HEIDELBERG SHIRE, VICTORIA, 1895–1898

A bridge, a drain and the next generation

Reports from the *Mercury and Weekly Courier*, transcribed, with the original pages at the back

My great-great-grandfather, Charles Lawson, was the engineer of the Shire of Heidelberg, just north-east of Melbourne, in the years before Federation. These newspaper reports follow two of the decisions he advised on: a new bridge over the Diamond Creek, and drainage for the village of Heidelberg.

They are a model for local government today:

1. Councillors engaged their community about a problem in the real world, not in the financial statements.
2. The plan the engineer brought was a plan of the bridge, not an asset management plan.
3. The finances were explained plainly: the loan, the interest and sinking fund, and the extra rate needed to repay it, and who would pay it.
4. The solution was not a *fait accompli*. The options were set out with their costs and benefits: patch up the old bridge, build a wooden bridge, or build an iron one.

The community decided, in the open, with the next generation in mind. The iron bridge opened in April 1898, on the eve of Federation, and still carries traffic on Main Hurstbridge Road today. The drainage story shows the other side: years of delay while the problem festered, and an engineer's advice weighing first cost against the cost of maintenance over the long run.

The world councils govern today is far more complex. The questions haven't changed.

Ben Lawson, Common Thread Consulting

About this transcription. The text is transcribed from the National Library of Australia's digitised newspapers (Trove), corrected against the scans. Spelling and punctuation follow the originals. Passages not about the bridge or the drainage are omitted, marked [...]. Words that can't be read with confidence are marked [?].

Heidelberg Shire Council

Mercury and Weekly Courier, Thursday 12 September 1895, page 3 (extracts). nla.gov.au/nla.news-article58279092

Present: Crs. Peers (chairman), Ford, Ryan, Adams, Waddell, Bond, Holland, Mitchell, Lugton, Brewer and Davey. […]

Correspondence

[…] From O. G. Rudd, secretary Temperance and General Mutual Life Assurance Society, saying that some time ago the Heidelberg council had purchased ground from the society for drainage purposes. The tenant was complaining that the drain had not been formed and that damage was accruing to the property; also that it was not only a nuisance in that respect, but that tenements in which typhoid fever had been present drained on to the said property. It was mentioned that the matter was receiving attention.

From M. E. McCullough, "Yarraford," Alphington, objecting to the making of an open drain through Broomfield Estate. Matter left in hands of members of riding and engineer, to report at next meeting. […]

From secretary Board of Health, stating that William Francis, of Austin-street, Alphington, had complained to the board respecting an alleged nuisance caused by stagnant water and foul drainage near his premises, particularly under a little street bridge where he said the filth accumulated. Mr. Francis had mentioned that he had several times brought the matter under the notice of the council and its officers, also that some time ago he had fever in his house. Secretary to reply.

From Mr. Smith, manager of the London Bank of Australia, Fitzroy branch, re Somerville's land. The price offered by the Heidelberg council, viz., £1 per foot for having two frontages close to Heidelberg Road, was absurd, even with the present depression, and also allowing for the prejudicial effect of the council making an open sewer across the land, which would no doubt seriously affect the remainder, as no one would care to build on the edge of an open drain. […]

Drainage of Heidelberg

The engineer brought up a report, as asked for by Cr. Holland, relative to the drainage of Heidelberg. It was pointed out that as the finances of the shire were not in too flourishing a position it would be advisable to postpone the matter for the present. This was agreed to.

Proposed Bridge at Diamond Creek

THE RELATIVE MERITS OF A WOODEN OR AN IRON BRIDGE CONSIDERED. DECISION IN FAVOR OF IRON BRIDGE BY SMALL MAJORITY.

Mercury and Weekly Courier, Friday 2 April 1897, page 3. nla.gov.au/nla.news-article58571390

A public meeting of ratepayers of the Greensborough riding of the Shire of Heidelberg, convened by the President (Cr. J. Ward), was held at the Literary Institute, Diamond Creek, on Saturday evening. The hall was well filled. The President occupied the chair, and among those present were Crs. Ford, Davey, Lugton, Waddell, Matthews, Mitchell, Peers, Ryan, Ex-Crs. Wadeson and Burrows, Mr. Lawson (shire engineer), Mr. Price (shire secretary), Mr. Finney (manager of the Commercial Bank), and other leading ratepayers from the various ridings.

The President (Cr. Ward) said the object of the meeting was to discuss the question of erecting a bridge over the Diamond Creek, on the main road, and to consider the borrowing proposals of the council. The council had accepted a scheme of erecting an iron bridge. It gave him great pleasure to be there that evening, and he would like to hear the ratepayers fully and freely discuss the action of the council. The matter was one purely for the ratepayers to decide; and he wanted them to speak out plainly. He did not propose to put forward at the commencement any direct proposition, but after he had heard the views of those present he would put a resolution before them, when it would be competent for any one to move an amendment. The proposal accepted by the council was to construct an iron bridge at a cost of £975. To pay that amount back in 30 years, it meant 4 per cent interest and 2 per cent sinking, the latter being put aside for the purpose of paying back the principal. This interest and sinking fund meant that the Greensborough riding would have to pay annually £58. The amount of rates received annually was £418, and on this valuation it would require an extra rate of 2d in the £ to pay interest and sinking fund on the amount it was proposed to borrow. This would fully cover everything, including incidental expenses. The engineer was present and had the plans with him, and he was prepared to answer any question that might be put to him. The council had no desire to keep anything back, but was desirous of disclosing everything to the ratepayers. (Applause.)

Cr. P. Ryan, as the mover that this meeting be convened, would like to say a few words in favor of the work the council proposed to carry out. Twelve or 18 months ago the question of building a bridge was under discussion in the council, and it was then thought advisable to wait on the minister of public works. That gentleman, after listening to the representations made by the deputation, promised to get something put on the estimates. The shire secretary wrote twice since then, but received no definite reply. The minister was waited upon a second time, and he then said they were too late for that year, and that the matter would be considered when next year's estimates were being framed. The proposal now was to go to the minister again to try and get a sum put on the estimates. Their engineer's estimate of the cost of the bridge seemed to him (Cr. Ryan) too high. It was first thought that £850 would be sufficient, but the sum had now been increased by £125. He (Cr. Ryan) had supported an iron bridge as against a wooden one, which would cost £550. He thought the ratepayers would be justified in spending the difference, £425, seeing that the wooden bridge would be always requiring repairing, while the iron bridge would be for all time. It would be to the permanent interest of the ratepayers to put up something substantial. They would be justified in erecting a bridge that would be a lasting asset in the district. (Applause.)

Mr. Gowdie heartily supported all that Cr. Ryan had said.

The Chairman then moved "That this meeting adopts the proposal of the council to construct an iron bridge over the Diamond Creek at Diamond Creek at an estimated cost of £975, and to borrow the money

required for that purpose."

Mr. Gowdie: I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution.

A Ratepayer: Will the 2d rate fall on the whole of the Shire or only on the Greensborough riding?

The Chairman said the Greensborough riding alone would have to pay the rate.

Mr. Lawrisson wanted to know why the Greensborough people should be taxed for Diamond Creek's benefit. Was it fair? Their roads were in a terrible state, and yet they were asked to pay an extra rate for this Diamond Creek bridge. All the Greensborough ratepayers' money in the past was given to Diamond Creek, and now they were asked to submit to additional taxation to erect a bridge from which they received no benefit.

The Chairman said the rate must apply to the whole of the riding.

Mr. Lawrisson: If Diamond Creek gets this bridge we must have the hill cut down from St Helena. (Laughter and applause.) Where and how was the money from Greensborough spent? They had bad roads and no metal put down.

Mr. Gowdie, in reply to Mr. Lawrisson, said it was a hungry, starved way of talking that he (the latter) had adopted. (Laughter.) Diamond Creek might as well ask why should they erect a bridge that would be used largely for the Eltham Shire traffic. They had a splendid bridge across the Plenty at Greensborough.

Mr. D. Ryan moved as an amendment in favor of erecting a wooden bridge over the creek at a cost of £550.

Mr. J. McLaughlin seconded the amendment.

Mr. Gilding asked what state of repair the present bridge was in, and what it would cost to repair it. If it could be repaired to meet the requirements of the district for 15 or 20 years, it would be foolish to spend money; but if they had to have a new bridge, let it be a good substantial one.

Mr. Lawson (engineer) said the bridge was in a very bad state of repair. The ratepayers might as well throw their money into the Creek as try to patch it up.

Mr. Gilding, as one of the largest ratepayers in the riding, said he spoke feelingly. They were assured that evening that the rate would be 2d in the £; but subsequently they might find another 2d clapped on. (Laughter.) He would, however, support an iron bridge.

Ex-Cr. Burrows: Would it not be possible to have stone abutments and wooden girders? What would that cost?

Mr. Lawson: £550 as against £975.

Ex-Cr. Wadeson said at one time he had thought a wooden bridge would answer, but seeing that an iron bridge would be permanent, and that the rising generation would be called upon to pay for it, he thought it would be preferable. He did not think they would grudge the 2d in the £ when they saw the good they would receive in return.

Cr. Peers said the Heidelberg Shire councillors were not men to jump at conclusions without carefully considering and weighing matters. When the engineer unequivocally condemned the bridge, he (Cr. Peers) had asked whether it could not be repaired, and the answer was that it would be only pitching money away, and that the thing would soon fall to pieces. In repairing it props and supports would have to be put in, and these would impede the waterway. They all knew the waterway was not sufficient now. The bridge had been a noble bridge, but its day was done. A new wooden bridge would of course do for the present,

but it would be wiser to have a better one, and one they could afford. He was the oldest resident of Diamond Creek in that room, and he could assure them that when the present bridge was built the ratepayers thought it a grand affair. They had not roads and bridges in those days like the present generation enjoyed. He remembered when the township had to turn out to clear the roads of scrub. It would take a bullock-dray a week to go to Melbourne and back. Creeks had to be forded in those days. With reference to the speeches made against the iron bridge by Greensborough ratepayers, he might mention that they all helped to pay for the bridge at Greensborough over the Plenty. They could not ascertain the cost of that bridge because it was built in the old road board days. Every one had to pay for it.

Ex-Cr. Burrows: The Government built that bridge.

Cr. Peers: It is a good bridge, and we, as ratepayers and taxpayers of the colony, contributed towards its cost.

Mr. J. Laidlay: We had tolls then.

> Cr. Peers: While we live we might as well have a good, substantial, and sightly bridge over the Diamond Creek, and, in dying, leave behind us a heirloom for the next generation. (Loud applause.)

Cr. Mitchell said he was one of those who supported the plans as adopted by the council. This iron bridge was not passed by the council in a hurry. They had been in favor of a wooden bridge until it was fully explained to them, and they were convinced that an iron bridge would be the cheapest in the long run. As the ratepayers had seemed to be in the dark about the matter he had advised that a public meeting be called, and this had been done. He had given them every information in his power, and he came there that evening to hear what the ratepayers had to say. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Cr. Ryan remarked that the extra rate of 2d in the £ was estimated on the present rates of £418. The rates had decreased since 1892 by about £175. In future years the valuation would probably increase instead of decrease, and consequently the extra rate would be less instead of more.

Mr. Gilding: Are we to get the same amount of government subsidy?

Cr. Ryan: This bridge is nothing to do with the subsidy.

Mr. Gilding: But if we lose the subsidy we may have to pay a higher rate.

Cr. Ryan: That is quite possible.

Mr. H. G. Price (shire secretary): We receive from the government by way of municipal endowment 6s for every £ of our rateable revenue. If this subsidy were withdrawn it would be equal to 4d in the £, or another 4d rate.

Cr. Lugton: Unless values go up. (A voice: "Not much fear of that.")

Mr. Gilding asked the dimensions of the old and the proposed new bridge.

The Engineer: The new bridge would be 10ft longer than the present one, namely 110ft., 2ft. wider (18ft.), and 1ft. 10in. higher.

The Chairman said the rates received from the Diamond Creek and Greensborough portions, respectively, of the riding were as follows, taking the Plenty as the dividing line: Diamond Creek, £262; Greensborough, £156.

Ex-Cr. Burrows: That is not a fair division at all.

The Chairman: The Plenty is the dividing line.

Ex-Cr. Burrows: Where's Nillumbik?

Mr. Starling thought the boundary should be taken from where the roadmen work. (Hear, hear.) That would be about Brown's corner. With a proper division they would find Greensborough had the larger amount of rates by £70. This bridge was for the benefit of a number of people who had no interest in this shire. Could they not get Eltham to assist them in any way? If this bridge could be repaired it would be wiser to postpone the erection of a new bridge pending a question of re-division, which would probably be heard of before long. He would like to have some definite assurance as to whether the Government would grant anything towards building the proposed bridge. If they could get pound for pound from the Government, it would, of course, be wise to build a good iron bridge. If they lost the Government subsidy they might have to pay a general rate of 1s 6d, and when the railway rate came on goodness knows what it would run them into. He thought they were going in too extensively for their little riding, unless they had a Government grant. If they had no grant he would go for a wooden bridge.

Mr. D. Ryan said he had been told that the Minister gave them to understand pretty definitely that they would not get a grant.

Cr. Ford said the proposed bridge was regarded as a national work. They had received most favorable replies from the Minister, who said the Heidelberg Shire had just claims, and gave them to understand he would put an amount on the estimates, but when they had pressed him, said they would have to come to him again before the next year's estimates were framed. […]

Mr. D. Ryan asked Cr. Ford what reply the Minister gave the second time.

Cr. Ford: He encouraged us by asking us to come again when he was framing next year's estimates.

The chairman then put the motion and the amendment, the latter being submitted first. A division was taken and resulted as follows: **For wooden bridge, 18; for iron bridge, 25; majority, 7.** Only ratepayers were allowed to vote.

Mr. Gowdie thought the matter would be more equitably decided by a poll.

The chairman said any 20 ratepayers, by depositing £20, could demand a poll. The council could not take the initiative. If a certain number of votes were not polled the £20 or a portion of it would be forfeited; but if the poll was a legitimate one the deposit would be returned.

The proceedings terminated with the usual vote of thanks.

Our reporter interviewed Mr. Lawson, the shire engineer, as to the description of the proposed bridge, and learned that it is to be a lattice-girder bridge, with two openings of 55ft. The girders are to be of iron, and the cross girders of steel, with double timber decking. The abutments, wings, and centre pier are to be made of brick and cement on pile foundation. The reason of this is that the depth of the rock is so great that it would be too expensive to carry brick-work down. The bridge, including everything, will be 130ft. long, 18ft. wide, and 2ft. higher than at present. A temporary bridge will have to be erected during the progress of the work. The entire cost is estimated at £975. Precisely the same bridge, except that the girders be wood instead of iron, would cost £550. Red gum girders would last longer than the present generation. A bridge all constructed of timber would cost £450.

Diamond Creek Bridge: The Opening Ceremony

Mercury and Weekly Courier, Friday 29 April 1898, page 3 (extracts). nla.gov.au/nla.news-article58572511

The erection of a new iron-girder bridge over the Diamond Creek having been completed, the structure was formally opened for traffic on Thursday, 21st inst., by the President of the Heidelberg shire (Cr. Lugton) in the presence of about 100 persons. The whole of the councillors, excepting Cr. Ford, who was indisposed, and Cr. Holland, who is away from the colony, were present at the ceremony; Mr. E. H. Cameron, M.L.A., was also in attendance. […] The bridge was gaily decorated with bunting, and a dinner, splendidly catered by Mr. Guest, was provided at the Mechanics' Institute. […]

The old bridge was erected forty years ago on designs drawn by Mr. Wingrove. It was of wood and served its purpose well. Of late years it showed decided signs of age, and its replacement by a new, modern, and substantial structure became imperative. On this point all ratepayers were unanimous, but there was much controversy as regards building another wooden bridge or an iron one. The last municipal election for the Greensborough riding was fought on this question, and "iron" emerged from the ordeal triumphant. It was then estimated the cost would be £1000, which included driving piles to the rock, to make the foundation doubly durable. Owing to the price of material rising during the controversy the engineer's original estimate was found to be a long way under the tender prices. The specification was subsequently remodelled and the piling was dispensed with. A contract was then let to Mr. T. Adams for about £1200. Particular care was taken in regard to the foundation, and various tests applied during the progress of the work, but it stood as firm and as immovable as adamantine rock, so that all uneasiness on that score is now over.

The President (Cr. Lugton), in declaring the bridge open for traffic on Thursday, said its erection marked an era in the history of Diamond Creek, which he hoped would so progress in the future as to make it necessary at no distant date to widen the bridge for increased traffic. (Applause.) He trusted it would serve them faithfully and long, and would carry tons of produce across the creek.

The dinner

[…] Mr. Cameron, in responding, said Parliament deserved well at the hands of the people […]. Regarding federation, he said the Bill was not perfect, but if they waited until all details were so arranged as to meet with unanimous approval they would have to wait a very long time. If they did not get federation now they would not get it in the lifetime of this generation. There never was a more opportune time than now to unite, seeing that a spirit of discontent was manifesting itself throughout the world. […] Any one at his age might not reap much benefit, but the young men would, and they should legislate for the future. He concluded by complimenting the ratepayers on the erection of so handsome and substantial a new bridge. It was a great credit to all concerned. **The shire engineer (Mr. Lawson) he considered was a straight, honest man, and they could rely that all the work he had put into this bridge was done with the utmost conscientiousness.** Great credit was also due to Mr. T. Adams, the contractor, who had done his work well. […]

Mr. Cameron proposed the Heidelberg shire council and success to the bridge. […] At one time he (Mr. Cameron) thought it would be extravagant expenditure to put an iron bridge over the creek instead of a wooden one; he was now of opinion iron was the best. (Applause.) And having seen the handsome bridge just constructed, he thought the council was fully justified in incurring the expenditure. The cost was only £1200, which in his opinion was small. He was perfectly satisfied that so experienced an engineer as Mr.

Lawson would not make a mistake. He referred to the foundation, and was prepared to trust to the engineer's word that it was perfectly sound and durable. (Hear, hear.) […]

[…] Mr. Thomas Ford proposed the "Officers of the Shire." […] He referred to the capability of Mr. Lawson, and said Mr. Price was assiduous in the performance of his duties, and courteous to all the ratepayers. […]

Cr. Lugton said Mr. Lawson was unavoidably detained, having obtained a job surveying a line at Dean's Marsh, and that Mr. Corben, clerk of works, would respond in his stead. Mr. Corben spoke well of the bridge, and said the contractor had built it faithfully and well. With regard to the foundations, he had tested them while the work was proceeding, and the centre pier never shifted the sixteenth of an inch. He thought they were perfectly secure. […]

Cr. Waddell proposed the health of the local celebration committee. He said wood was superseded by iron everywhere as a mark of progress. The repayment of the loan for the bridge extended over a period of 30 years, and the interest and sinking fund would only amount to £60 per year. […]

Cr. Ryan also replied, and said the bridge would be a great boon. It was the duty of the council to erect a good substantial structure that would last for all time, seeing that it was on an important main road. […]

Heidelberg Drainage

Mercury and Weekly Courier, Friday 27 May 1898, page 2 (editorial, and a later paragraph from the same page). nla.gov.au/nla.news-article58572601

The absurdity of a council rushing to the ratepayers to ask what it shall do or what it shall not do was exemplified last Wednesday evening, when a meeting was called in the Recreation Hall, Heidelberg, to obtain an expression of opinion from the ratepayers in regard to the adoption of a drainage scheme. The ratepayers did not seem to know what they did want, and so rejected all motions and did nothing, winding up the abortive proceedings by referring the whole matter to the council. That body is elected to do the ratepayers' business, and should have sufficient backbone to act without running after its constituents for instructions on all and every occasion. If there was one member of the Heidelberg riding with spirit and independence enough to take as firm a stand as Cr. Ryan did in the Greensborough riding in connection with the Diamond Creek Bridge, a good drainage scheme would be adopted.

The schemes that have been laid before the council from time to time are as follows: One scheme is to commence at the Austin Hospital's 9in. drainage pipe, with a 2ft. culvert from Studley-road to Hawdon-street. At Hawdon-street there is to be a 3ft. branch to take the drainage from the railway and Eaglemont, and thus do away with the unsightly ditch that enters the main street next to Holland's timber yard. From Hawdon-street to Cape-street a 4ft. culvert is to be constructed, and from thence along Burgundy-street and Jika-street, past the old cheese [factory?] to near the baths, an underground sewer, 4ft. in diameter, will be constructed.

The alternate scheme provides for the same system of drainage to Cape-street, and from thence to follow the natural watercourse or gully to the river, using the present culvert under the Sir Henry Barkly hotel, and building a new culvert, 4ft. 6in. in diameter, to Buckland-street; then to construct an open pitched invert or bottom to the river through the park.

The Shire engineer has recommended the scheme along the roadway as the best and most economical, as it will be complete from Studley-road to the river, which cannot be said of the other scheme, which provides for a discharge some distance from the Yarra. In the scheme he recommends the maintenance will be very small, as the water flowing through will keep the sewer clean. The other scheme, through Sill's property, though the first cost would be smaller, viz., £2000 as against £3000, would be in the long run the most expensive, as the open part to the river would be a growing nuisance and the maintenance would cost a large aggregate sum. Mr. Thwaites, engineer of the Board of Works, approved of the scheme recommended by Mr. Lawson.

What is called the temporary scheme subsequently proposed was reported on by the engineer as follows: "The method suggested provides for catchment pits to be built at the intersection of Cape and Burgundy streets, opposite the post office. At the bottom of these pits an outlet pipe, 12 inch diameter, will be large enough to carry the ordinary summer flow of the channels, and it would be laid along the south side of Burgundy-street, about 15 feet from the building line, thence along Jika-street past the police court, and discharge into the Yarra at the bottom of Yarra-street. This pipe, as I have before stated, will carry the ordinary channel water, but of course will not be large enough to discharge the heavier rainfall. As soon as this outlet pipe becomes full, however, the water will flow from an outlet provided in the pits and find its way thence into the present culvert, and into the existing watercourse. This would be practically clean water. Other small catchment pits, manholes, &c., would have to be built at the intersection of street channels, and at other points, and the pipes would require to be truly and carefully laid to the proper gradients. I estimate the cost of carrying out the work at £400."

Yet another scheme proposed by Cr. Matthews was that the council purchase about 450 feet of land in Burgundy-street at £2 per foot for drainage purposes, and construct a barrel drain from Cape to Burgundy-street to empty into an open drain. All these schemes, upon which much engineering time and skill has been expended, and very much municipal oratory has taken place, have been rejected, and now, to quote Cr. Lugton, "we are as we were before we started," because the council cannot or will not act with firmness and decision.

[…] The Heidelberg drainage question is still as unsettled as ever. The council appears disinclined to take any action of its own volition, and the ratepayers are similarly inert. Thus the filthy, bottomless, germ-generating sewer remains master of the situation, and next autumn will probably again send forth its noxious gases to capture residents in a typhoid or diphtheria grip.

Heidelberg Drainage (later in 1898)

Mercury and Weekly Courier, 1898 (two reports; edition and page to be confirmed).

Some ratepayers of Heidelberg, who state that they are anxious to obtain a proper system of drainage in the village, appear to be "agin the scheme," whatever it is, so soon as the council takes action to give effect to their (supposed) wishes. The unsightly ditch that sluggishly meanders through Sill's estate and the park to the river they appear to regard with a lingering affection. Like a tortuous boa constrictor it seems to mesmerise them with its slime whilst poisoning them and their children with its fever-tainted diphtheric fumes. After dilly-dallying for years, the Heidelberg council has resolved to take the bull by the horns and carry out a scheme which appears to be the best yet submitted, namely, to construct a barrel drain through Sill's, having secured easement rights, and thence to the Yarra by open channelling. The total cost will be £1600, and probably the Government may be induced to contribute. The gentlemen who have consistently objected to every scheme now object to this one. That was only to be expected, and we are pleased that the council has decided to display firmness and go right on, leaving the discontents the remedy they have under the Local Government Act of demanding a poll. It is no use paltering with a chronically discontented minority, as it would be practically impossible to obtain complete unanimity at any time. Men holding the representative position of councillors should strive to do the greatest good for the greatest number; and now that they have secured all necessary drainage rights from property owners, should push on with the good work of abolishing the scandalous disease bed which has so long disgraced the otherwise salubrious village.

A special meeting of the council was held on Wednesday evening to adopt plans, specifications and estimates as to cost, and to arrange for the flotation of a loan.

The usual protest was lodged by Messrs. M'Cracken, Montgomery and others, who do not appear to know exactly what they do want; but was properly disregarded by the council, who carried out the business for which the meeting was called. One singular feature of the proceedings was the reversal of opinions previously expressed by Cr. Davey. At the last ordinary meeting he was in favor of the scheme, but on Wednesday night he wished to delay the undertaking, but without success.

Cr. Matthews subsequently gave formal notice that he would move at the next ordinary meeting that the council proceed to borrow £1600 in that number of debentures of £100 each, bearing interest at the rate of 4 per cent., to carry out the drainage scheme as adopted.

Cr. Davey intimated his intention of moving an amendment when this motion comes on for discussion.

Mr. Montgomery, on behalf of the "protesting" party, gave notice of their intention to demand a poll on the question, and asked that it be taken on the same day as the annual election.

One or two little matters were explained during the discussion. First, that the threat to obtain an injunction against the council restraining it from emptying its drainage into the Yarra is all nonsensical moonshine, seeing that very nearly all the metropolitan drainage finds its way into that pellucid stream. Second, that rights-of-way will be made available for property owners to drain into the barrel sewer.

This is how the matter stands at present, but Mr. Lawson, the engineer, informs us that if the council is not checked in its work the proposed drainage scheme should be completely constructed before the hot season commences.

The original reports

Mercury and Weekly Courier, 1895–1898, from the National Library of Australia's Trove

HEIDELBERGSHIRE.

CONNCIL—WEDNESDAY.

Present:—Crs. Peers (chairman) Ford, Ryan, Adams, Waddell, Bond, Holland, Mitchell, Lugton, Brewer, and Davey.

ALLOWANCE TO PRESIDENT.

Cr. Holland moved that the allowance to the President be fixed at £20.

Cr. Ward moved as an amendment that the amount be £50. Only those who had passed through the chair knew the expenses attendant thereon.

Cr. Ryan moved that the allowance be reduced by £10. Seconded by Cr. Mitchell.

Cr. Bond supported the reduction.

The council decided upon £40.

Cr. Holland then moved a further amendment that the allowance be £30.

Cr. Bond seconded the amendment, which was lost, and £40 is the allowance.

The retiring President, Cr. Peers said he could not give the exact expenses incurred by him during his term of office, but the allowance had certainly been swallowed up.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT.

Cr. Ford moved that Cr. Davey be elected President for the next year. He considered that that gentleman was well qualified to fill the position. He knew the ropes, and he (Cr. Ford) believed that it was the wish of the Heidelberg people to see him elected.

Cr. Waddell had pleasure in seconding the proposition.

Cr. Bond had no doubt but that the matter had been cut and dried. However he intended to move that Cr. Holland be elected as president. He considered that it was necessary to have a second magistrate in Heidelberg, and for this reason alone Cr. Holland would be an acquisition.

Cr. Ryan seconded. He had no complaint whatever against Cr. Davey, and he considered that that gentleman would make the best President. However Cr. Holland was the senior member and he considered the position of president should be offered to him.

Only Crs. Bond and Ryan voted for the amendment, and Cr. Davey was duly elected. Upon taking his seat at the head of the table he returned thanks to the council for having elected him to such a high and honorable position. He trusted with the assistance of each member of the council to have a pleasant year of office.

Cr. Holland rose at this stage and said that although defeated he had not been defeated fairly. Cr. Ford had been a conspirer in connection with the election of president. Cr. Holland concluded by saying—I only wish there was an opportunity of going before the ratepayers to see whether Cr. Davey, Cr. Ford or anyone else should have the position of president. Cr. Ford is prejudiced against me. I am sorry to see that members of the council have come under the wing of that councillor, and I regret to see Cr. Brewer, the new member also coming under his wing

Cr. Ford denied having conspired in the matter at all.

Cr. Holland—You've elected Cr. Davey as a dummy and I'll treat him as such while he occupies the chair.

Cr. Holland continued to make remarks, when Cr. Ford said—It's only the bully who wont allow a reply. I don't believe in a man playing the bully.

Cr. Holland—You did try to play the bully on me, but it didn't come off. You tried too, to square the reporter in the train.

Cr. Ford—I shall move that Cr. Holland be deemed guilty of an offence if he continues to talk in this strain.

Cr. Holland—Cr. Davey is not game to resign, and go before the ratepayers on the question.

Cr. Ward—Supposing we go on with the business of the council and then we will be able to deal with Cr. Holland.

The matter then dropped.

Cr. Ford complimented the retiring President, Cr. Peers upon the manner in which he had carried out his office. He moved that a minute be entered on the council book expressing approval and appreciation of Cr. Peers' action.

Cr. Lugton seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Cr. Peers, in replying said that he had entered upon the duties of presi-

had entered upon the duties of president with dread, but now at the close of his year of office he looked back upon it with pleasure. Councillors had been kind and charitable. The only thing he regretted was that he had not kept an account of every penny which went through his hands in connection with the presidential allowance.

CORRESPONDENCE.

From the Diocesan Registry stating that the guardians of the church at Diamond Creek declined to accept £5 for the land the shire council desired to obtain from the church. They thought their demand for £8. 10s. little enough.

Cr. Ryan moved and Cr. Peers seconded that the offer of £8. 10. be agreed to, providing that the transfer be signed without perusal fees. Carried.

From the Treasury forwarding £508. 2s. 7d. being proportion of the amount (50,000) of endowment to municipalities payable for the half year ending 31st December, 1895. Received.

From Town Clerk, Fitzroy relative to omission from the estimates of the subsidy hitherto paid towards the maintenance of public reserves and gardens which reserves and gardens were the property of the Goverment. It was asked that the council support a petition to be presented to Parliament in connection with the matter. Request to be complied with.

From E. H. Cameron M.L.A. as follows—Re Mc Greggor's amendment of the *Local Government Act*, I am very much opposed to it. You need not be alarmed it won't pass. Received.

From O. G. Rudd, secretary Temperance and General Mutal Life Assurance Society saying that some time ago the Heidelberg Council had purchased ground from the society for drainage purposes. The tenant was complaining that the drain had not been formed and that damage was accruing to the property; also that it was not only a nuisance in that respect, but that tenements in which typhoid fever had been present drained on to the said property. It was mentioned that the matter was receiving attention.

From M. E. McCullough "Yarraford," Alphington objecting to the making of an open drain through Broomfield Estate. Matter left in hands of members of riding and engineer, to report at next meeting.

From Fink, Best and Co. stating that as a result of their negotiations they had arranged a settlement of the matter with the Shire v. Reuben, which they trusted would be satisfactory, the terms being that Mr. Herman pay a total of £79. 2s. 9d. representing the monies due for rates and street construction, exclusive of interest and cost. Mr. Herman had paid £39. 2s. 9d. on account and signed a gurantee to pay the balance by monthly instalments of £5. Received.

From the Metropolitan Board of Works making reference to a letter dated 30th ult., from the council requesting that the scour pipe from the main at the Templestowe bridge on the west side of the Yarra might be extended in order to carry the water clear of the river bank to the water's edge, the matter received attention. Received.

From Edward Louden, W. H. Nutall, B. Smith, A. Hodson and A. Henry, asking for permission to place nightsoil on land. Granted on the motion of Cr. Holland, seconded by Cr. Bond.

From secretary Board of Health, stating that William Frances, of Austin-street, Alphington had complained to the board respecting an alleged nuisance caused by stagnant water and foul drainage near his premises particularly under a little street bridge where he said the filth accumulated. Mr. Francis had mentioned that he had several times brought the matter under the notice of the council and its officers, also that some time ago he had fever in his house. Secretary to reply.

From Mr. Smith, manager of the London Bank of Australia, Fitzroy branch *re* Somerville's land The price offered by the Heidelberg Council viz., £1 per foot for having two

viz., £1 per foot for having two frontages close to, Heidelberg Road was absurd, even with the present depression, and also allowing for the prejudicial effect of the council making an open sewer across the land, which would no doubt seriously affect remainder as no one would care to build on the edge of an open drain. Unless a reasonable settlement was at once come to, he would be compelled to instruct the bank's solicitors to deal with the matter.

Letter to be written to Mr. Smith asking what price he considered the land was worth.

From Patrick Allen, licensee of Tower hotel, Alphington, saying that he had expended monies in repairing the drains and water pipes and to complete the job and make the place look as if some one lived in it he would asphalt the footpath all round the hotel if the council would assist him. The cost would he thought about 200 square yards at 1s. 2d. per yard. Engineer to attend.

PRIVATE STREETS ACCOUNT.

It was decided to request Mr. Robinson, the late shire secretary and engineer to meet Mr. Lawson, the present engineer with reference to the accounts in connection with the construction of private streets.

DRAINAGE OF HEIDELBERG.

The engineer brought up a report, as asked for by Cr. Holland relative to the drainage of Heidelberg. It was pointed out that as the finances of the shire were not in too flourishing a position it would be advisable to postpone the matter for the present. This was agreed to.

FINANCE.

Accounts amounting to £385 2s 2d passed for payment.

ALPHINGTON POST OFFICE.

Cr. Ward drew attention to the fact that there was a proposition on the part of the Government, in following out its retrenchment policy, to abolish the post office at Alphington, in order to effect a saving of a paltry £10 per year. Naturally the residents were up in arms, and it had been arranged that a deputation should wait upon the Postmaster-General with reference to the matter, and point out the injustice of the proposed closing of the office Cr. Ward mentioned that Wednesday next had been fixed as the day on which to interview the Postmaster-General, and he hoped that as many of the councillors would attend as could make it convenient. Several of those present agreed that it would be a great injustice to Alphington residents, and a hope was expressed that so many facts and figures would be presented at the deputation as would cause the Postmaster-General to allow matters to remain as at present.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES.

Crs. Brewer, Lugton, Mitchell, and Ford were appointed members of the Public Works Committee.

It was proposed that Crs. Waddell, Ward, Peers, and Holland form a Finance Committee.

Cr. Ward declined to act on any committee with Cr. Holland until he had withdrawn a remark made at the beginning of the meeting, in reference to conspiracy in connection with the election of president.

Cr. Holland was asked by several of the councillors to withdraw his objectionable remarks, but he declined.

Cr. Ford then moved that Cr, Holland be deemed guilty of an offence under Standing Order, No. 23, which has reference to any councillor using offensive language, etc.

Cr. Holland said that he had lowered Cr. Ford's colors once before, and he would do so again.

Cr. Ward seconded Cr. Ford's motion.

The President: "Cr. Holland, I have asked you twice to withdraw the remark."

Cr. Holland: "If you ask me fifty times I won't withdraw."

Crs. Bond, Adams, and Ryan each strongly advised the withdrawal of the reference to conspiracy.

Cr. Holland: "I didn't know I said straight out that it was conspiracy, but if such was the case I'll withdraw, but only that one word, mind."

only that one word, mind."

Cr. Ford considered Cr. Holland's attack on him was cowardly in the extreme.

The Finance Committee was then constituted as proposed.

After several minor matters had been dealt with the council then adjourned.

PROPOSED BRIDGE AT DIAMOND CREEK.

THE RELATIVE MERITS OF A WOODEN OR AN IRON BRIDGE CONSIDERED.—DECISION IN FAVOR OF IRON BRIDGE BY SMALL MAJORITY.

A public meeting of ratepayers of the Greensborough riding of the Shire of Heidelberg, convened by the President (Cr. J. Ward), was held at the Literary Institute, Diamond Creek, on Saturday evening. The hall was well filled. The President occupied the chair, and among those present were Crs. Ford, Davey, Lugton, Waddell, Matthews, Mitchell, Peers, Ryan, Ex.-Crs. Wadeson and Burrows, Mr. Lawson (Shire engineer), Mr. Price, (Shire secretary) Mr. Finney, (Manager of the Commercial Bank), and other leading ratepayers from the various ridings.

The President (Cr. Ward) said the object of the meeting was to discuss the question of erecting a bridge over the Diamond Creek, on the main road, and to consider the borrowing proposals of the council. The council had accepted a scheme of erecting an iron bridge. It gave him great pleasure to be there that evening, and he would like to hear the ratepayers fully and freely discuss the action of the council. The matter was one purely for the ratepayers to decide; and he wanted them to speak out plainly. He did not propose to put forward at the commencement any direct proposition, but after he had heard the views of those present he would put a resolution before them, when it would be competent for any one to move an amendment. The proposal accepted by the council was to construct an iron bridge at a cost of £975. To pay that amount back in 30 years, it meant 4 per cent interest, and 2 per cent sinking, the latter being put aside for the purpose of paying back the principal. This interest and sinking fund meant that the Greensborough riding would have to pay annually £58. The amount of rates received annually was £418, and on this valuation it would require an extra rate of 2d in the £ to pay interest and sinking fund on the amount it was proposed to borrow. This would fully cover everything, including incidental expenses. The engineer was present and had the plans with him, and he was prepared to answer any question that might be put to him. The council had no desire to keep anything back, but was desirous of disclosing everything to the ratepayers. (Applause.)

Cr. P. Ryan, as the mover that this meeting be convened, would like to say a few words in favor of the work the council proposed to carry out. Twelve or 18 months ago the question of building a bridge was under discussion in the council, and it was then thought advisable to wait on the minister of public works. That gentleman, after listening to the representations made by the deputation, promised to get something put on the estimates. The shire secretary wrote twice since then, but received no definite reply. The minister was waited upon a second time, and he then said they were too late for that year, and that the matter would be considered when next year's estimates were being framed. The proposal now was to go to the minister again to try and get a sum put on the estimates. Their engineer's estimate of the cost of the bridge seemed to him (Cr. Ryan) too high. It was first thought that £850 would be sufficient but the sum had now been increased by £125. He (Cr. Ryan) had supported an iron bridge as against a wooden one, which would cost £550. He thought the ratepayers would be justified in spending the difference, £425, seeing that the wooden bridge would be always requiring repairing, while the iron bridge would be for all time. It would be to the permanent interest of the ratepayers to put up something substantial. They would be justified in erecting a bridge that would be a lasting asset in the district. (Applause.)

Mr. Gowdie heartily supported all that Cr. Ryan had said.

The Chairman then moved "That this meeting adopts the proposal of the council to construct an iron bridge over the Diamond Creek at Diamond Creek at an estimated cost of £975 and to borrow the money required

and to borrow the money required for that purpose."

Mr. Gowdie : I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution.

A Ratepayer : Will the 2d rate fall on the whole of the Shire or only on the Greensborough riding ?

The Chairman said the Greensborough riding alone would have to to pay the rate.

Mr. Lawrisson wanted to know why the Greensborough people should be taxed for DiamondCreek's benefit. Was it fair ? Their roads were in a terrible state and yet they were asked to pay an extra rate for this Diamond Creek bridge. All the Greensborough ratepayers' money in the past was given to Diamond Creek and now they were asked to submit to additional taxation to erect a bridge from which they received no benefit.

The Chairman said the rate must apply to the whole of the riding.

Mr. Lawrisson : If Diamond Creek gets this bridge we must have the hill cut down from St Helena, (Laughter and applause.) Where and how was the money from Greensborough spent. They had bad roads and no metal put down ?

Mr. Gowdie, in reply to Mr. Lawrisson, said it was a hungry starved way of talking that he (the latter) had adopted. (Laughter.) Diamond Creek might as well ask why should they erect a bridge that would be used largely for the Eltham Shire traffic. They had a splendid bridge across the Plenty at Greensborough.

Mr. D. Ryan moved as an amendment in favor of erecting a wooden bridge over the creek at a cost of £550.

Mr. J. McLaughlin seconded the amendment.

Mr. Gilding asked what state of repair the present bridge was in, and what it would cost to repair it. If it could be repaired to meet the requirements of the district for 15 or 20 years, it would be foolish to spend

money ; but if they had to have a new bridge, let it be a good substantial one.

Mr. Lawson (engineer) said the bridge was in a very bad state of repair. The ratepayers might as well throw their money into the Creek as try to patch it up.

Mr. Gilding, as one of the largest ratepayers in the riding, said he spoke feelingly. They were assured that evening that the rate would be 2d in the £ ; but subsequen tly they migh find another 2d clapped on. (Laughter) He would, however, support an iron bridge.

Ex. Cr. Burrows : would it not be possible to have stone abutments and wooden girders. What would that cost ?

Mr. Lawson : £350 as against £975

Ex. Cr Wadeson said at one time he had thought a wooden bridge would answer, but seeing that an iron bridge would be permanent, and that the rising generation would be called upon to pay for it, he thought it would be preferable. He did not think they would grudge the 2d in the £ when they saw the good they would receive in return.

Cr. Peers said the Heidelberg Shire councillors were not men to jump at conclusions without carefully considering and weighing matters. When the engineer unequivocally condemned the bridge, he (Cr. Peers) had asked whether it could not be repaired, and the answer was that it would be only pitching money away, and that the thing would soon fall to pieces. In repairing it props and supports would have to be put in, and these would impede the water way. They all knew the water way was not sufficient now. The bridge had been a noble bridge, but its day was done. A new wooden bridge would of course do for the present, but it would be wiser to have a better one, and one they could afford. He was the eldest resident of Diamond Creek in that room, and he could assure them that when the present bridge was built the ratepayers thought it a grand affair They had not roads and bridges in those days like the present generation enjoyed. He remembered when the township had to turn out to clear the roads of scrub. It would take a bullock dray a week to go to Melbourne and back. Creeks had to be forded in those days.

a week to go to Melbourne and back. Creeks had to be forded in those days. With reference to the speeches made against the iron bridge by Greensborough ratepayers, he might mention that they all helped to pay for the bridge at Greensborough over the Plenty. They could not ascertain the cost of that bridge because it was built in the old road board days. Every one had to pay for it.

Ex-Cr. Burrows : The Government built that bridge.

Cr. Peers : It is a good bridge, and we, as ratepayers and taxpayers of the colony, contributed towards its cost.

Mr. J. Laidlay : We had tolls then.

Cr. Peers : While we live we might as well have a good, substantial, and sightly bridge over the Diamond Creek, and, in dying, leave behind us a heirloom for the next generation. (Loud applause,)

Cr. Mitchell said he was one of those who supported the plans as adopted by the council. This iron bridge was not passed by the council in a hurry. They had been in favor of a wooden bridge until it was fully explained to them, and they were convinced, that an iron bridge would be the cheapest in the long run. As the ratepayers had seemed to be in the dark about the matter he had advised that a public meeting be called and this had been done. He had given them every information in his power, and he came there that evening to hear what the ratepayers had to say. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Cr. Ryan remarked that the extra rate of 2d in the £ was estimated on the present rates of £418. The rates had decreased since 1892 by about £175. In future years the valuation would probably increase instead of decrease, and consequently the extra rate would be less instead of more.

Mr. Gilding : Are we to get the same amount of government subsidy ?

Cr. Ryan : This bridge is nothing to do with the subsidy.

Mr. Gilding : But if we lose the subsidy we may have to pay a higher rate.

Cr. Ryan : That is quite possible.

Mr. H. G. Price, (shire secretary) : We receive from the government by way of municipal endowment 6s for every £ of our rateable revenue. If this subsidy were withdrawn it would be equal to 4d in the £, or another 4d rate.

Cr Lugton : Unless values go up. (A voice : "Not much fear of that.")

Mr. Gilding asked the dimensions of the old and the proposed new bridge

The Engineer : The new bridge would be 10ft longer than the present one, namely 110ft., 2ft. wider—18ft., and 1ft. 10in. higher.

The Chairman said the rates received from the Diamond Creek and Greensborough portions, respectively, of the riding were as follows, taking the Plenty as the Dividing line .—Diamond Creek, £262 ; Greensborough, £156.

Ex. Cr. Burrows : That is not a fair division at all.

The Chairman : The Plenty is the dividing line.

Ex.-Cr. Burrows : Where's Nillumbik ?

Mr. Starling thought the boundary should be taken from where the roadmen work. (Hear, hear.) That would be about Brown's corner. With a proper division they would find Greensborough had the larger amount of rates by £70. This bridge was for the benefit of a number of people who had no interest in this shire. Could they not get Eltham to assist them in any way ? If this bridge could be repaired it would be wiser to postpone the erection of a new bridge pending a question of re-division which would probably be heard of before long. He would like to have some definite assurance as to whether the Government would grant anything towards building the proposed bridge. If they could get pound for pound from the Government, it would, of course, be wise to build a good iron bridge. If they lost the Government subsidy they might have to pay a general rate of 1s 6d, and when the railway rate came on goodness knows what it would run them into. He thought they were going in too extensively for their little riding, unless

sively for their little riding, unless they had a Government grant. If they had no grant he would go for a wooden bridge.

Mr. D. Ryan said he had been told that the Minister gave them to understand pretty definitely that they would not get a grant.

Cr. Ford said the proposed bridge was regarded as a national work. They had received most favorable replies from the Minister who said the Heidelberg Shire had just claims, and gave them to understand he would put an amount on the estimates, but when they had pressed him, said they would have to come to him again before the next year's estimates were framed. The Metropolitan Board of Works, of which he was a member, proposed to strike a 3d rate over the whole district included in its jurisdiction. He and others were trying to defeat that proposition. With regard to the extra rate for this bridge, he would advise the people of the Greensborough riding to follow the example of the Heidelberg riding who wished to annex the best part of Ivanhoe. (Interruption) The Greensborough riding should make an effort to annex about 1,500 acres from Heidelberg which would relieve them of any rate. (Laughter and interruption.)

Cr. Waddell said if the Amending Board of Works Bill passed Parliament places like Greensborough, and Diamond Creek would be excised and exempt from rating for all time.

Mr. D. Ryan asked Cr. Ford what reply the Minister gave the second time.

Cr. Ford: He encouraged us by asking us to come again when he was framing next year's estimates.

The chairman then put the motion and the amendment, the latter being submitted first. A division was taken and resulted as follows: For wooden bridge, 18; for iron bridge, 25; majority, 7. Only ratepayers were allowed to vote.

Mr. Gowdie thought the matter would be more equitably decided by a poll.

The chairman said any 20 ratepayers, by depositing £20, could demand a poll. The council could not take the initiative. If a certain number of votes were not polled the £20 or a portion of it would be forfeited; but if the poll was a legitimate one the deposit would be returned.

The proceedings terminated with the usual vote of thanks.

Our reporter interviewed Mr. Lawson, the shire engineer, as to the description of the proposed bridge, and learned that it is to be a lattice-girder bridge, with two openings of 55ft. The girders are to be of iron, and the cross girders of steel, with double timber decking. The abutments, wings, tnd centre pier are to be made of brick and cement on pile foundation. The reason of this is that the depth of the rock is so great, that it would be too expensive to carry brick-work down. The bridge, including everything, will, be 130ft. long, 18ft. wide, and 2ft. higher than at present. A temporary bridge will have to be erected during the progress of the work. The entire cost is estimated at £975.

Precisely the same bridge, except that the girders be wood instead of iron, would cost £550. Red gum girders would last longer than the present generation.

A bridge all constructed of timber, would cost £450.

Diamond Creek Bridge.

THE OPENING CEREMONY.

The erection of a new iron-girder bridge over the Diamond Creek having been completed, the structure was formally opened for traffic on Thursday, 21st inst., by the President of the Heidelberg shire (Cr. Lugton) in the presence of about 100 persons. The whole of the councillors, excepting Cr. Ford, who was indisposed, and Cr. Holland who is away from the colony, were present at the ceremony; Mr. E. H. Cameron, M.L.A., was also in attendance.

A local committee consisting of the President of the shire (Cr. Lugton) Crs. Peers and Ryan, and Messrs. R. Wadeson, John Lawrie, W. Herbert, Edward Jones, Wm. Gray, G. Pizzey, W. Gilding, Constable Swanwick, and Mr. E. C. Leach (the able secretary) had made arrangements for the suitable celebration of the event.

The bridge was gaily decorated with bunting, and a dinner, splendidly catered by Mr. Guest, was provided at the Mechanics' Institute.

The councillors, municipal officials, and other visitors were conveyed to the Creek in a three-horse drag and a waggonette provided by Mr. A. Wilson of Heidelberg. The turnouts and the fast horses gave general satisfaction, and were an agreeable contrast to the Commotion and Grand Flaneur trip on a previous occasion.

The old bridge was erected forty years ago on designs drawn by Mr. Wingrove. It was of wood and served its purpose well. Of late years it showed decided signs of age, and its replacement by a new, modern, and substantial structure became imperative. On this point all ratepayers were unanimous, but there was much controversy as regards building another wooden bridge or an iron one. The last municipal election for the Greensborough riding was fought on this question, and "iron" emerged from the ordeal triumphant. It was then estimated the cost would be £1000, which included driving piles to the rock, to make the foundation doubly durable. Owing to the price of material rising during the controversy the engineer's origional estimate was found to be a long way under the tender prices. The specification was subsequently remodelled and the piling was dispensed with. A contract was then let to Mr. T. Adams for about £1200. Particular care was taken in regard to the foundation, and various tests applied during the progress of the work, but it stood as firm and as immovable as admantine rock, so that all uneasiness on that score is now over.

The President (Cr. Lugton) in declaring the bridge open for traffic on Thursday said its erection marked an era in the history of Diamond Creek, which he hoped would so progress in the future as to make it necessary at no distant date to widen the bridge for increased traffic. (Applause.) He trusted it would serve them faithfully and long and would carry tons of produce across the creek.

THE DINNER.

At the dinner in the Mechanics' Institute, Cr. Lugton presided, and read apologies for the absence of the Minister of Public Works, Mr Taverner, Mr. Hume Cook, M.L.A., and others. He then proposed the usual loyal toasts, which were honored with enthusiasm.

(Mr. Turnley recited "Hodge and the Vicar.")

Cr. J. S. Adams proposed the Parliament of Victoria, coupled with the name of Mr. Cameron, M.L.A. He thought the present was a very good Parliament, and he hoped the Government would push on with a public works policy. One matter as regarded Diamond Creek was the want of proper police court accommodation, which he had no doubt Mr. Cameron, who knew the requirements of the district so well, could get remedied.

Mr. Cameron, in responding, said Parliament deserved well at the hands of the people, and the Government was doing the best it could to mete out justice all round under difficult circumstances. With reference to the Mallee all the water of the colony would not

all the water of the colony would not make it grow cereals. Yet the farmers there were clamouring for reservoirs. The Government might as well try to make a sand ladder to the moon, as to the Mallee with the waters of the irrigate Murray. They considered in the Mallee if a railway was 30 miles from their holdings that they had no railway; but the claims of districts within 30 miles of Melbourne were ignored year after year. He (Mr. Cameron) had, however, received a promise in writing from Sir George Turner that as soon as the question of direct railway communication to the northern suburbs was settled, the extension of the line from Heidelberg to Eltham would be considered. With reference to the local police accommodation he thought the small expenditure necessary to build a suitable place could be obtained. Regarding federation he said the Bill was not perfect, but if they waited until all details were so arranged as to meet with unanimous approval they would have to wait a very long time. If they did not get federation now they would not get it in the lifetime of this generation. There never was a more opportune time than now to unite, seeing that a spirit of discontent was manifesting itself throughout the world. The war about to commence between America and Spain would not be confined to those nations. Other nations would take advantage of it for aggressive purposes, and it was thus really necessary that the people of any country should unite. He believed the federation they were asked to accept under the present bill would upset the income of the country for several years, but the ultimate benefits to be derived would amply counteract preliminary difficulties. Any one at his age might not reap much benefit, but the young men would and they should legislate for the future. He concluded by complimenting the ratepayers on the erection of so handsome and substantial a new bridge. It was a great credit to all concerned. The shire engineer (Mr. Lawson) he considered was a straight, honest man, and they could rely that all the work he had put into this bridge was done with the utmost conscientiousness. Great credit was also due to Mr. T. Adams, the contracter, who had done his work well. He had known that gentleman's father before he (the contractor) was born, and he hoped to see Tom Adams getting bigger and more profitable contracts in the future.

(Cr. Matthews gave a recitation.)

Mr. Cameron propose the Heidelberg shire council and success to the bridge. He referred in complimentary terms to the councillors, and was glad to see their "father" was with them. The President, he considered, was the right man in the right place. If anything he was afraid Cr. Lugton was a little too liberal with his money. (Laughter.) At one time he (Mr. Cameron) thought it would be extravagant expenditure to put an iron bridge over the creek instead of a wooden one; he was now of opinion iron was the best. (Applause.) And having seen the handsome bridge just constructed, he thought the council was fully justified in incurring the expenditure. The cost was only £1200, which in his opinion was small. He was perfectly satisfied that so experienced an engineer as Mr. Lawson would not make a mistake. He referred to the foundation and was prepared to trust to the engineer's word that it was perfectly sound and durable. (Hear, hear.)

(Cr. Brewer sang "Killarney," Mr. T. Ford acting as accompanist.)

Cr. Lugton, in responding on behalf of the council, said his colleagues all worked amicably together for the good of the shire, and it was pleasant to be associated with them. He was glad to see the bridge finished, and trusted the time would not be far distant when they should meet again at the opening of a railway line from Heidelberg to Hurst's bridge. (Applause.)

Cr. Ryan proposed the toast of the contractor, Mr. T. Adams, who had made a good substantial job of the bridge, and he trusted he would obtain many more contracts. He did not think Mr. Adams had made a great deal of money out of the work, but he hoped he would have better luck next time. (Hear, hear.)

time. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Adams, in replying, said the bridge had been built honestly. He thanked the proposer of the toast for his good wishes, and hoped he might ere long get the contract for building a railway line to Hurst's bridge. (Laughter and applause.)

Mr. Thomas Ford proposed the "Officers of the Shire." He referred to them individually and collectively in eulogistic terms. He said they did the work of the shire in a most satisfactory way. He referred to the capability of Mr. Lawson, and said Mr. Price was assiduous in the performance of his duties, and courteous to all the ratepayers. He also gave a deserved word of praise to Dr. Phillips, the health officer, Mr. M. B. Finney, treasurer, and Mr. Crisp, rate collector.

Mr. Holmes sang a song which was loudly applauded.

Cr. Lugton said Mr. Lawson was unavoidably detained, having obtained a job surveying a line at Dean's Marsh, and that Mr. Corben, clerk of works, would respond in his stead.

Mr. Corben spoke well of the bridge and said the contractor had built it faithfully and well. With regard to the foundations he had tested them while the work was proceeding, and the centre pier never shifted the sixteenth of an inch. He thought they were perfectly secure.

Mr. Price in a few well chosen remarks also responded.

Song—Mr. Berriman.

Cr. Waddell proposed the health of the local celebration committee He said wood was superseded by iron everywhere as a mark of progress. The repayment of the loan for the bridge extended over a period of 30 years, and the interest and sinking fund would only amount to £60 per year.

Recitation by Mr. M. B. Finney.

Mr. Leech briefly responded.

Cr. Ryan also replied, and said the bridge would be a great boon. It was the duty of the council to erect a good substantial structure that would last for all time, seeing that it was on an important main rood.

Cr. Matthews in a first class speech the best we have heard on the subject, proposed the press. He said it was the duty of the journalist to consider the responsibility of his position and to write conscientiously. The press was a most important adjunct to civilisation, and although they might sometimes suffer from the tyranny of the press, on the whole it was a well conducted institution, and was indispensable to enlightenment and progress.

Mr. Turnley, in responding on behalf of the *Heidelberg News*, said he had endeavoured to express his journalistic opinion conscientiously. Often he might be wrong but he endeavored to do what was right. In regard to federation, for instance, he had determined to oppose the present bill although his action might be unpopular in the shire. He did not believe in the bill and was not afraid to say so. With reference to Mr. Cameron's argument that if we did not accept the bill now before the country we would never get federation this generation he might mention that precisely the same argument was used when the Commonwealth Bill of 1891 was before Parliament. Yet only seven years had elapsed, and they now had a bill which was a vast improvement on that of 1891. Still further delay and consideration would give them a bill acceptable to all.

Mr. Harris and Mr. Saxon, representing other papers, also responded, the former loyally swearing to all that Mr. Cameron had said on Federation, and the latter referring to the prostitution of a section of the press which published impure literature.

Mr. Cameron proposed the health of the genial chairman, which toast was duly honored and responded to, and the proceedings concluded with the National Anthem.

Heidelberg Drainage.

THE absurdity of a council rushing to the ratepayers to ask what it shall do or what it shall not do was exemplified last Wednesday evening, when a meeting was called in the Recreation Hall, Heidelberg, to obtain an expression of opinion from the ratepayers in regard to the adoption of a drainage scheme. The ratepayers did not seemed to know what they did want and so rejected all motions and did nothing, winding up the abortive proceedings by referring the whole matter to the council. That body is elected to do the ratepayers' business, and should have sufficient backbone to act without running after its constituents for instructions on all and every occasion. If there was one member of the Heidelberg riding with spirit and independence enough to take as firm a stand as Cr. RYAN did in the Greensborough riding in connection with the Diamond Creek Bridge, a good drainage scheme would be adopted.

The schemes that has been laid before the council from time to time are as follows :—

One scheme is to commence at the Austin Hospital's 9in. drainage pipe, with a 2ft. culvert from Studley-road to Hawdon-street. At Hawdon-street there is to be a 3ft. branch to take the drainage from the railway and Eaglemont and thus do away with the unsightly ditch that enters the main street next to Holland's timber yard. From Hawdon-street to Cape-street a 4ft. culvert is to be constructed, and from thence along Burgundy-street, and Jika-street, past the old cheese to near the baths, and under-ground sewer, 4½ft. in diameter, will be constructed.

The alternate schemes provides for the same system of drainage to Cape-street and from thence to follow the natural water course or gully to the river using the present culvert under the Sir Henry Barkly hotel, and building a new culvert, 4ft. 6in. in diameter to Buckland-street; then to construct an open pitched invert or bottom to the river through the park.

The Shire engineer has recommended the scheme along the roadway as the best and most economical, as it will be complete from Studley-road to the river, which cannot be said of the other scheme, which provides for a discharge some distance from the Yarra. In the scheme he recommends the maintenance will be very small as the water flowing through will keep the sewer clean. The other scheme, through Sill's property, though the first cost would be smaller, viz. £2000 as against £3000, would be in the long run the most expensive as the open part to the river would be a growing nuisance and the maintenance would cost a large aggregate sum.

Mr. THWAITES, engineer of the Board of Works, approved of the scheme recommended by Mr. LAWSON.

What is called the temporary scheme subsequently proposed was reported on by the engineer af follows :—

"The method suggested provides for catchment pits to be built at the intersection of Cape and Burgundy-streets opposite the post office. At the bottom of these pits an outlet pipe, 12 inch diameter commences—this will be large enough to carry the ordinary summer flow of the channels, and it would be laid along the south

and it would be laid along the south side of Burgundy-street, about 15 feet from the building line, thence along Jika-street past the police court, and discharge into the Yarra at the bottom of Yarra-street. This pipe, as I have before stated, will carry the ordinary channel water, but of course will not be large enough to discharge the heavier rainfall. As soon as this outlet pipe becomes full, however, the water will flow from an outlet provided in the pits and find its way thence into the present culvert, and into the existing watercourse. This would be practically clean water. Other small catchment pits, manholes, &c., would have to be built at the intersection of street channels, and at other points, and the pipes would require to be truly and carefully laid to the proper gradients. I estimate the cost of carrying out the work at £400

Yet another scheme proposed by Cr. MATTHEWS was that the council purchase about 450 feet of land in Burgundy-street at £2 per foot for drainage purposes and construct a barrel-drain from Cape to Burgundy-street to empty into an open drain. All these schemes, upon which much engineering time and skill has been expended, and very much municipal oratory has taken place, have been rejected, and now, to quote Cr. LUGTON, "we are as we were before we started," because the council cannot or will not act with firmness and decision.

A public meeting against the Federal Bill is to be held in the Collingwood town hall on Thursday evening next, when Mr. Ben. Tillett, and other prominent speakers, will deliver addresses.

Messrs. A. G. Wilcox and Francis C. Wood advertise their intention to apply for 30 acres at the warden's court, Heidelberg, for mining purposes on West Yan Yean road, Morang.

There was a meeting against the Federal Bill last night at the public hall, Fairfield, Cr. Lugton presiding. A report will appear in our next issue. We understand that the bill is to be discussed at a meeting of the Fairfield Ratepayers and Residents Association to be held in the local state school this evening.

A number of woman, anxious to secure adult suffrage, are to meet shortly in the Collingwood town hall in opposition to the Federal Bill.

The Collingwood branch, A.N.A., is organising a local committee to promote the acceptance of the Federal Bill by the electors.

The Heidelberg drainage question is still as unsettled as ever. The council appears disinclined to take any action of its volition, and the ratepayers are similarly inert. Thus the filthy, bottomless, germ-generating sewer remains master of the situation and next autumn will probably again send forth its noxious gases to capture residents in a typhoid or diphtheria grip.

The "great trial" takes place at the Heidelberg court on Monday, when two young men are to be prosecuted for questioning Mr. Harper at a recent public meeting as to the efficacy of silver star starch and empire cocoa, and suggesting the application of hair-restorer. It is stated (we cannot vouch that it is true) that the defence has subpœnaed Mr. Harper with a view of putting him in the box.

Isabella Cockburn, machinist, 422 Station-street, North Carlton, reports stolen from her at the Fitzroy Football Ground, on the 21st inst., a lady's half-hunting silver geneva watch, No. 10451. Value £3 10s.

Charlotte Paul, 27 Batman-street, North Fitzroy, reports stolen from her dwelling, on the 21st. inst., an old fashioned pair of gold earings, egg shape; and a nickel waterbury watch.

fashioned pair of gold earrings, egg shape; and a nickel waterbury watch. Value £1 10s.

We beg to draw attention to the advertisement of Messrs Smith and James, Fitzroy Nursery, next Old Colonists' Home, where the best and cheapest plants may be obtained.

A notice from the Board of Health concerning the measles epidemic appears in our advertising columns.

Owing to the indisposition of Mr. Batson, the town clerk of Fitzroy, who, we are glad to say, is now all right again, Mr. M'Millan, the municipal accountant, acted as town clerk at the last meeting of the council.

The Heidelberg Junior F.C. played the Britannia at Heidelberg Park with the following result:— Heidelberg, 4 goals 3 behinds to Britannia's 2 goals 5 behinds. Mr. H. Wragge umpired for the teams. The Juniors desire to thank Mr. Wragge his kindness to them.

Heidelberg Drainage, Mercury and Weekly Courier, 1898 (edition to be confirmed)

Some ratepayers of Heidelberg, who state that they are anxious to obtain a proper system of drainage in the village, appear to be "agin the scheme," whatever it is, so soon as the council takes action to give effect to their (supposed) wishes. The unsightly ditch that sluggishly meanders through Sill's estate and the park to the river they appear to regard with a lingering affection. Like a tortuous boa constructor it seems to mesmerise them with its slime whilst poisoning them and their children with its fever-tainted diphtheric fumes. After dilly-dallying for years, the Heidelberg council has resolved to take the bull by the horns and carry out a scheme, which appears to be the best yet submitted, namely, to construct a barrel drain through Sill's having secured easement rights, and thence to the Yarra by open channelling. The total cost will be £1600, and probably the Government may be induced to contribute. The gentlemen who have consistently objected to every scheme, now object to this one. That was only be expected, and we are pleased that the council has decided to display firmness and go right on, leaving the discontents the remedy they have under the Local Government Act of demanding a poll. It is no use paltering with a chronically discontented minority, as it would be practically impossible to obtain complete unanimity at any time. Men holding the representative position of councillors should strive to do the greatest good for the greatest number; and now that they have secured all necessary drainage rights from property owners should push on with the good work of abolishing the scandalous disease bed which has so long disgraced the otherwise salubrious village.

A special meeting of the council was held on Wednesday evening to adopt plans, specifications and estimates as to cost, and to arrange for the flotation of a loan.

The usual protest was lodged by Messrs. M'Cracken, Montgomery and others, who do not appear to know exactly what they do want; but was properly disregarded by the council who carried out the business for which the meeting was called. One singular feature of the proceedings was the reversal of opinions previously expressed by Cr. Davey. At the last ordinary meeting he was in favor of the scheme but on Wednesday night he wished to delay the undertaking, but without success.

Cr. Matthews subsequently gave formal notice that he would move at the next ordinary meeting that the council proceed to borrow £1600 in that number of debentures of £100 each bearing interest at the rate of 4 per cent. to carry out the drainage scheme as adopted.

Cr. Davey intimated his intention of moving an amendment when this motion comes on for discussion.

Mr. Montgomery, on behalf of the "protesting" party, gave notice of their intention to demand a poll on the question, and asked that it be taken on the same day as the annual election.

One or two little matters were explained during the discussion. First, that the threat to obtain an injunction against the council restraining it from empting its drainage into the Yarra is all nonsensical moonshine, seeing that very nearly all the metropolitan drainage finds its way into that pellucid stream. Second, that rights-of-way will be made available for property owners to drain into the barrel sewer.

This is how the matter stands at present, but Mr. Lawson, the engineer, informs us, that if the council is not checked in its work the proposed drainage scheme should be completely constructed before the hot season commences.