Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

WEDNESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 1889

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 25 September, 1889.

Brisbane Water Supply—approval of plans—committee.—Defamation Bill—committee.—Day Dawn Freehold Gold-mining Company's Railway Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4 o'clock.

BRISBANE WATER SUPPLY.

APPROVAL OF PLANS.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE (Hon. A. J. Thynne) moved that the President leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider this Order of the Day.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE, in moving—

That the plan, section, book of reference, and estimated cost of proposed scheme for an additional water supply from the Upper Brisbane River for the city of Brisbane and its suburbs, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 24th instant, be now approved by the Committee—

said the question was one requiring a certain amount of engineering knowledge, and though one might assume a superficial knowledge on such a question, still it was difficult to thoroughly discuss it in a single speech, and that was the reason for asking hon. members to consider the question in committee. It was not long since the Brisbane Water Supply Bill was considered in that Chamber, and therefore he need not refer any further to that subject beyond giving a short description of the scheme now proposed to be carried out by the Board of Waterworks. A reference to the plan and book of reference would show that there were only six private individuals whose properties had to be resumed, or over which rights had to be assumed by the board, in order to carry out the works. With those exceptions, the whole of the works were proposed to be carried out on land vested in the Crown, or in charge of local authorities, being roads along which the pipes would run. The proposed site for the pumping station was at Kholo, on the Brisbane River, at a point about six miles below the place from which the Ipswich water supply was now taken. Below the Kholo Bridge there was a long reach of water, with such natural features as led to the expectation that a continuous and extensive supply of water might be there obtained. The pumping station would include engines, boilers, pumps, and other machinery; engine and boiler houses, tunnelling and other excavations, at an estimated cost of £45,500. From the pumping station a duplicate rising main was to be constructed to the top of Mount Crosby, consisting of two pipes, each 24 inches in diameter. The wisdom of having duplicate pipes was self-evident. It was to avoid any danger of a break-down in the supply, through injury to either of the two pipes. The cost of the duplicate rising main to the top of Mount Crosby, including valves, etc., was estimated at £14,373. On the top of Mount Crosby there was to be a reservoir sufficient to provide for a certain quantity of water being held, and allowed to run, by gravitation, to the city, or either of the two reservoirs at present in existence, without any further pumping or lifting process. The cost of the reservoir, including stand-pipe, valve-houses, inlet and outlet pipes, was estimated at £22,997 5s. 9d. From the reservoir there would be a single gravitation main to Brisbane 24 inches in diameter, and fitted with valves, junctions, etc., at an estimated cost of £148,736 12s. It was at present under consideration whether it would not be judicious to excavate the space required for a duplicate line of main, from the reservoir to the city, or one of the other reservoirs. It was supposed that the cost of that excavation would be, perhaps, one-fourth greater than the cost of the excavations for one line of pipe, but if, in the future, it should become necessary to lay a second main, the cost would be equal to the first cost of laying the main, and there would be also the danger of injury to the first line of pipe through the operations connected with the second excavation. He did not say that the excavation for the second line would be at present carried out. It was a matter that would receive further consideration from the board, and also from the Government, who would have to advance the money. The estimate submitted included a branch main to Enoggera, 16 inches in diameter, with valves, junctions, etc., complete, at a cost of £30,250 1s. The object of the extension was to enable the board, when the Enoggera supply should happen to be sinking, to keep the supply up to the overflow mark as nearly as possible by gravitation from the top of Mount Crosby. There were several smaller items, such as engine-drivers' houses, forming roads, telephone, etc., amounting to £3,750, engineering and surveying £3,000, and there was the addition of 10 per cent. for contingencies, less Customs duties, making a total of £290,178 9s. 9d., or, in round numbers, £300,000. He thought it his duty to mention that the approval of the plan, section, and book of reference would convey with it the legal authority to the board to carry out the further works in the shape of duplication of mains, or any other works to be done, within the limits of the plan, section, and book of reference now before the Committee. He would only add that the scheme had received great consideration for a very long time. The discussion of the question of water supply to the city of Brisbane had been going on for many years, and within the last two or three years it had received a great deal of detailed and careful attention. Under the circumstances, he trusted there would be no hesitation on the part of hon. gentlemen in agreeing to the resolution he had moved. Tenders were received for the work some time since, and intimation had been given to the parties interested, by some of the tenderers, that unless the tender proposed to be accepted was quickly accepted, the contractors would not be able to carry out the work, because there was an expected upward tendency in the home markets, with regard to both labour and material.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said he thought it was due to the Committee, as he had some personal acquaintance with the scheme, that he should afford them some explanation as to its details. At the time he made the preliminary survey for the railway into North Brisbane, he took the levels of the country from Brisbane to Ipswich. Finding that those measurements would be valuable in connection with the supply of water to the city of Brisbane, he extended the survey to the Albert, Logan, and Pine Rivers, and also up the Brisbane River as far as Colinton, and he made some further measurements, even as far as Durundur, on the Stanley River. Before any scheme for the supply of water to the city of Brisbane could be recommended, it was necessary that every possible available source should be examined, and not merely pronounced upon as a matter of opinion, but as a matter of fact. At that time there was only the Enoggera supply available, and he ascertained that there were only two other spots in which reservoirs could be constructed to afford a supply of water to the city of Brisbane by gravitation, one at Gold Creek and another a couple of miles from that place at

Moggill Creek. The question arose at one time whether it would not be possible to bring water from the higher parts of the valley of the Brisbane to the city, so as to avoid the expense of pumping, but he discovered that the level at Colinton was so little above the level of Brisbane, that if the main were laid from the river at Colinton to the city of Brisbane there would not be a sufficient fall to make the water flow through the pipes. Then the question arose whether by going higher up the river a purer and better supply might not be obtained. And he carried on his measurements as far as Durundur and bey ond that place, because in Stanley Creek the water was excellent and a very large quantity was available. He found, however, that the gradient would not admit of the water being brought down along the valley of the river, and the range between Stanley and Caboolture Creeks, by which the distance would be shortened, was too wide to admit of its being tunnelled, while the height of the range was too great for the water to be brought that way by any other means. The scheme was therefore reduced to the question of obtaining a supply from Gold Creek and Moggill Creek reservoirs by gravitation, from the Brisbane River by pumping, or from the Logan and Albert Rivers by pumping. The position on the Logan suitable for a pumping station would have been five or six miles above Logan Village, the most suitable position on the Albert River being some seven or eight miles further. The distance from Brisbane to the point on the Brisbane River from which it was proposed to obtain the water supply was about seventeen miles—a distance which was not unreasonable—and the country presented few engineering difficulties in the shape of tunnels or heavy works. Mount Crosby, where the pumping station was to be erected, stood at an elevation of four or five hundred feet, and that would allow of the pipes being laid on a good hydraulic gradient all the way to Brisbane, so that the conditions were as favourable as could be had for carrying out a scheme of that kind. With regard to the scheme at present in operation, taking Enoggera, Gold Creek, and also Moggill Creek—if a reservoir were constructed at that place—there was not a sufficient area of catch water under the best conditions to supply the city, even at the present time. His original plan was to bring the water from Gold Creek by a scheme which would have been less expensive by £15,000 or £20,000—namely, by tunnelling through the hills to Enoggera, and carrying the water through the present pipes, or additional mains. But another scheme was adopted, and an excessively large pipe was laid to Gold Creek. Fortunately, one-half of that large pipe could be rendered available for the Brisbane River scheme, and the other portion might be used to force water back into the Gold Creek reservoir. There would also be the advantage that, in the case of the city of Brisbane not requiring, at any particular time, the whole of the water pumped, it would be possible, by closing the valves, to throw the water back up Gold Creek into the reservoir, where it could be stored for use when the demand on the pumps was greater than they could supply. There would also be the advantage that a further scheme could be carried out, by cutting a tunnel through from Gold Creek into the Enoggera reservoir, by which the water would be sent, not only into Gold Creek reservoir, but into the Enoggera reservoir, from the Brisbane River, when there was any water to spare; but he was afraid that would not often be the case unless greater care was exercised in its consumption. He ascertained at one time that in the manufacturing part of the city seventy gallons of water per diem were used by every man, woman, and child, and that in the lower part of the city, between forty and forty-five gallons per diem were used by each individual. It was not desirable that they should curtail the amount of water. As regarded the purity of the Brisbane River water, taking the average of dry weather, he did not think it would be any better or any worse than the water supplied by the gravitation scheme. The whole of those waters were very free from any contamination in the shape of minerals, and that might perhaps be an objection, because there should be sufficient mineral matter to keep down organic impurities. As regarded the question as to whether the best line had been adopted from an engineering point of view, he thought that any person who had had an opportunity of inspecting the country, which was not pleasant to ride or drive over, would be quite satisfied that the only thing to do was to adopt as nearly as possible the route which was laid down in the chart. On one side were the mountain ranges, and on the other side there was the river. There had been a scheme proposed to lay down the pipes alongside the railway line; but that would cause an additional cost in getting to the railway and in increasing the distance and length of mains. Besides, the mains would not go through country which was more populous than that through which it was proposed to take them. He did not know anything further that he need state except that he had had a personal acquaintance with that country, and would be quite willing to proceed with any further discussion in the matter if any hon. members wished for information.

The HON. F. T. BRENTNALL said he would like to ask the Minister of Justice whether the Committee was to understand that the adoption of the present plan, specification, and book of reference empowered the board to go in for unlimited expenditure in the future. They had an estimate of cost before them, nearly £300,000. But if he understood the Minister of Justice correctly, the adoption of the present specification and book of reference gave unlimited scope for the expenditure of money in future.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said that the adoption of the specification and book of reference and estimate of cost gave the board power to do whatever was necessary within the limits of the plans to carry out the work. As regarded the amount which they would be at liberty to expend, that would depend upon whether the Treasurer was prepared to advance more than was now proposed to be expended. That was a practical check.

The HON. J. SCOTT said he was very glad to have heard the Hon. Mr. Gregory refer to the Stanley Creek scheme, because a good many people had an idea that there was better water to be obtained from another place in the Brisbane valley. The water in the Stanley Creek was peculiarly pure and clear, and he had been informed by people who knew sufficiently well that the expense of bringing the water the additional distance would not be so great as that of the pumping scheme. The Minister of Justice said that something like £100,000 would have to be spent upon the pipes from the reservoir to Brisbane, and he understood that the distance of Stanley Creek from Brisbane was nearly twice as great; so that the cost of the piping would be £200,000, and it would not be necessary to pump the water. Besides that, the water would be better. However, from what had been said by the Hon. Mr. Gregory, he supposed that there would not be sufficient fall, and that gravitation would not answer. It would save a great deal of money if it were simply a question of laying down the pipes.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said he might state that Stanley Creek, at the only place at which it might be possible to secure water to bring down towards Brisbane, was somewhere about 400 feet above the sea level, and there was a ridge about six miles wide between it and Brisbane. That ridge was about 700 feet high, so that it would be necessary to pump the water up some 300 feet or 400 feet in order to get it out of the Stanley River over into what he might call the Caboolture River valley, from which, of course, it would be possible to bring the water pipes along the present roads. But that would require pumping machinery equal to that necessary in the other scheme, and the amount of friction and high pressure used in forcing the water through several miles of pipe, instead of about a quarter of a mile, would be another item of difficulty. It would possibly require double the amount of steam power; and there was another matter that would have to be taken into consideration, which, from an engineering point of view, was a very important item, but which might have escaped general observation; that was, that the Brisbane River pumping station would be within three or four miles, more or less, of a very good seam of coal, which could easily be obtained. That would reduce the cost of coal for pumping to a minimum. There was no coal up the Stanley within some thirty or forty miles, and the cost would, therefore, be brought up to a high figure. Under all those conditions, it was quite clear, the moment they began to calculate and work it out, even in the rough, the Stanley Creek scheme would be one of far greater effort and labour and cost than anything that could possibly be encountered in bringing the water down from the Brisbane River. The water that came down Stanley Creek was part of the water which would be obtained from the Brisbane River when it got lower down, so that they were not leaving the Stanley River out. Two or three other large streams also joined the Brisbane River with better water in them even than the Stanley. There were at least three beautiful streams coming down along the valley of the Brisbane, but they were subsequently contaminated by organic matter from the vegetation on the banks, and by the time they had reached the place where it was proposed to erect the pumping machinery, they would have lost a great part of their mineral constituents. Most of the water came through basalt and contained considerable quantities of lime and magnesia, which made it inferior for washing purposes, but better for other purposes. If he remembered rightly, Colinton was only 70 feet above the tidal level, at a distance of eighty miles or more away, and that would explain why it would not be practicable to bring the waters by pipes from there. As regarded the quantity of water that would be obtainable, he had seen a point where the three heads of the Brisbane River brought down so little water that there would not be enough to supply the city of Brisbane. But if hon. gentlemen looked at that point they would find that there were some five or six miles of broad reaches of water, making it look like a beautiful navigable river, and it was only because there were bars here and there that it was not so. Nevertheless that area would be valuable as a large natural reservoir, and, in the event of the Brisbane River actually ceasing to run, there would be several months' supply of water for Brisbane. That was an important feature not to be lost sight of. And those reservoirs would not be liable to accidents such as they had recently heard of in the United States. Being so near the tidal level, they would not be liable to burst their bounds. Altogether, whatever might be the condition of water in the Brisbane River, and whatever might be the cost, that was the only source from which water was obtainable for their purposes.

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR said it seemed to him that the matter was being rather hurried over. He was not aware that it was coming on for discussion, and thought it was rather unusual that the plans and sections of such an important project should be laid upon the table one day and brought up for final discussion the next. There was a great deal to be considered in connection with the matter, a great deal that was not gone into when the Water Supply Bill was before them, and some more light had been thrown upon the possibility of obtaining a better and purer supply of water from the Stanley Creek. There was no doubt that the proposed site for the pumping station would be a place where the water must necessarily be contaminated. The Brisbane River watershed was rather thickly populated, and a large number of cattle and sheep were depastured upon it; also there were a considerable number of residences. Consequently the water must undergo an amount of pollution in regard to which they had no information before them. In point of fact they had no analyses of the water. They did not know what it was like, and what the supply was likely to be. All they had obtained in the shape of information was the plans before them. But as regarded the capacity of the waterhole referred to by the Hon. Mr. Gregory, to supply the city in seasons of prolonged drought, and the capacity of the pumping machinery, they really had not the necessary information; at all events he did not feel satisfied in the matter. In such a serious matter as that it would be as well that the plans and specifications should remain upon the table, at all events, for the time usual in other cases. Of course he knew it would be out of the province of anyone to attempt to alter the scheme now; but for the satisfaction of hon. members, they should have more information than they possessed as to the quality of the water, and the efficiency of the supply. In point of fact the quantity obtainable from the river in periods of prolonged drought had been questioned, and doubts had been raised as to whether that was the best scheme. The Hon. Mr. Wood, who knew the country intimately, had lately written to the *Courier* to the effect that the water of the Stanley was comparatively pure, and that its elevation above Brisbane was such that no pumping machinery would be requisite. The water would flow by gravitation to all parts of the city and the neighbourhood, and the cost, although the distance would be nearly double, would be very much less than that of the present scheme. How far that was correct he was not in a position to say. That was the opinion of a gentleman who had an intimate knowledge of the country, and it ought to have some weight; and they ought to be given such information as would satisfy those who had to bear the burden of the outlay of money that was proposed. As was stated by the Hon. Mr. Brentnall, they did not know what the end would be, so far as the cost was concerned. The matter appeared to have been gone into very hurriedly, and they should not commit themselves to a measure which might not only be burdensome, but insufficient in future.

The HON. W. FORREST said it had not been made clear that they were even going to obtain a sufficient supply from the present scheme. There was no doubt that the first cost would be as much as £300,000; but it was not clear that the supply would be sufficient. He had been informed by a very good authority that the Brisbane River above that chain of waterholes ran

almost dry, and unless they took some artificial means to divert other streams to increase that supply, there would not be nearly enough water for Brisbane. He would be glad to hear, before the resolution was passed, that there was a reasonable prospect of a sufficient quantity of water being obtainable.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said he could only say that inquiries had been going on for years, and that the scheme before hon. members had been, by the common consent of those who had been concerned in those inquiries, recommended as the only one practically available for the supply of water. The quantity of water coming down the Brisbane River had been estimated by Mr. Nesbit, at a period of great depression in the river, to be something like 2,000,000 gallons per day. That amount actually came down at a time of drought, at the place where the pumping station was to be erected, and they had every reason to expect that there would be a sufficient supply available for a long time. In regard to what the Hon. Dr. Taylor had said, suggesting the postponement of the question for a time, he did not see what advantage was to be gained by that, unless the hon. gentleman was prepared to come down with some definite counter scheme or proposition to submit. The matter had been under consideration for years, and nothing would be gained by a delay. The hon. gentleman, as well as every other member of the community, had had for a long time an opportunity of making suggestions. The scheme before them had had very full and careful consideration. The hon. gentleman was not present when the Hon. Mr. Gregory made some very pertinent remarks in regard to the scheme, and he was sure, if he had been, that he would have been quite satisfied that the best scheme had been selected, and that, in fact, it was the only scheme practicable.

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR said if the supply to be obtained from the Brisbane River in periods of drought was only to be a matter of 2,000,000 gallons per diem, it would only supply a population of 50,000, at 40 gallons per head per diem, and that was the amount consumed at present in Brisbane. A great deal more than 2,000,000 gallons per diem would have to be obtained somewhere. The scheme was a very comprehensive one, and it would have to supply a population of nearly 100,000, and that number might be expected to increase considerably in the course of a few years; it might possibly be doubled. How could the supply obtainable from the Brisbane River be expected to supply a population of nearly 200,000 people? They ought to have something more definite to go upon than they had. They had been told that they could obtain only 2,000,000 gallons per diem from the Brisbane River, and that was not sufficient, They ought to have the report of some competent person, the Hydraulic Engineer, for instance, so that they would be able to form some idea as to whether the scheme was worth the large expense they were called upon to incur in connection with it.

The HON. W. GRAHAM said it would be very inadvisable to delay the matter, although there was a great deal in what the Hon. Dr. Taylor had said. He had not consulted the plans himself, and was not at all sure that he would do so, because he admitted that he had not the necessary knowledge to make much of them. The Minister of Justice had stated that at the very worst time 2,000,000 gallons a day would be obtainable from the source contemplated. That might only supply a population of 50,000; but they must remember that they would always have the present reservoirs to fall back upon, and certainly the quantity stated would be a very great assistance. If the Hon. Dr. Taylor had been present when the Hon. Mr. Gregory was speaking, he would have known a great deal more. In regard to the scheme the Hon. Mr. Wood wrote to the paper about, Stanley Creek was a tributary of the Brisbane, and the supply was proposed to be taken from the river below where Stanley Creek and some other creeks flowed into it. Therefore, if the supply from the river would not be sufficient, he did not see how that from Stanley Creek could be. Moreover, so far as he could make out from what the Hon. Mr. Gregory had said, it would be necessary to have pumping works even if they obtained the supply from the Stanley. In fact the only thing in favour of the Stanley was that there was less population on its watershed, and the water was less likely to be polluted. The Government had gone to a considerable expense in trying to obtain artesian water, and those attempts had not been successful near Brisbane, and he did not see how any Government could so alter the conformation of the country that they could create a supply where nature had not created it for them. As to the expense, there was very little doubt that if they went to the Main Range they might get an ample supply of water by gravitation, but the expense would be enormous.

The HON. F. T. BRENTNALL said he hoped no hon. member would take it for granted that a proposal such as that now before the Committee, involving the expenditure of so much money, should be voted right off without discussion. He had asked the Minister of Justice a question as to the future cost to which Parliament would commit itself by the adoption of the plan, section, and book of reference, and the reply he had received confirmed his impression that they were giving unlimited power to the board to expend money, so long as they kept on the lines marked out on the plan. So long as they did not take up another scheme, they could spend £3,000,000 instead of £300,000, and they need not go to Parliament for permission to incur that expenditure. Something had been said about the explicit explanation given by the Hon. Mr. Gregory—and he had followed, with a great deal of pleasure, the exposition by that hon. gentleman of the various schemes that had been brought forward—but he understood the hon. gentleman to say that the supply which it was now proposed to provide, would not be sufficient for the requirements of the city, even with its present population, if the consumption went on at the present rate. If that was the case they were really asked to sanction the expenditure of nearly £300,000 on a scheme that would be utterly inadequate in ten years' time even for the north side of the river; omitting the south side with its rapid suburban growth. With such an admission from a gentleman of the Hon. Mr. Gregory's experience he felt still more induced to question the policy of voting right off without consideration such a plan. The main consideration was whether the city would get value for the money spent; and he should like the Hon. Dr. Taylor's inquiry to be answered, if possible, so that the Committee might know whether the supply was likely to be sufficient for future requirements for the city and the whole of the suburbs for the next fifty years.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said that in dealing with the question as to whether the supply would be sufficient for the city of Brisbane, what he wished to convey was that the present reservoirs or any additional reservoirs which might be constructed to supply the city by gravitation would be inadequate to supply

even the present population, and therefore it was necessary to look to the Brisbane River as a further source of supply.

The HON. J. SCOTT said he had no wish to oppose the scheme now proposed, but he would suggest that the Government might take steps to set apart the catchment area of the Stanley River as a water reserve for the purpose of supplying the city of Brisbane and its suburbs.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said that the greater part of that country was now taken up by settlers. There was a considerable amount of settlement on the Blackall Range, and it was hoped that the settlement there would increase. If such reservations were made, it would be better to go to the other heads of the Brisbane River —Emu Creek and the head of the Brisbane River itself—where a better supply could be obtained than from the Stanley River, and where the country was more sparsely occupied. But the supply to be obtained at the site of the proposed pumping station included not only those three heads of the Brisbane River, but also Lockyer Creek; and there was no possibility of finding a larger catchment area within any reasonable distance.

The HON. W. F. TAYLOR said he might inform the Committee, in reference to what had fallen from the Hon. Mr. Graham, that he had been informed by the Hon. Mr. Wood that there would be no difficulty in impounding the waters of the Stanley River at a sufficient elevation, and in a sufficient quantity, to provide an unlimited supply for the city of Brisbane. That was one of his principal reasons for urging the consideration of that scheme. He had no personal knowledge of the locality; and he made that explanation because the Hon. Mr. Graham appeared to think that he wished to go to the Stanley River where the supply was less, although he considered that the supply further down would not be adequate. He thought the Minister of Justice ought to inform the Committee whether the pumping machinery would be equal to raising 2,000,000 gallons a day. No facts had been put before the Committee as to the quantity or quality of the water, or the power of the machinery to be used.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said he had no detailed particulars as to the capacity of the pumps, but they were calculated to pump sufficient water to supply a population of 300,000. He believed they were calculated to raise a great deal more than 2,000,000 gallons a day.

The HON. B. B. MORETON said he would like the Minister of Justice to inform the Committee whether the pumps were to be constructed in the colony, or whether tenders from outside the colony would be accepted?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said that tenders had been received from outside the colony, and inside as well. Only one tender from inside the colony was received, and unfortunately that was 60 per cent. above the lowest tender received. The disproportion was too great to allow of that tender being accepted, and the pumping machinery would have to be obtained from England.

The HON. SIR A. H. PALMER said he would like to call the attention of the Minister of Justice to a statement which appeared in the daily papers within the last week. It was stated that the plans for the pumping machinery were not prepared in the colony, that the manufacturers at home were allowed to make their own plans, that the pumps and pumping machinery were to be supplied by them on plans of their own, and that parties in the colony who would have tendered for the work could not do so because they could obtain no plans. That was a statement that should be either confirmed or contradicted.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said that in calling for tenders for powerful pumping machinery or large bridges, it was customary not only to provide a plan, showing the general idea, for the inspection of the tenderers, but also to invite the tenderers to put in their own specifications of the particular machinery they proposed to supply. The result of that practice, both in England and on the Continent of Europe, had been highly satisfactory. And in New South Wales, the construction of the Hawkesbury Bridge would have been absolutely blocked, if it had not been that one of the conditions was that the parties tendering might either tender according to the official specifications, or according to specifications of their own, because the tenders based on the former were so high as to be almost out of reason. He thought it was very desirable that tenderers should not be tied down entirely to the specifications on which the tenders were called. He could take hon. members to places where excellent pumping machinery had been put up in such a position and condition as to work at the greatest possible disadvantage. He had found in one instance an elaborate apparatus to prevent the pipes from bursting, but simply because someone forgot to have a little tap put in the proper place the whole thing was waterlogged, and a great deal more coal had to be used than ought to have been necessary. The pump went "bang, bang, bang;" and he tried to tell the man working the machinery what he ought to do; but the man thought he knew better than anybody else, and he supposed it was going "bang, bang, bang" yet. In another instance in which he had seen waterworks constructed from local designs, the relative proportions of the cogwheels had been inverted, and the result was that the sound produced, when the machinery was in motion, was something like that caused by a steam hammer. He could give many other illustrations, but that was quite enough to show that it was not advisable that the tenders should be confined to local manufacturers. At the same time, if local engineers were able to carry out the work, it was very desirable that every inducement should be offered to them to do so. He was satisfied, however, that in the case of heavy works, such as would be necessary in connection with the present scheme, where the quantity of material was great, and the amount of labour comparatively small, the cost would be at least 50 per cent. more. Hon. gentlemen knew very well that tenders were called by the New South Wales Government some time ago for the supply of engines. Every obstruction was put in the way of tenderers outside the colony, and every facility afforded to local tenderers, but the result was that the engines could be supplied by English firms at £2,000, while they could not be supplied in the colony for less than £3,300. The reason for the difference was the expense of putting up special machinery necessary for doing the work in the colony, whereas the English firms had those machines already in use. In the case of a locomotive, an English manufacturer could estimate to the fraction of a penny the cost of every piece of metal used, but that could not be done so accurately in the colony, and the price of labour in the colony was more than 100 per cent. above the English price.

The HON. SIR A. H. PALMER said he had no doubt the Committee were much obliged to the Hon. Mr. Gregory for the lucid explanation he had given in connection with matters that had nothing to do with the question he had

asked. The question he had put to the representative of the Government was whether it was true that the local manufacturers were asked to tender without any plans and specifications having been prepared by the proper officers on which they could tender?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said he did not know that he could give a categorical reply to the hon. gentleman's question, but he could inform the Committee that the only machinery which was to be obtained outside the colony was the pumping machinery. It was a recognised thing in the construction of large waterworks, that the pumping machinery must be of the best character obtainable, and there were, in the old country, firms who were so pre-eminently successful in supplying pumping machinery, that their work gave an assurance of satisfaction which it would be hard to get elsewhere. The members of the board had endeavoured, as far as possible, to give the local tenderers every fair opportunity of tendering, and whether the plans of the pumping machinery were prepared in the old country or not, he was sure the board did not call for tenders without giving colonial tenderers an opportunity of examining the plans. It was not possible that the rumour could be true that no opportunity had been given for local tenderers to examine the plans of the works required. The board desired to have the work supplied by local tenderers, if possible, but they were obliged to select the lowest tenderer, who happened to be outside the colony, when the only tender received in the colony was 60 per cent. higher.

The HON. SIR A. H. PALMER said he had not yet received an answer to his question. Were any plans and specifications prepared on which local manufacturers could tender? He had not yet received an answer to that question.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE said he was not in a position to say definitely one way or the other; but he could say that when the Board of Waterworks called for tenders in the colonies they did not do so without submitting full information, together with plans of the work to be done, to the people who were asked to tender. He had a little more information upon the subject mentioned by the Hon. Sir A. H. Palmer now, and that was that the scheme of tendering was that each tenderer was to supply in his tender a description of the machinery which he considered it necessary to use in connection with the pumping. Each tenderer had to supply his own design for the pumping machinery, and the board were to select the one which was thought to be the most suitable and the most convenient.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, and the report was adopted.

On the motion of the MINISTER OF JUSTICE, the following message was ordered to be sent to the Legislative Assembly:—

The Legislative Council having had under consideration the plan, section, book of reference, and estimate of cost of proposed scheme for an additional water supply, from the Upper Brisbane River, for the city of Brisbane and its suburbs, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 24th inst., beg now to intimate their approval of the same.

DEFAMATION BILL.

COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the MINISTER OF JUSTICE, this Order of the Day was postponed until after the consideration of Order of the Day, No. 3.

DAY DAWN FREEHOLD GOLD-MINING COMPANY'S RAILWAY BILL.

COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the MINISTER OF JUSTICE, the President left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider the Bill.

The various clauses and the preamble were passed as printed.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

The report was adopted; and, on the motion of the MINISTER OF JUSTICE, the third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at a quarter to 6 o'clock.