

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

THURSDAY, 8 AUGUST 1889

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 8 August, 1889.

Brisbane Temperance Hall Bill—third reading.—Brisbane Water Supply Bill—resumption of committee.—Western Australian Constitution.—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4 o'clock.

BRISBANE TEMPERANCE HALL BILL.
THIRD READING.

On the motion of the Hon. P. MACPHERSON, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly, by message, in the usual form.

BRISBANE WATER SUPPLY BILL.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the Order of the Day being read, the President left the chair, and the House went into committee to further consider this Bill.

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."

Question—That on line 45, after the word "of," the word "filtered" be inserted—

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said he thought, when they came to look at the question, it was one of such very great magnitude that it could hardly pass without further consideration. There were several points to which the Hon. Dr. Taylor referred yesterday in reference to the attempt to filter the Enoggera water, which was tried at one time, and he might explain what took place on that occasion. First of all the hon. gentleman asked what was the character of the gelatinous matter which choked the filters, or how were the filters constructed. The gelatinous matter consisted of a number of minute organisms, which belonged to the order of fresh water sponges, and which held an intermediate position between the animal and vegetable kingdom, not exactly determined by those who had examined into the question. However, that was immaterial. Those organisms, when they died, decayed and contaminated the water. When they were in the reservoir every cubic inch of water contained about a thousand of them, and each of the sponges consisted of a great many of those animalculæ accumulated together, which very quickly separated and multiplied. Now, the form of filter used was that adopted at the best works in England, consisting of a layer of gravel at the bottom, and then about two feet of carefully washed sand. The water was allowed to settle in a settling tank from the reservoir, as far as it would settle, and it was then run in from a height of about two feet on to the sand. Those were exactly the conditions under which the system was carried out at home, at all the very large filtering works, except some of the recent ones, in which special appliances had been brought into operation. Had the water been chalky or clayey, water that was not muddy, it would, of course, have formed a sediment on the filter, which would have allowed a small quantity of water to pass through the filters. They would not have been choked up altogether; but those small gelatinous organisms formed a film of about the thickness of a sheet of paper on the top of the sand, which made it absolutely impervious to the water. The filtering material might be scratched with a stick, and the water would rush through rapidly at that particular spot; but in three or four minutes the spot was absolutely closed again. If hon. members wished to go a little further into the question he would refer them to the report of the Board of Waterworks, presented to both Houses of Parliament in 1872, in which details were given with regard to the condition of the water and the expense of constructing the filters which had been made. However, no money was available to do anything further, and no further steps were taken, neither had there been any money available up to the present time. Now, in Europe, new systems had been adopted with regard to filtration, and some plans of a very excellent character were carried out, but the quantity of water required was not very large. They had the

spongy iron filters, which were admirable, and so were the filters in which the water was churned in huge cylinders, along with scrap iron. Both those plans had an admirable effect in changing the water from an impure to a wholesome condition, but, unfortunately, they gave it a peculiar taste and smell; and, indeed, the effect was very singular. If one went into a community which had been drinking water derived from such a source, it would at once become apparent that there was a very peculiar odour in the atmosphere. That was not generally known to those who had studied the question, but they occasionally practically became aware of it, when they had to carry out metallurgical works, in which the water was affected by iron. Of course where iron tanks were allowed to become rusty that effect was lost, or rather, was not so apparent. He believed the plan had been carried out very largely in some cases at home, but it was very expensive, and if they were to adopt it here, they would require to double the water rates of consumers. He believed consumers would rather have a double allowance of dirty water than have to pay for the dirt being taken out of it. At any rate, that had always been the opinion expressed by the majority of those water ratepayers with whom he had conversed on the subject. Then, as regarded the way in which they should filter. They found that it was impossible to filter the water at the reservoir, in consequence of its organic contamination, and they discovered that, in passing it through seven and a-half miles of pipes to Brisbane from Enoggera, and a greater distance from Gold Creek, the increased pressure and the contact with the iron pipes had the effect of destroying the life of those organisms to some extent, and decomposing them into gases. The other parts combined again with the oxide of iron and formed a coat of mud inside the pipes, which were periodically scraped out by the pipe cleaner. Then the water was in a totally different condition. Most of these gelatinous organisms could be got rid of by settlement, and hon. members might not be aware of the plan now carried on on the Observatory Hill. There a large supply tank, capable of holding about two days' supply, was constructed, into which the water was run during the night, and subsequently delivered to the consumers. The water was thus greatly purified, although it must be admitted that the source was only available for a part of the city, and was not so complete as if carried out on a larger scale. It would, no doubt, improve the water, if it were filtered. They now came to another question—namely, whether the filtration of the water could be carried out as economically at the source of supply as if it were filtered in Brisbane. A pipe of half the size now required to deliver the water to the higher surfaces of Brisbane would bring down a far larger proportion of the water from the storage reservoir. The necessity of pumping, to get up to the higher levels, for the purposes of filtration, could be more economically carried out near Brisbane, in consequence of the price of coal, which could be got more cheaply along the wharves than it could be if taken to the source of supply. Further, it was very important that any water delivered from the filter should be delivered as rapidly as possible, in order that it might not be further contaminated. They must remember that no process of filtration, or purification of any kind whatever, could be absolutely perfect. There must be still some germs or animal organisms in it. Other classes of filters had been used elsewhere since the attempt had been made to filter Enoggera water, and, with some modification, the large circular filter used for the purpose of extracting lime might be suitable. The water near London contained a given

quantity of lime dissolved in carbonic acid. It was very hard, and would soon crust the pipes and choke them. It was not suitable for washing, and required first to be softened. Now, the system adopted was, that exactly the same quantity of lime as was already in the water was added to it, and that combined with the lime held in solution dropped to the bottom, and became fine powdered chalk. Then came the question of filtration, and they found that the large circular filter was the best, with a scraper running round and round which scraped off the mud from the edge of the filter, so that the surface of sand was always kept clean. Those filters had the further advantage that it was easy to wash the sand and other materials used. There was no lime in the water here. They had totally different conditions. The Hon. Dr. Taylor had asked yesterday what were the constituents of the water. Upon reference to the report of the Board of Waterworks it would be found that many analyses had been made, and they found that the quantity of organic matter was $1\frac{1}{2}$ grains, common salt $1\frac{1}{2}$ grains, and all other matters only increased the amount to $4\frac{1}{2}$ grains per gallon. So that there were only two grains of other substances, such as carbonate of magnesia and carbonate of lime. The latter only amounted to about half a grain per gallon. The reason why the water of this district could not be made clear and bright was because of the minerals contained in it. They knew that if lime, alum, zinc, or lead were dissolved in water it became extremely bright and pure in appearance, although it had a greater amount of impurity in it than before. Iron always gave a certain brown-coloured tinge that was certainly not pleasant, and encouraged the growth of vegetable and animal impurities. Lime made the water rather hard, and he had made it a practice to fill the top of his filter with limestone. The result was that the Enoggera water instead of coming out a brown water came out a beautiful clear white water. The same principle ought to be adopted in their large filters for supplying the district, and that would be best worked out by filling the lower parts of the filter, not with gravel but with basalt. That substance combined lime and mineral salts, which were not prejudicial to health, but which had the power of precipitating a large proportion of the organic matter from the water which passed over it. They had only to go to the heads of the Logan, Albert, or Brisbane Rivers, and there where the water came into contact with the basalt it became beautifully pure. They might well take a lesson from nature and purify in an artificial way the supply of water for the population of Brisbane. As regarded the substances which would purify water, alum might be used on a small scale; but it was expensive, and unless very accurate proportions were studied a quantity of soluble alum in water was not exactly conducive to health. It was not precisely poison, but it was certainly not such a substance as it would be desirable to have in the water supplied to the city. As for zinc, it had directly injurious effects. The water coming from iron roofs had a bright and clear appearance, but it contained a certain amount of zinc, and how far that in solution might be considered advantageous to the community was scarcely doubtful. He, however, knew that zinc destroyed the organisms that otherwise would be in the water. Then, again, great loads of organic dust were drifted by the wind on to the tops of houses. That was washed down by the first rain into the tanks, and people drinking the water from those tanks thought it was far better than the Enoggera water. Fortunately, however, zinc, although it might be to some extent prejudicial to health, was very

fatal to the minute organic creatures which would otherwise form in the water. They were killed off straight, and went to the bottom of the tank; so that, perhaps, in incurring the lesser evil they avoided the greater. In regard to lead, no doubt it made the water very bright, but they all knew it was very objectionable; and, what was more, it was exceedingly undesirable to use lead where the water was pure, because pure soft water rapidly dissolved lead, while hard water containing much mineral matter did not. That was one of the matters that was not thoroughly understood—why pure water was so much more dangerous in leaden pipes than the water generally supplied from springs. The water supplied from Enoggera, and other sources near Brisbane, was all very pure and soft. It was free from those salts and sulphates which would render lead pipes less noxious; and he thought some provision should be made in the Bill which would prevent the Board of Waterworks using lead pipes in connections for houses. When he was a member of the Board of Waterworks he did all he could to reduce the amount of lead used in pipes. But the plumbers found it much easier to lay lead pipes, and there was more profit upon it, therefore they preferred it to galvanised iron pipes and made out to a majority of the board that galvanised iron pipes were no good. No doubt they were no good to them, and there were a good many services in Brisbane in which there was as much as 100 feet of lead piping conveying the water, which was a thing that should not be allowed, and as the Board had not been discreet enough to prevent lead being used steps ought to be taken by the legislature whereby the use of lead should be restricted as far as possible. If filtration were rendered compulsory the water rates would be increased by from 30 per cent. to 50 per cent. In fact it would be a great deal cheaper for the Board of Waterworks to buy filters, and deliver them free of cost to every householder in the district, so that they might filter the water for their own use, than to attempt to filter it in bulk. A large proportion of the water consumed was never brought into use for what was termed domestic purposes, where it came into contact with their food. Some investigations were made to find out what was the proportion of water that would be used for domestic purposes, and what would be actually delivered to the consumers, and it appeared, after careful inquiry, that taking Spring Hill and that part of the city, the amount of water actually delivered to the consumers was as much as seventy gallons per head—men, women, and children—per diem. Now, they all know that a great quantity of that must have been wasted. If the families used seventeen gallons for culinary purposes, it was as much as they would use. In the city, as it might be called, in Queen street and the streets parallel, the consumption amounted to forty-one gallons per head, and they would see that the difficulty in supplying the city with water had arisen, more from wanton waste on the part of the consumers than anything else. In fact, as much as 30,000 gallons per week was used by the Railway Department, and that lasted for nearly twelve months, till, at last, after repeated remonstrances, it was put a stop to; but the same sort of thing was going on over the whole place, and at least three-fourths of the water supplied to consumers was absolutely wasted. There was not sufficient water to flush the drains, and therefore it just trickled out, and was no good. That, however, was a matter for administration; but it simply showed that if filtration was to be carried out by the board for the whole water supply, it must involve an enormous expense for very little benefit, and it would be far better to leave the board to use its

discretion. If they dealt with the question in the Bill at all, they might simply make provision that the board, so far as possible, should carry into effect a system of filtration but that no such works should be carried into effect until the plans, and the *modus operandi* in which it was proposed to put it into effect, had been submitted for the approval of the Government and both Houses of Parliament.

The Hon. W. F. TAYLOR said he was sure they all ought to be very much obliged to the Hon. Mr. Gregory for the very lucid explanation he had given of the way in which they might be able to filter the water, so as to make it sufficiently pure for domestic purposes. He thought that hon. gentleman had answered the query of the hon. the President very fully. He had shown that the thing was feasible, and any one who took the trouble to read the matter up, as he apparently had done, would agree that it could be done at a reasonable expense. The cost was a matter which he was not prepared to dispute; he did not know what the cost would be, but whatever it was, it was a minor consideration. If the cost were between £5,000 and £6,000 per annum more, including the interest upon the cost of the filters and the pumping machinery, was that amount to be weighed in the balance against the health of the community, which would be improved by a supply of good, wholesome water, instead of the water they had been accustomed to hitherto? He did not think the cost ought to be considered for one moment. If it were a question of convenience, they were ready to spend a quarter of a million over the extension of a railway to the city, but when it became a question of the health of the community, the question of cost appeared to be almost always thought of. Notwithstanding what had been said to the contrary, he maintained that the consumers would willingly pay 50 per cent. more for filtered water than for the stuff they paid for at present. They could not use the water that was supplied at present, and what they required for domestic purposes was caught on their own roofs. In very few instances was Enoggera water used for domestic purposes. A tank was a necessary addendum to every house in the community, and why should that be the case if Enoggera was so universally used for domestic purposes as some hon. members imagined? The question had been asked, should they use filtered water for washing vehicles and watering horses? He said they certainly should, because the water was so putrid and so disagreeable that it stank them out of their baths in the morning. Was it fit to give to horses or cows? Was water containing such foul matter fit to be used for cleaning vehicles? He could assure hon. members that gentlemen who kept vehicles found it expensive to keep them decent, owing to the condition of the water with which they had to wash them. A vehicle might come from the coachbuilders as bright as possible, newly varnished and painted, and in a very few weeks it would be as old looking as if it had not been touched for six months. It was a matter of economy that they should have clean water. They should have pure water for their horses to drink. Those animals suffered from indigestion the same as human beings, and they were as easily affected by impure water as human beings were. Certain water companies in London filtered the water, and that water was used for watering streets and flushing drains, and for every other purpose, domestic or otherwise. There were one or two points which the Hon. Mr. Gregory had not touched upon in giving the statistics of the experimental filtration which the Board of Waterworks indulged in some seventeen years ago. That appeared to be the only experiment they ever tried, and he was not

aware whether that was only one experiment or one of a series. Nor did the hon. gentleman tell them the rate of filtration per hour. However, the hon. gentleman had clearly told them how it could be done, and he saw no reason why it should not be attempted, and something should not be done to improve the quality of the water. The hon. gentleman had shown, and he thought he had himself shown, by what he said yesterday, that what could be so easily done in other places, could be just as easily done here. The Minister of Justice stated that in Great Britain they could not get pure water notwithstanding the filtration, and they had to resort to certain companies. Those companies had gone in for a merely commercial speculation. They used condensed water, which they aerated, sometimes so as to make it like soda water, and at other times simply sufficiently to give it a pleasant taste, and that was sold freely where the supply of water was not as good as it might be. Water might leave the distribution tank as good and pure as possible; but there were many reasons of contamination before it was actually used by the consumer. Those who had gone into the subject could very easily understand how that contamination might arise. There might be a leakage of sewage matter into the pipes, but the water was more likely to be contaminated where there was not a constant supply of water, but simply an intermittent supply. It was easy to understand that although water might be delivered filtered, and be practically pure, it could not reach the consumer in that condition. That was a subject that was well understood by those who had investigated the subject, and it was repeatedly referred to by the late metropolitan water examiner in London. The Hon. Minister of Justice was evidently under the impression that he had a great objection to what were termed popular institutions—institutions elected by the people. But he was a very staunch supporter of all institutions being elected by the people, and he would go as far as to say that he thought the Legislative Council ought to be elected by the people. He questioned very much if the Board of Waterworks could be called a popular institution; he was under the impression that it was a nominee board. Certainly it was not very popular in the ordinary sense of the term with the people, and had not been so for many years past, owing to the deleterious nature of the compound they served out as water. In respect to the effect of filtration through sand and gravel upon water, the Hon. Minister of Justice stated yesterday that he doubted if chemists knew very much about the subject; he doubted if they were in a position to state distinctly what was pure water and what was impure water. To a certain extent, perhaps, the hon. gentleman was right. It was a very difficult matter for chemists to say absolutely what was pure water, but it was by no means so difficult to say what was impure water, and dangerous to health. Fortunately they did not stand still in these matters, and what the chemist failed to do, the bacteriologist attempted to accomplish. He had in his hand the transactions of the Sanitary Institute of Great Britain, vol. viii. A paper was read at a congress of that institute, held at Leamington in the year 1887, by Mr. Percy F. Frankland, on the subject of bacteriological analysis of water, and that process went a long way towards proving the efficacy of sand filters, of which there might possibly have been some doubt in the minds of some chemists:—

“For many years past we have, of course, been fully alive to the fact that the real danger in sewage contaminated water does not reside in the organic matter discoverable by chemical analyses, but in the presence of minute living organisms capable of producing zymotic disease. But until the last five years very

little was known either of those organisms themselves or of the manner in which they would deport themselves under the various processes of purification to which water is subjected. It is to the beautiful methods of bacteriological investigation, which we largely owe to the genius of Robert Koch, that is due the great advance which has recently been made in our knowledge of the sanitary conditions of water supply, and more especially of water purification. It is, indeed, difficult to over-estimate the stimulus which has been given to this important branch of science by the introduction of these novel modes of investigation.

"By the light of researches on the bacteriology of water, made with the assistance of these methods, the process of filtration assumes an altogether new aspect, as its efficiency can now be gauged by another standard besides the naked eye of the engineer or the organic analysis of the chemist. A standard, moreover, which is far more closely connected than are either of the others with the sanitary aspects of the question.

"By means of the methods of Koch, which I have described elsewhere, it is possible to determine with very considerable quantitative accuracy the number of micro-organisms in a given volume of water, so that, by submitting the water supply of a town to this examination before and after filtration, or, indeed, before and after any other form of purification, we ascertain whether, and to what extent, the filtration or other process of purification in question, has been effective in removing the micro-organisms from the water.

"The value of this standard has been duly recognised by Colonel Sir Francis Bolton, the official examiner under the Metropolitan Water Act, and for nearly two years past I have now periodically submitted the London waters to this test, and during the past twelve months these results have been published by the Local Government Board.

"These periodical examinations, on the one hand, of the river waters from which the water supply of the metropolis is mainly derived, and, on the other hand, of the water after filtration, as supplied to the consumer, have fully established the extraordinary power which this simple process of sand filtration possesses of removing micro-organisms from water. In the following table I have recorded the averages of the reduction in the number of micro-organisms, obtained during the first six months of the present year, in the water drawn from the rivers Thames and Lea respectively."

The number of micro-organisms contained in one cubic centimetre of London water in the year 1886, was—unfiltered Thames water, at Hampton, 45,400; at Chelsea, where the water passed through a filter, 159; at West Middlesex, 180; at Southwark, 2,270; at Grand Junction, 4,894; and at Lambeth, 2,587; unfiltered sea water, from intake of East London Company, 39,300; at New River, where it was filtered, 363; and at East London, 224. He thought with those facts before them it would be very difficult to doubt that sand-filters were very useful. Those who were acquainted with the subject knew that water contained a large quantity of organic impurity, and also large quantities of micro-organisms. Numbers of those were pathological in their nature, and it was to that fact that they owed so many diseases that human beings suffered from; and if, as was clearly shown, sand-filters would reduce those micro-organisms from 30,000 to 300, there must be a great deal more in the matter than had been acknowledged up to the present. The amendment which he proposed did not make it compulsory upon the water board to filter the water. The clause would read:—

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

They had not exhausted all their researches yet. Notwithstanding the Hon. Mr. Gregory, who certainly had been very kind in giving the information he had, he (the Hon. Dr. Taylor) maintained that a lapse of seventeen years was a long time to wait before they renewed investigations into that important matter as to whether the water supply of Brisbane could

be purified by filtration or not, and they must agree with him that if unfiltered water contained such enormous quantities of micro-organisms, many of which were disease-producing, it was their duty to render that water less disease-producing, by diminishing the number of those micro-organisms. In regard to the statement he made yesterday, which the Minister of Justice had commented upon, he was glad to find that the matter had been put in a different light—that Queensland was not deserving of the very unenviable position in which it was placed, regarding its death rate from typhoid fever. But, unfortunately, in looking through the statistics of the last five years he found that Dr. McLaurin had made the mistake of putting down the year 1885 for the year 1884. He, no doubt, took his information from Mr. Hayter's statistics, and made a mistake. In the Registrar-General's report for the last five years ending with the year 1887, he found that deaths from typhoid fever in 1883 were 238; in 1884, 542; in 1885, 197; in 1886, 304; and in 1887, 137. The Registrar-General congratulated them upon the satisfactory diminution of typhoid, and said it was no doubt owing to the improved sanitation of the place. He had not the statistics for the year 1888, possibly the number might have gone up again. He said:—

"The low rate of mortality from typhoid fever, a disease which is essentially the outcome of filth, impure water, want of cleanliness, or imperfect drainage, may be an indication that the principles of hygiene, which are now being more strictly enforced by the boards of health in the populous cities of this colony, improved drainage, and the conservation and distribution of good water to the urban portion of the population, is resulting in the reduction of mortality from this fell disease, which, in the great majority of cases, carries off those in the very prime of life."

He trusted hon. gentlemen would take the amendment into their favourable consideration, because he believed it was necessary, and could not hamper the Board of Waterworks, and would be a source of great good to the community at large.

The HON. C. F. MARKS said he wished to point out that in the preamble of the Bill the water was specified to be pure and wholesome. The board would therefore have, by the Bill, to supply pure and wholesome water; and he thought it was unnecessary to tie their hands as to the method they adopted for purifying the water. He was aware that science was constantly progressing, and electricity had been brought into use for the purification of sewage, and the latter being simply very impure water, the same method could be applied to the purification of water used for domestic purposes. He thought it would be preferable to allow the clause to stand as it was in the Bill, and leave it to the board to adopt what method of purification they thought best.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said the Hon. Dr. Taylor had explained that the statistics which he quoted were from the wrong year. Now, it appeared to him (the Minister of Justice) to be a matter of indifference from what year they were quoted, so long as a gentleman, who professed to be an authority on the health of the colonies, committed himself in print in his inaugural address to an important conference of medical men, and afterwards published his remarks in an important periodical issued in another part of the world. That gentleman was responsible for whatever mistake he made, and they could not place any reliance upon the accuracy of any one portion of his figures if they found another portion was wrong. He was very much struck with a peculiar coincidence in connection with the

extraordinarily bad year for typhoid fever which had been referred to by the Hon. Dr. Taylor. They had had a great many things attributed to changes of Ministry; but he observed that that terrible epidemic appeared to have occurred immediately after the appointment of the late Ministry. He hoped hon. gentlemen would bear that in mind, so that they might have fully before their eyes the facts stated by the Hon. Dr. Taylor. He had no doubt that the hon. gentleman's address would be quoted hereafter to popular audiences of electors as a solemn and important warning which they ought to bear in mind. Otherwise, he thought there was very little for him to say on the amendment. The hon. gentleman acknowledged that it would not make the filtration of water compulsory, and the only grounds upon which such an amendment could be brought forward were that it should be made compulsory. He had pointed out that the amendment, if passed, would have no practical effect. He thought it was better that the clause should be allowed to stand as it was, and he trusted the Committee would adopt it in its original form.

The HON. SIR A. H. PALMER said he would strongly recommend the hon. gentleman to withdraw the amendment, because it would only end in a count out if he did not. His great learning and scientific knowledge had already cleared the House, and the amendment had no chance of being carried.

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR said there was some truth in what the hon. the President had said, that the House had been pretty well cleared out, whether by his speech or not he did not know. With the permission of hon. members, he would withdraw the amendment.

Amendment withdrawn; and clause put and passed.

Clause 21 passed as printed.

On clause 22, as follows:—

"When the flow of water in the Brisbane river or the quantity stored in the reservoirs has been diminished to such an extent as to render it expedient in the opinion of the board to lessen the quantity of water supplied, such supply may be lessened or discontinued as the board thinks proper:

"Provided that, before the supply is discontinued or lessened for domestic purposes, reasonable public notice shall be given by the board of its intention so to do."

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that he, like other members of the Committee, recognised that the question before them was a most important one. They had not had the measure before them very long, and although there were several members who were intimately acquainted with water supply Acts, and all the collateral laws in relation thereto, the majority were not so charged with knowledge. He wished to suggest to the Minister of Justice that the consideration of the Bill be deferred until next Tuesday week. There would be plenty of time to discuss it, and possibly, it might be made a good Bill, or perhaps it might not be altered at all. There was a show next week at Toowoomba, which would cause the absence of certain hon. gentlemen, and he thought in the interval those who took a deep interest in the Bill would have posted themselves up, and could then come forward and give their ideas and conclusions on the information they had gathered. He hoped the hon. gentleman would not go any further that evening, and that he would assent to the suggestion made. It was made in a perfectly kindly spirit, and he was sure the House was desirous of facilitating the passage of the Bill, as far as it possibly could, but there were certain things in it which required further consideration. They had not had time to consider the question, since the Bill left the

other section of the legislature. The measure had been drawn in an extraordinary way, in many points, and he certainly hoped that further consideration of it would be deferred. He was quite sure the passage of the measure would not be delayed by adopting his suggestion.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said it was his intention to move the Chairman out of the chair after passing clause 22, and afterwards give notice of the adjournment of the House over next week, so as to give hon. gentlemen time to further deal with and consider the question and other matters which might come before them. At the present moment, so far as he could judge of the state of business, there was not much prospect of their receiving from the other House during next week any other measure. It would be a matter of convenience to hon. members who had given a considerable amount of attention to their duties this session to give them a few days reprieve from the performance of those duties.

Clause put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on the next sitting day.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE, in moving—

That an address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that Her Majesty will be pleased to grant responsible Government to Western Australia—

said: Hon. gentlemen,—I will reserve any remarks I have to make on this question until the address comes before the House for consideration.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE presented the address, and moved that it be read by the Clerk.

Question put and passed; and address read as follows:—

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

May it please Your Majesty:

We, Your Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Council of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, humbly approach Your Majesty with every assurance of our devotion to Your Majesty's Crown and person: Having in common with the other Australian colonies long enjoyed the advantages of self-government, under which our material prosperity has been increased and our loyalty and devotion to Your Majesty have continued unabated, feeling that the same result will follow the granting of similar powers to our fellow-colonists in Western Australia, we humbly pray that Your Majesty will be pleased to speedily extend to Western Australia a full measure of responsible government, under a constitution similar to that of Your Majesty's other Australian colonies, and that Your Majesty will be pleased to direct that any territory which in Your Majesty's wisdom it may be deemed expedient to exclude from the new constitution may be reserved for settlement under a similar form of government and for the use of British people, thus advancing the cause of Australian federation and unity, and adding Western Australia to the group of loyal, contented, and autonomous colonies.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said: Hon. gentlemen,—I beg to move that the address as read by the Clerk be now adopted. The people of Western Australia have agitated for a considerable time for the granting of responsible government to that colony, and they have appealed to the Governments of all the Australian colonies for their sympathy and support in the appeal they are now making to have a system of government established amongst them, similar to that under which the other colonies have thriven so much. As neighbours of the Western Australians, we have considerable interest in their welfare; and in the interests of Queensland, we also are very much concerned in the prosperity and welfare of the

whole of our Australian neighbours. That is the justification for our addressing Her Majesty upon this subject. We know very well the interest with which the people of Queensland and New South Wales, in the old days, looked forward to the establishment of responsible government, and we know also the immense improvement and change for the better which followed the establishment of responsible government in all these colonies. There is no reason in the world to doubt that the same happy result will be obtained by the people of Western Australia if constitutional government is granted to them. We, in this colony, feel every sympathy and goodwill towards the movement which has been initiated in that colony towards gaining a higher and better position, more independent powers of self action, and the same free exercise of their own judgment as to what is the best course of policy to be adopted for the development of their colony as we ourselves have. I think, hon. gentlemen, that these are good and sufficient reasons why we ought to interest ourselves in the success of the appeal which the people of Western Australia are making. I regret to say that the proposal to hold a conference of members of the Governments of the different colonies during the course of this week has been found impracticable, and in lieu of that the Governments of the Southern colonies have arranged for the adoption of an address to Her Majesty similar to that which you are now asked to approve of. The address speaks for itself clearly, distinctly, and properly. I trust that the House will accept it and adopt it with the unanimity which the subject deserves. I move the adoption of the address.

The PRESIDENT said: Before putting the motion for the adoption of this address, I beg to point out to the hon. gentleman in charge of it that British subjects do not comprise Irishmen. It is the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland," and the term "British people" would therefore not cover Irishmen. I would, therefore, suggest to the hon. gentleman the alteration of the address, by using the term "Your Majesty's subjects."

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said: Hon. gentlemen,—With great respect for what has fallen from the President, I think he is entirely wrong.

The PRESIDENT: I am sure I am not.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The Hon. the President observes that he is sure he is not. What is the old Roman word for the British Isles but "Britannia?" Take the history of the empire right through, from the inception of civilisation up to the present time, and we find that no Irishman ever objected to be called a British subject, and we all know that the word "Britain" is the term used for these countries. Caledonia, Hibernia, Cambria, and Anglia, were all included in the word "Britannia"—Britain. I hope the Hon. the President will excuse me for differing from him. I have never heard the point raised before, and I may remark that there are no men on this earth who are more jealous of not being called "British" subjects than the Scotch. There are no men on this earth who are more annoyed than the Scotch when they hear everything called "English." I respectfully beg to observe that the suggestion of the President is unnecessary, and that the word "British," I apprehend, unquestionably includes all Her Majesty's subjects in the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

The PRESIDENT: I beg leave to differ from the hon. gentleman. The Scotchman is a British subject, because Scotland is included in the words "Great Britain," and has been ever since

the union of Scotland and England. The title of Her Majesty is "Queen of Great Britain and Ireland." Of course it is of no consequence to me how the address reads, but I say that the term "British subjects" does not cover Irishmen.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I would point out to the President—

The PRESIDENT: I have suggested this to the Minister of Justice. I do not want to argue the matter.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I wish to make this observation—

The PRESIDENT: I will not argue, Mr. Paterson; I have allowed you to speak on the subject, but I have only addressed the Minister of Justice.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said: Hon. gentlemen,—I would be very glad, if I saw the necessity for the alteration, to accept the suggestion of the Hon. the President. There is one test that might be applied. Supposing Irishmen came to the colonies, they certainly are British people, and there is scarcely any people who would be more likely to feel annoyed about any distinction being drawn between themselves and others than Irishmen. At the same time, I think the word "British" covers every person who belongs to the British nation, whether Englishmen, Irishmen, or Scotchmen.

The HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Is Ireland not a British island?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE: It is a part of the British Empire. I think the term used covers Irishmen as well as British subjects.

The PRESIDENT: I merely made the suggestion for the consideration of the Minister of Justice. I am of the same opinion still; but, of course, I shall put the question.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—Before we adopt this address I think we should take into consideration whether this House is really not doing something which is against the desire of Western Australia. Had we gone merely as far as asking that Her Majesty would be pleased speedily to extend to Western Australia a full measure of responsible government, that would be in accordance with their desire. But we go on to say that we trust that such part as Her Majesty's Government may be pleased to cut off, may also be granted some constitution. Now what the Western Australians have been specially anxious to get is the whole of their colony brought under responsible government, and when the Home Government was perfectly willing to give them responsible government, so far as the southern division of Western Australia was concerned, they objected to it. They said they would not take it, and they petitioned against it, and offered all sorts of remonstrances. Their object is now to get us to address the Imperial Government, and ask them to grant responsible government for the whole of the territory at present included in the country known as Western Australia. Now the real condition of things is this: The central part of Western Australia is an absolute desert. The first time I crossed it there was 86 miles to travel before I could get across the sand belt, and with the exception of a small patch intervening there is somewhere about 300 miles of barren and useless country, with only here and there a very small isolated patch of useful land. Then you reach a totally different climate on the north-western coast. You get into a tropical condition of things and a totally different class of country. Now the West Australians are very anxious to have the whole of the north added to their Government, and that is

really the point at issue, not the question of responsible government. That would have been agreed to without the slightest difficulty, but they would not accept it, and remonstrated and objected to a constitution being granted for the southern portion of the colony only. The Northern Territory of South Australia and the northern half of Western Australia would form a colony to consist of one general character of country, and would be conveniently governed under one set of laws, which would be unsuitable when applied to the different conditions of the south. The difference is far greater between North Western Australia and South-Western Australia than it is between North and South-Eastern Australia. In Eastern Australia the difference is comparatively small, and there would be far less difficulty in legislating for the whole of the eastern coast together under one code of laws than to deal with the lands on the western coast. I merely mention it in explanation of how the matter stands. If we pass this address the West Australians will exclaim, "Save us from our friends." No doubt what we here suggest would be the best for Australia, and I think it will be desirable that the northern part should be established as a separate colony, and that that separate colony should be under the same system of responsible government as appertains to the eastern colonies of Australia. In fact, it is inexpedient that there should be more than one form of government appertaining to any part of Australia. That is the most important point at issue, and while I fully agree with what is stated here in the address I can see there will be a very serious feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the Western Australians as to the way in which we propose to help them, which is so far from helping them that it is absolutely contrary to their wishes. Under those conditions the House will see what it is proposed to do; but, viewing the matter as an Australian generally, while this course may be the best for Australia as a whole, still we must consider how far we are now acting in carrying out the wishes of those at whose express desire we now propose to take action.

The Hon. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON said: Hon. gentlemen,—This address will have my hearty support notwithstanding the observations which have fallen from the Hon. Mr. Gregory, in the matter of territorial division, which I consider are subordinate indeed to the question before the Australian colonies. Western Australia has sought the assistance of all the other self-governing colonies to help them to achieve responsible government in that colony. I quite agree with what has transpired in the different legislatures as well as out of them, in regard to the whole of that territory not being included in the proposed colony. The whole of the present territory, designated Western Australia, would be too large. It is a country which is not comparatively so rich in resources as the colonies of Eastern Australia, but still I think it would be better that its northern boundary should be a parallel of latitude a little to the north of the boundary between Queensland and New South Wales, as has been recently suggested by the British Government. The House should give the proposed address its hearty support, and I trust that the time is not far distant when the whole of Australia will be under responsible government, and a new colony will be formed in the north-western section of that territory. I think it is gratifying indeed to find that there is a section of our fellow-colonists in Australia who seek our assistance in so important a matter. It is to me, and I am sure it is to others, a peculiar gratification. It is the first instance, I believe, of the kind which has happened in the history of the Australian continent, in which one colony

has sought assistance from other colonies, and that assistance has been unanimously accorded most promptly. This address will be a mark in the history of Australia. One section of its people, now under the régime of a Crown colony, asks that they shall be able to become the masters of their own affairs—one of a "group of loyal, contented, and autonomous colonies." What does autonomous mean? It means that they shall have the power to make their own laws, and do such things as are necessary within their own territory in carrying on government—an ambition that does them credit. We have now an opportunity of helping them, and I hope we shall do so unanimously. Australia will be a power in the world when it achieves the position that all its colonies are on the same basis of self-government. The federation of Australia can never take place while such a block of the map of Australia is a Crown colony. The fact of Western Australia being a Crown colony will be a preventing element to the federalisation of all the colonies of this island continent. There is one part of the address with which I especially agree, and that is the part that expresses the wish that—

"Your Majesty will be pleased to direct that any territory which in your Majesty's wisdom it may be deemed expedient to exclude from the new Constitution may be reserved for settlement under a similar form of government and for the use of British people."

I hope that wisdom may be exercised in future. I need say no more except to repeat that I am glad we have had an opportunity of aiding the people of Western Australia in this matter, and I trust the address will be passed without a dissentient voice.

Question—That the address, as read, be adopted—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE: I beg to move that this House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, August 20.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE: I move that the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-two minutes to 6 o'clock.