose of providing that pure and wholesome water. He thought that it would be unwise on their part to pass restrictions upon that board, which might tend in the opposite direction to which they were intended.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said the amendment would give the board greater facilities than were given at present for the establishment of filtering depôts.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE: They have special authority at present.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said there was a special authority, but they wished to make it more plain. The hon. gentleman had referred to the absence from the Hon. Dr. Taylor's consideration of popular institutions. How had popular institutions dealt with such questions in Brisbane already? What about the nightsoil question? Was it not a disgrace? It would be a disgrace to the aborigines of Australia. He had no patience with anybody who talked about popular institutions in relation to the water supply or the sanitary condition of this city. Both of those matters were a disgrace to the city and to the authorities. He paid sufficient rates to supply himself with water and carry out the sanitation of the different premises of which he was a tenant or the owner, and he could not free himself from the miserable despotism of the popular institutions and do his own work in his own way, which he could do for one-third of the money he now paid. All he knew about popular institutions was that they had heavy overdrafts, and their work was badly done. They could not refer to it without what the Scotch would call a "scunner" coming over their minds. Surely the Minister of Justice ought to accept the amendment with a good grace. He might at any rate postpone the clause, as he had often postponed clauses before, and let them have time for further consideration. Every hon. member knew that the measure in its present form was the product of a very

hurried consultation, or if not a consultation a very hurried consideration. The Minister of Justice knew the Bill was not the outcome of many minds; it was a piecing together of all that was known of existing laws, and of such other matter as it suited certain minds to put into it. The basis of the measure, its backbone, was crude in the highest degree. The basis of rating was not sound, and there was too much power given to the board; but those were matters which could be dealt with later on. Even at the pumping station that was proposed to be adopted, he had seen the water so thick that a four-oared boat could not be driven through it. The Hon. Mr. Gregory knew what he was referring to. He had seen the water at Enoggera so thick with scum and vegetable matter that the boat could not go through it with two oars. His hon. friend, Mr. Lambert, had seen the Fitzroy River, into which thirteen other rivers poured their waters, so thick with vegetable matter that he could not drink it.

The HON. W. F. LAMBERT: I had to.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he hoped the Minister of Justice would postpone the matter, so that they might consider whether they should have to drink water of any kind or quality, or whether they should drink pure water.

The HON. SIR A. H. PALMER said it would be very desirable that the hon. gentleman who proposed the amendment should show how the water was to be brought in filtered for domestic purposes. It was easy to find fault. He had bothered himself about the Bill a great deal, and had not been able to arrive at any conclusion as to how to bring in a separate supply of water for domestic purposes, and a supply for washing carriages and horses and other things. When an amendment of that sort was proposed, the remedy ought to be shown also; if it were, no doubt it would be taken advantage of. He had gone into the question thoroughly, and had studied the Bill, and had taken the Hon. Dr. Taylor's remarks into consideration. He agreed with him in many things, and was sure it would be a great advantage if they could have the water filtered for all purposes; but he did not see how it was to be done. How were they to divide water to be used for domestic purposes from the other water? They would require a double set of pipes from top to bottom.

On the motion of the MINISTER OF JUSTICE, the House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said: I beg to move that this House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at eight minutes to 6 o'clock.