

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**WEDNESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 1900**

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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER, 1900.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

## PAPER.

The following paper, laid on the table, was ordered to be printed:—Report upon the working of the Queensland Government Savings Bank for the year ended 30th June, 1900.

## DENTISTS BILL.

## FIRST READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. J. G. Drake) presented a Bill to provide for the registration of dentists qualified to practise in Queensland, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed; and the second reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

## BUILDING BILL.

## COMMITTEE.

On clause 1—“Short title”—

HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said he was unfortunately absent when the Bill was discussed on the second reading yesterday afternoon, but he ventured to submit that they ought not to proceed with such a technical and highly intricate measure after only twenty-four hours' consideration. For himself, he had given an hour or two to the consideration of the Bill the other day at home, and he had come to the conclusion that, while it was no doubt admirably suited to

the requirements of a country like England, he should require a great deal of information before he would be satisfied that it was one which the Council ought to assent to under the conditions obtaining in Queensland. At the same time he congratulated the Postmaster-General for bringing in a measure of the kind. For long he had deplored that in Brisbane and the larger towns of the colony there was no legislation to prevent the vagaries of builders and owners of land. Some of the buildings he saw erected were extraordinary—astonishing. Whether from an architectural or sanitary point of view, they were most of them more or less defective. Perhaps the Committee would excuse him for not confining his remarks to clause 1, as he had not had an opportunity of taking part in the debate on the second reading, but he wished to offer a few objections why the Bill should not be gone on with just now. Not only in the metropolis, but in other important towns, the erection of buildings was a matter in which the Government ought to have interposed long ago. While opposed to the radical tendency of the day to interfere unnecessarily with the rights and privileges of the individual, at the same time the public must be protected from the indiscretion and improprieties that had been perpetrated with regard to buildings. The majority of the buildings in the large towns had been erected with an almost total disregard to consideration of health. People came from the cold climate of England to the warm climate of Queensland, and built their houses on lines which were found suitable in Great Britain. They forgot that, for climatic reasons, they wanted quite a different description of habitation. He himself had had a little experience in that line, having put up a great many houses, more probably than he should have done if he had been a wise man. Of course the old adage might be turned against him that “Wise men occupy and fools build,” but at the same time if there were no fools there would be no homes for the wise men to live in. His own opinion of the Bill before the Committee was that it was a most admirable adaptation from the Imperial statutes, but that it would be unworkable in Queensland in its present form. In the first place it ignored the necessity of a comprehensive and complete system of sewerage. Substantial and permanent buildings, which the Bill seemed to provide for, could not be erected unless provision was made for drainage. Unfortunately, in Brisbane, and in other towns of the colony, there was no proper drainage. Some hon. gentlemen might remember that in past years he had strongly urged upon the citizens the necessity of a proper system of sewerage, yet he now came down, after an absence of four years, to find that that was apparently further off than ever. They would never have a healthy city—a city fit to live in—until they had a complete and comprehensive system of sewerage. It might be thought he was departing from the question before them, but in a sense sewerage was a superstructure of the buildings which the measure contemplated interfering with. He maintained that there were clauses in the Bill which could not possibly be carried out unless they had a system of sewerage; and from that standpoint it was at any rate premature to pass the measure as it at present stood. Of course, it would be possible to insert a clause that the provisions of the Act should be suspended in any town or city in which it might be proclaimed where sewerage still had to be supplied, but they were scarcely prepared for that. He had only read the abstract statement of the Postmaster-General's speech as reported in that morning's *Courier*, not having had access to *Hansard*, but it did appear to him that the

hon. gentleman had not furnished the Council with sufficient reasons for passing the Bill, and it behoved them to consider the Bill very seriously before passing it into law. Such a measure should not have been introduced unless strongly supported by expert opinion. They had had Royal Commissions on all sorts of questions, but if ever there was a question which would justify the examination and report of a Royal Commission, it was that of a Building Act. But, while admitting so much, he hoped the Postmaster-General would not construe his remarks into an encouragement to the Government to appoint more Royal Commissions. He thought they had had quite enough of them for the present. If hon. members intended to seriously deal with the matter, the better course would be to have it thoroughly inquired into by a select committee; and if that were done he was sure that the expert evidence obtained would prove the necessity for altering many of the provisions of the measure. He might refer to one case. Provision was made for the appointment of an officer called a "surveyor." That surveyor was entrusted with huge powers, by means of which, if he were a corrupt man, he could almost ruin some builders who would not comply with his demands. Granting that the man appointed as surveyor by the local authority would be the quintessence of honesty, there was not in the Bill any guarantee against incompetency. The appointing clause did not even provide that he should be a person of knowledge, experience, and skill. He thought the Bill could be made a good and serviceable Bill, which would ensure to the metropolis and other important towns that the buildings would be not only ornate and comfortable, but also healthful; but the Bill appeared to be drawn with a profound indifference to the fact that bubonic plague had been amongst us. He had been told by a gentleman who was an authority on the subject that one provision of the Bill could not have been more excellently framed if the object had been not to construct houses for men but abodes for rats. He was referring now to provisions respecting foundations and flooring. A measure of this kind should be one whose extension to other towns than the metropolis was contemplated. For instance, in Rockhampton, where he lived, the climate was so excellent and invigorating that the residents could to a certain extent disregard the laws of health; at the same time, even in that town there should be some statutory provision that buildings should be erected with regard to sanitary conditions. He was glad to notice that the Bill recognised, for the first time in the legislation of the colony, that there were certain lands below flood level which people should be prevented from building upon, except under prescribed conditions; but in a measure of this kind there was the danger that enterprise might be interfered with by making the cost of building so excessive that people would not go into it. He noticed that there was

[4 p.m.] no provision in the Bill in regard to steel buildings, which were found in America to be most economical and comfortable, and believed to be the most durable. The Bill required a vast amount of profound consideration, and it ought not to be passed unless its provisions were fortified by evidence on which hon. members could place reliance in cases in which their own experience and knowledge of the subject did not enable them to form a judgment. He did not object to clause 1 going through, and probably other clauses; at any rate he was not going to obstruct. He had no hesitation in saying that he was a supporter of the Government, and it was his

desire to help them; but he wanted the Bill to be made a serviceable Bill, one that would not need constant tinkering, and would not cause vexation and expense when people were anxious to improve their properties. He would be happy to assist the Postmaster-General as far as he could, but he objected to the Committee being hurried; if it came to passing clause by clause this afternoon he would feel bound to record his emphatic protest.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL did not yield to the Hon. Mr. Buzacott in desiring that the Bill should be thoroughly discussed; and it appeared to him that at this time of comparative leisure, before there was a rush of business from another place, they might very well devote the time of the Council to the consideration of this measure. He did not anticipate that they would be discussing this Bill this afternoon; he thought they would have been discussing another Bill, which it was proposed to refer to a select committee. But, seeing that they had no other business before them except this Bill, he thought they might spend some little time in the consideration of the earlier clauses; and he thought the interesting speech made by the Hon. Mr. Buzacott was in itself justification for the action taken in going on with the Bill this afternoon. The hon. gentleman said he did not notice in the report of his (the Postmaster-General's) remarks yesterday that he offered any special reason for the passing of the Bill at the present time. The special reason was this: Buildings were going up in Brisbane which should go up under proper inspection. They were buildings which were to last fifty, or 100, or perhaps hundreds of years; and if steps were not taken now to see that those buildings, so far as their foundations and walls and other parts of the structure were concerned, were carried out upon proper scientific principles, and sufficient for the purpose, the results of any defects would be felt years and years hence. It was true that the Bill was founded on an English Bill, but it had been very carefully modified to suit the circumstances of Queensland. There was a clause to the effect that the provisions of the Act might be extended by the Governor in Council to any part of the colony. Seeing that those buildings were going up, why should they wait till there was a complete system of sewerage in operation in Brisbane? He admitted that it was desirable to have a proper system of sewerage introduced and carried out; but that was another subject. He was glad the hon. gentleman did not quite approve of the suggestion that the Bill should be referred to a Royal Commission—which would only mean delay; and he was not sure that, if it were referred to a select committee, any information was likely to be obtained that had not been obtained already. The Bill had been contemplated a long time; it had been in hand a long time; and he could assure hon. gentlemen that the opinion of experts had been taken. Men who were qualified to speak from the position of architects and builders had been consulted in the matter; and the Bill might be said to represent the consensus of opinion with regard, at all events, to those two classes of persons as to the provisions necessary to carry out the objects of the Bill. As to the surveyor, who the hon. gentleman thought would be an autocrat invested with enormous power, if he would look more carefully through the Bill he would find that the power of the surveyor was limited very much to surveying the buildings and expressing his opinion on them, and that he was not vested with any extraordinary powers. He had no wish to unduly press the Bill; but he thought they could hardly spend an hour this afternoon more profitably than in considering the earlier clauses

of the Bill. What he would suggest was that they should go on as far as the 32nd clause, which commenced the part of the Bill that dealt with the requirements of the law in connection with buildings. It referred to the second schedule, which was a very voluminous document, and was perhaps capable of considerable improvement. He was not prepared to say whether it was or not; but at that point in the Bill commenced the provisions which applied to buildings which came under the Act. The previous clauses related to what he might call the machinery, dealt with the extent to which the Act was to operate, the appointment of a surveyor, and the nature and the time and the notices which had to be served on the builder before any action could be taken against him in connection with any contravention of the Act or any irregularity. If they were to address themselves to the earlier portion of the Bill that afternoon, they would be in a very much better position next week for going on with the discussion of it. There was no way by which they were more likely to get a clearer idea of the scope of the Bill than a discussion of its earlier clauses. Should it appear to the Committee that there was any extraordinary difficulty in connection with any of the clauses, or that there was anything not understood which perhaps a little inquiry would put right, that clause could be postponed, and it would always be possible to re-commit the Bill for further consideration of clauses as to which any doubt existed.

HON. A. J. THYNNE said that he also was unfortunately unable to be present yesterday at the second reading, and he must confess that he was not prepared to discuss such an important Bill in committee to-day. Not having been able to thoroughly study the measure he did not feel able to criticise it in detail as it went through. At the same time he would say there was scarcely any measure more urgently required in the city and suburbs of Brisbane to-day than a proper Building Act, and he was sure the Postmaster-General would have the support of the great majority, if not all, the members of the Council in endeavouring to get a measure of that character passed into law this session. Now was the time, when new buildings were becoming more numerous, to take the matter up and deal with it before things were done which could not be undone. He was under the impression, which he believed to be a correct one, that this Bill was largely the outcome of the work of the combination of architects who had been pressing on the local authorities the necessity for a proper Building Act; and the fact that they had taken that interest in it for so long was a strong recommendation of the measure they supported. He knew that some of those architects had time after time pointed out the dangers and disadvantages, both to property-owners and to the public, by the absence of a proper system of regulating buildings. With regard to their work to-day he thought the afternoon might very well be devoted to the consideration of the interpretation clause. Questions would arise from it which ought to be discussed at the very outset, and which would enable them, as they went along, to get a better grasp of the Bill as a whole. The difficulty he felt was that they had not yet so considered the Bill as to be able to make a careful investigation of it in committee; and, such being the case, it might be as well to let the Bill stand over for a few days. Such a course, he knew from his own experience, saved time in the long run, and it enabled members to make a more thorough investigation into the subject of the Bill.

HON. W. F. TAYLOR said there was no doubt the Bill was very urgently required, but that was no reason why it should be rushed

through without due consideration. He had just seen the Bill for the first time. He was not present yesterday, and had not read *Hansard*, so that he did not know what had been said about it; but from a remark of the Postmaster-General one would infer that the Bill was urgently necessary in order to affect some particular building now under erection.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Not a particular building; a number of buildings in course of erection now.

HON. W. F. TAYLOR: The Act was not to take effect until the 1st January, so they had plenty of time before them for its consideration. If it were to come into operation as soon as it was passed, they could understand the necessity for hurry; but as that was not the case, they ought to have an opportunity for discussing the matter properly. The only expert they had in the Council, an architect, was absent at that moment, and he wanted to read the Bill carefully and form a sound opinion upon it. He might say that he was very much in favour of the Bill being sent to a select committee; it would not lead to very much delay, and hon. gentlemen would know exactly what it was they were doing, whereas if they passed the various clauses through Committee, the majority, he was afraid, would know nothing about them. In any case, the consideration of the Bill ought to be postponed to some future day.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL wished to say that the reference he made to buildings going up now in Brisbane was in answer to the objection of the Hon. Mr. Buzacott that he had not stated any reasons for the introduction of the Bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2 put and passed.

On clause 3—"Commencement of Act"—

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he would formally move that the clause stand part of the Bill, but he would ask the Council to negative it as it was unnecessary, seeing that the commencement of the Act was contained in the interpretation clause, page 3.

HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said the paragraph in the interpretation clause referred to was not an interpretation but an enactment, and ought to stand as a separate clause. It would be more convenient, and in accordance with practice.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the interpretation clause was full of matters which might be said to be enacting matter; in fact, the whole of it was an enactment.

Clause put and negatived.

On clause 4—"Interpretation"—

HON. J. T. SMITH said it seemed to him that clause 4 was the core of the Bill, and it was full of difficulties from one end to the other. It was not understandable without an expert to explain to them all the technicalities of the architecture, and it would be impossible to discuss it in an assembly such as the Council was. No doubt the Bill had been considered by experts, but before being asked to pass the various clauses they ought to be in a position to say they were right beyond the mere assertion of experts. He quite agreed with other hon. gentlemen who had spoken, that it was most important that the question should in some way be settled, but they ought to know exactly what they were doing, and he doubted very much whether anyone present could read through the Bill and understand what it all really meant. He agreed with the Hon. Mr. Buzacott that the question of sewerage was of immense importance in connection with the Bill, which would be incomplete without some such provision.

Then, with regard to the question of the surveyor, of course there should be [4.30 p.m.] proper inspection, and he did not think the powers of inspection could be too great if they were confined to the building—that was to say, up to the point of stopping the works until investigation was made. At the same time, a man should not be allowed to interfere with the construction of a building under the Act unless he was really an expert; and it might be as well to require that the surveyor should have credentials from some institute.

HON. A. J. THYNNE: In this clause there were over forty definitions, and it might, perhaps, be of advantage to take them seriatim. The first definition was that of “adjoining owner” and “adjoining occupier”; and one of the first points to look to was in what respect the rights or liabilities of adjoining owners were being altered.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: That is in Part VI.

HON. A. J. THYNNE: This interpretation was the alphabet from which they had to learn the technical language of the Bill; and when they came to a definition which suggested possibilities of great difficulty the sooner they were mentioned the better. A little lower down there was the definition of “centre of the roadway,” and he would like to know whether every precaution had been taken not to in any way affect the law as it stood at present in the Undue Subdivision of Land Act, which provided certain widths of streets and lanes, and prohibited the erection of buildings within a certain distance from the centre line of those streets or lanes. At a later part of the same clause he noticed something that suggested to him a divergence from the present law in the definition of “the prescribed distance,” which was “twenty feet from the centre of the roadway where such roadway is used for the purpose of carriage traffic.” He would have expected to see there “thirty-three feet,” being the half of the chain wide standard width of road. Later on, in the same definition, it said, “ten feet from the centre of the roadway where such roadway is used for the purposes of foot traffic only.” It suggested to him at once, as a matter for investigation, whether the Bill would not really authorise the construction of buildings along those narrow lanes—a thing that was distinctly opposed to that very useful Act, the Undue Subdivision of Land Act. This Bill was supposed to come into force in a few months in North and South Brisbane; and it was no secret that in the city of Brisbane there was absolutely no starting point for the surveys which could be referred to to-day; and there was scarcely a single block or section of the city that was not irregular in shape or occupied a little more or a little less than the specified frontage as shown by the deeds of grant. He knew something about this matter from practical experience, because he had to re-erect a building which had been held by the same family for something like sixty years, and directly the building was commenced, notice of encroachment on the street was received. It was one of the first buildings erected by a private individual in that part of the city, and ought to have been taken as one of the starting points in fixing the alignment; but other people who had built more recently had gone out of the line a little, and wished to force these people to alter their alignment. Was this power to be given to the surveyor under the Bill when it was a recognised fact that there was no datum point from which to start surveys, and no definition of the exact boundaries of any particular block in the city of Brisbane to-day. He hoped the Committee would

direct their attention to this matter so as to provide a sure means of getting over this difficulty in the future. There was no requirement in the Bill that the surveyor should be a competent licensed surveyor. He should not only be that, but if he was to have power to regulate the alignments of the streets of the city of Brisbane he ought to be a man of high professional attainments and capacity. Another way in which the difficulty might be got over would be by making provision for the Governor in Council to appoint a committee of competent surveyors to lay down the nearest approach to the proper alignment of the streets without disturbing existing occupation. He thought the whole subject wanted dealing with in a broader and more detailed method than was contemplated in the Bill. In some parts of the city every inch of frontage represented a considerable number of pounds; and unless care was taken to make proper provision in regard to this matter it might, not only lead to shearing of the frontage of an owner, but also to litigation between adjoining owners in other portions of the block. In the interests of peace amongst adjoining proprietors it would be well if some scheme were devised for dealing with this great difficulty. There was in the Bill a provision by which the erection of buildings for dwellings on low-lying land was prohibited unless they could be drained by gravitation into an existing sewer; and he thought it was a pity that had not been in force some time. In 1893 he expressed the opinion—and he had expressed it several times since—that nothing better could happen to the people of Brisbane than the resumption of those low-lying flooded lands and their conversion into places of public resort, parks, grazing lands, or something of the kind. He was not speaking of places used for business purposes, but places used as dwellings; and he thought it would be an excellent thing, in the interests of public health, if means could be found to bring about a migration of the inhabitants from the low-lying, unhealthy portions of the city and suburbs to the higher lands. This provision, he thought, would be one step towards bringing that about; and when people realised that building on those low-lying lands was prohibited, they would be eager to dispose of them to the local authorities or the Government, or whoever might be entrusted with the power of utilising these low-lying lands, at a reasonable price, which would be about their real value. Then came another point: He should like to have some light thrown on the question of the “level of the ground.” There again they were in danger of running counter to the existing law, which left to the municipality the power and duty of fixing the level of the street. Apparently that power was now given to the surveyor, and, beyond him, to the police magistrate. So that the fixing the level of the street, in some circumstances at any rate, would be taken out of the hands of the municipality and transferred to the hands of an officer whose decision was liable to review by a police magistrate. At present, the owner of land might call upon a municipality to fix the level of the street to which his land fronted, and once the municipality had fixed the level of that street they were not at liberty to alter it unless they were prepared to pay to the owner of that land compensation for any damage sustained by him in consequence of the alteration of the level. They must preserve those rights, and it would not do to run the risk of having a dual authority in existence that might upset the landowner's rights, or might, on the other hand, upset the rights of the municipal council itself, and expose the council to actions for damages which were not caused by any act of theirs. He thought he had said enough to show how close

and careful the study of that clause should be. The Bill was one with which the Council was adequately qualified to deal, and they should not allow it to pass out of the House with defects in it which it was their duty to prevent.

HON. J. McMASTER: There was no doubt that the Bill was a very good one, but it ought to be very carefully gone into before it became law. There certainly must be a head somewhere—call him a surveyor—who would be empowered to go to a contractor and tell him he must carry out his building in accordance with the Act. Such surveyor would have to be a most efficient officer; if not—if he occasioned injury to builders or to the public—he would not long be suffered to hold his position. The local authority would very soon get rid of an incompetent officer. With regard to the starting point to which the Hon. Mr. Thynne referred, he was inclined to think the hon. gentleman was in error. He believed there was a starting point in Brisbane. At all events, the Government some years ago carried out a survey of a portion of the city, and the municipal council, for a copy of that plan, paid £300. That starting point, as far as he remembered, was at the Government House gate, went on to Ann street and down to Petrie's Bight, and took in the city proper. He was aware there had been difficulties of alignment by parties who had commenced to build since that survey was made by the Government, but whenever any difficulty arose with the municipal authorities they referred the persons to those plans, and they had adhered to them as far as the survey had gone. They ought to ascertain the effect of the Bill upon other properties which might not be in that particular portion of the city. As to the Bill itself, he had not been able to read it yet. Probably there was much in it that he might not understand, but it had been before the local authorities and the architects of Brisbane for many years, and had been carefully considered by them. At the same time it was desirable that it should be thoroughly gone into by the Council, because a very small error might cause a very large expenditure to many people. He knew of one error in Brisbane which had cost the citizens many thousands of pounds.

HON. A. C. GREGORY: Something had been said with regard to the starting point at Government House gate. [5 p.m.] When he was Surveyor-General he naturally looked to that point as one of great importance, more especially as he knew that under the old system every surveyor laying out a block of land, for certain reasons, used to add a link at the end of every ten chains. There were also some stone pillars put up, one of which was still standing at the corner of the Surveyor-General's office. He had others placed at the corner of Adelaide and George streets, but as he was looking out of his window one day he saw that a drain was to be repaired, and the corporation labourers took out the posts for that purpose. When they had finished their work it was their duty to replace the posts, but, finding the ground at that particular spot rather hard, they put them in a yard away. From that it would be easy to understand how complications could arise. What he first did was to fix the position of the Observatory on the top of Wickham terrace in connection with the position of the windmill, which was an old structure erected in early times. There they had something like a starting point that could be relied upon. His successor, Mr. Tully, carried out a trigonometrical survey on an accurate basis to find out the exact position of all the more important buildings in the streets that came within the scope of the municipality, but it was not completed from a practical point of view. What ought to be done was to continue that sur-

vey in which would be seen the actual streets that now existed and all the more important buildings fixed on the plans by actual measurement. With regard to surveyors, a man called a surveyor under a municipality was a surveyor of a sort; he was a surveyor of buildings, of walls, and of cesspits, all of which were necessary and useful; but the surveyor contemplated in the Bill would have to be of a higher class, able to make plans of streets and show the position of buildings on a sound basis. He might state that when he laid out Roma street straight into the bush he was told he was putting a white elephant on to the municipal council, that they would never be able to do anything with it. Afterwards he was rather cavilled at because he had not made it two chains wide, which he could not have done, because private property came in the way. However, those were professional details which he perhaps ought not to have brought into the discussion. To return to the clause, the word "street" seemed to need a little more definition. In the Undue Subdivision of Land Act, all streets in the suburbs or outside the municipality must be sixty-six feet wide. "Street" there meant not only a lane of six feet wide, but "any street or highway, and any road, bridge, lane, mews, footway, square, court, alley, passage, whether a thoroughfare or not, and a part of any such street, highway, road, bridge, lane, mews, footway, square, court, alley, or passage." He could prove or disprove anything upon that. The object of the Bill was an excellent one, and he should like to see it so dealt with that there would be no doubt about its interpretation. He considered that the Bill in the first instance ought to have gone into the other Chamber, where there was a larger number of professional men than there were here. In his time he had had to build bridges over rivers, erect lighthouses, lay out roads, lay out towns; now and then he had built a house himself, even to the making of the bricks; and all that enabled him to see the intricacy of the matter dealt with in the Bill. Unfortunately, however, he could not lay down the law on the subject as a man who could put a lot of letters after his name. He thought some means should be devised whereby they would have an opportunity of more carefully going into the matter; and he thought the necessity for very careful consideration was shown by the time taken in merely discussing one or two items of the interpretation clause—a clause which, as a rule, was supposed to be exceedingly simple.

HON. C. H. BUZACOTT said he was very much instructed and entertained by the speech of the Hon. Mr. Gregory. He thought a great deal of the objection to the Bill turned on the question of a triangulation survey; but if the Bill became law it would be a very easy thing to provide that the lines laid down should be on the basis of a triangular survey. He was disappointed, however, that the Hon. Mr. Gregory, before sitting down, did not suggest some way out of the dilemma in which they found themselves with regard to the Bill. If the Postmaster-General could devise any means of inspiring the Council with confidence in the capacity of those who designed the Bill in a scientific and technical sense, he, for one, would be inclined to accept a good deal of it on trust. If the Council did not think the Bill should be referred to a select committee, it might be advisable so get experts to attend at the bar of the House so that hon. members might get from them any necessary information in connection with the provisions of the Bill. The Hon. J. McMaster was of opinion that the municipal council would appoint a competent man as their surveyor, but his experience of municipal councils was that they would not pay the salaries which experts were entitled to demand.

Any alderman who would propose to pay a surveyor £700 or £800 a year would probably not be re-elected; and a man of the necessary attainments and qualifications could not be got for £200 a year, which was about the salary that a municipal council would be prepared to pay. He did not agree with the Hon. Mr. Gregory in deprecating the introduction of a measure like this into this Chamber; it seemed to him to be pre-eminently the class of Bill which this Chamber should be asked to initiate. He did not think they should accept the position of a chamber of revision merely; they ought to show that they had the capacity to do something more than correct the mistakes made in another Chamber.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: While he had the greatest respect for the other Chamber, he was not prepared to admit that the other Chamber was better qualified than the Council to pass this Bill. It had been proposed to refer the Bill to a select committee, but he thought it was very desirable that this Chamber should show that it was competent to initiate and pass legislation of this kind; and he rather shrank from the idea of handing over their Bills to select committees. There were only two Bills before the Council at present. One of them it was proposed to refer to a select committee, and he thought it was desirable that they should endeavour to tackle this Bill themselves. He did not wish to hurry the matter at all. There would be plenty of time between now and when the Bill came on again for hon. gentlemen themselves to consult expert authorities and satisfy themselves on anything doubtful, and in that way they might get the opinion of experts. Even calling experts to the bar of the House would be preferable to appointing a select committee to deal with the Bill. At the commencement of the discussion it was suggested that they should not go on with the measure until a system of sewerage was introduced; but the construction of buildings would go on whether they passed this Bill or not, and stopping the construction of buildings would not ensure the introduction of a system of sewerage. The next difficulty was the suggestion that they should do nothing in the way of regulating the construction of buildings until a survey of Brisbane upon a scientific basis had been completed; but he thought it was desirable to find some means by which to regulate the construction of buildings going on, hoping that before long some means would be found to ensure an accurate survey of the city of Brisbane. The clause under consideration was one he had in view when he suggested that they might pass certain clauses, and afterwards recommit the Bill for the purpose of dealing with any clauses that might require reconsideration. With regard to these definitions it was almost impossible to form an accurate opinion as to a definition until they had studied the clause where the particular expression occurred. He therefore fell back on the suggestion he made at the commencement of the debate that the clause should be passed *pro forma*, with the understanding that the Bill would be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering this clause, and, of course, any others which hon. members desired to have reconsidered. They could resume the debate either next week or— if hon. gentlemen thought that would be too soon—the week afterwards.

HON. W. D. BOX suggested that each paragraph of the clause be considered separately.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, clause 4 was postponed.

The Council resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and leave was given to the Committee to sit again on Tuesday next.

The Council adjourned at half-past 5 o'clock.