

CHAPTER XXI.

The Genesis of Albert Park—The Melbourn City, Corporation and the Proposed Home Park—The Lagoon and Marshy Land—West Beach Land Affected—Proposals to Turn Lagoon into Lake—The Engineer in-Chief's Report—Pumping Water from the River Yarra to the Lagoon—Emerald Hill Council Covetous—Wants Part of Park for Burial Ground—St. Kilda Council Successfully Objects—Hon. Gavan Duffy Sells Park Frontages, 1865—Political Opportunists, Messrs. Kerford and Casey, Follow Duffy's Example, 1875—Broken Ministerial Promises—St. Kilda Council's Protests—The Alpaca Park—Why so Named—The Pan Committee of Management—Its Veteran Chairman, Councillor O'Donnell—Government Park Subsidy Trouble.*

IT has been stated, in public print, that the Council of the Melbourne City Corporation, petitioned the Government, in the year 1844, that is two years after the city was incorporated, to reserve a piece of land as a park, which land is the domain that we now call Albert Park, named after Albert the Good, the Royal Consort of Queen Victoria. We have not, in our researches been fortunate enough to find contemporary authority for such a statement. What we have learnt by a perusal of the first minute books of the Melbourne Corporation, we venture to quote as authoritative. At the Melbourne Council, held on February 9, 1846, it was resolved, on the motion of Councillor Kerr, seconded by Alderman Condell, "That the Legislative Committee be instructed to inquire forthwith, as to the privileges, accruing to the inhabitants of Melbourne, in, and over, the public lands of the township." Whatever those rights were, if any, they probably included Town Common rights of grazing stock. We do not know if any action was taken by the Town Council, as the outcome of the answer to the inquiry. Some time passed, apparently, before anything further was done. In the Town Council's minute book, under date, June 20, 1853, at the Council meeting, Councillor Davis moved, and Councillor Haywood seconded, "That the Right Worshipful The Mayor, be requested to make application to the Executive Government, to grant to the Corporation the tract of land, lying between the Emerald Hill, and St. Kilda, and between the Government

Domain, and the Bay, as a Home Park for public recreation." The motion was carried, subject to an amendment, that added the words, after St. Kilda, "as shown in the plan, prepared by the City Surveyor, as a Home Park." On November 28, a letter was read in Council meeting, from the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, in which he stated that "the Lieutenant Governor is not, at the present time prepared to make the reserve, asked for by the City Council, for Park Land in South Melbourne, but he will not alienate, from the Crown, any portion of the land applied for."

The Melbourne City Council was interested in having a Home Park reserved that should serve as a common for the city of Melbourne. There were visionaries in those days, but they had not the advantage of telescopic sight. They desired, *inter alia*, that the Home Park should act as a grazing area for the cows that were to supply Melbourne with milk. And that came to pass. The Albert Park was *used* at first, as a cow run, as were also the lands across the St. Kilda Road, the Fawkner Park. Both parks were not unlike well stocked cattle runs. Some of the dairymen had there herds of 30 and 40 cows. At about four o'clock, in the afternoon, the cows gathered at the Park gates, and moored, in one continuous roar, wanting to be driven home to be milked, as we, in school, well remember was the case, in the year 1874, when the National School, in Punt Road, hard by the park gates, was built of corrugated iron. The parks were within the sphere of the Melbourne City Council's influence, at a time when the St. Kilda Road was only indicated, through the bush, by shallow V shaped ditches on either side, which were the surveyor's boundary lines of the yet unformed and timber encumbered road. Not so far from the park lands a track led off the unformed St. Kilda Road, striking due east through the thick bush. The track was so poorly marked, that two persons lost it, on their way to John Gardiner's cattle station on Gardiner's Creek, Malvern. The road, superimposed upon that track, is now called Toorak Road. The Melbourne Council was reaching out for dominion, but its covetous gaze was principally to the south, to the Green Knoll, to St. Kilda, where there appeared to be a prospect of a seaside settlement. It was this expansion, and the St. Kilda dream realised, that incidentally set the heart of the Melbourne City Council on having a large common—the Home Park—within its city's empty spaces. The growth of the suburban settlements, and the subsequent forma-

tion of municipalities, caused the City Council to partially retreat from its extensions. In the end, the Melbourne City fathers wisely recognised, that the neighboring councils to the Home Park, had perhaps more interest in it, than the city, specially as times and ways, had changed so considerably.

The proposed "Home Park," consisted of 560 acres, that included in its area, a lagoon. The land was part of 745 acres that was afterwards permanently reserved, in the year 1864, and since that date, kept for "the use, and the enjoyment, by the public, as a park." A list of parcels of land, issued by the Government, in 1871, showed 724 acres of Albert Park as reserved land, and the Alpaca Reserve, Fitzroy Street, St. Kilda, consisting of 21 acres, 2 roods, and 19 perches, as forming a permanently reserved part of Albert Park. In May, 1867, the lands were vested in the Board of Land and Works. Once reserved, not permanently reserved, the land lay fattening through summer, and winter, visited by few people, outside of wood thieves, or sportsmen, who went after the wild fowls that frequented fen lands. The lagoon itself, was a large sheet of shallow water, that spread out into marshy lands, and when swollen, with winters' rains, its surplus waters drained towards where the St. Kilda Railway Station is now, and so helped to increase the waters in the swampy land that, more or less, covered the West Beach, which at that time was houseless.

We have a memorandum of one of the Selwyn Smiths, wherein he states, that, as a boy, he recollected a weatherboard house known as "Carter's Folly," reputed to be haunted by the unshriven spirits of those, drowned in Hobsons' Bay. It was the only dwelling, except some huts of Chinese, between Kenney's Baths, and Emerald Hill. Carter was a dentist, who had forgotten the story of the foolish man, who built his house upon the sand, and, of how the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell. The seashore sand of St. Kilda, carried by the wind, lodged against the paling fences which enclosed the house, and also against the walls of the house, until of the palings, six feet in height, scarcely a foot of them appeared above the piled up sand. The passage ways alongside the house had disappeared in sand drifts. We well remember the building, in situation somewhere in the block of land now formed by the Beaconsfield Parade, Mary and Fitzroy Streets. There the house lay, a sand

choked derelict, the south-east corner of the building being swallowed up in sand. Portions of the almost submerged back verandah were used by trespassing goats as a shelter shed.

The apparent worthlessness of the Albert Park lands, from lagoon to the sea, may have been one of the factors that saved the land being apportioned and sold, left the way open for the reservation obtained by the Melbourne City Corporation. Sea shells, found beneath the surface of the park lands, suggest that the waters of the bay, at one time, covered a portion of Albert Park, and that the lagoon was left by the receding waves as a salt water marsh. The luxuriance of growth of the creeping plants of pigface, of mesembryanthemums, partial to being rooted in saline soil, found along the banks of the present Albert Park Lake is another sign, which tells the story of the sea that has receded. Indeed, the drift of the sand against Carter's old house was a modern instance of how the tendency of the shore line is towards a noticeable drift to the west, and, if further evidence of that movement is sought, it may be found in the constantly growing shoals of sand, along the West St. Kilda beach, and elsewhere, along the shore line.

In the year 1860, the Government promised a vote of £600 towards the improvement of "South Park," on the condition that at the Fitzroy Street end of the road, to be made through the Park, there should be a toll bar erected, a collector employed, and a tariff of tolls fixed, similar to the one that was in force on the Brighton Road Toll Bar. The Government required also, that a regulation should be passed, prohibiting certain vehicles, drays among them, from being driven on the road through the Park. The St. Kilda Council was in favor of the Government's proposal, but the Emerald Hill Council was opposed to any such restrictions being made. The Emerald Hill Council, speaking through its chairman, Councillor R. S. Anderson, said his Council "strongly reprobated the attempt to foster the growth of a colonial aristocracy, granting conveniences to wealthy people alone," and he alluded, sarcastically, "to the assumption of those, who were more familiar with the inside of a counter, than the interior of a carriage." The Emerald Hill Council passed a motion, declining to pay towards the expense of a toll bar.

The original minute book of the conference on the South Park Lagoon in Albert Park, 1871, is in the possession of the St. Kilda Council. The first delegates from the City Council of Melbourne

-were, Aldermen -Wragge, Bayles, Williams, Story, O'Grady, and Councillor Curtain; from the Town Council of Prahan the Mayor, and Councillors Lacey, and *Ogg*, from the borough councils of St. Kilda, Emerald Hill, and Sandridge, the Mayors and St. Kilda Councillors Lord, and Murray, Emerald Hill (now South Melbourne) Councillors Sandilands and Hoffman, and Sandridge (now Port Melbourne) Councilors Poolman, and Carrick. The first meeting was held in the Town Hall, Melbourne, on June 27, 1871. In addition to the delegates there were present, Messrs. Hood and Bage on behalf of the Albert Park Regatta Committee, Dr. Thomson, and the Town Clerks of Emerald Hill, and St. Kilda. Alderman Wragge was appointed chairman of the conference, and the town clerk of St. Kilda, Mr. George Sprigg, acted as the conference secretary. Sydney W. Smith, the surveyor of St. Kilda, had prepared a preliminary survey of the lagoon, and an estimate of the cost of deepening it. The Mayor of St. Kilda moved and the motion was carried:—

"That it is expedient that the lagoon in Albert Park be so deepened as to form a boating course."

A further motion was carried to the effect that the Government be requested to survey the lagoon, and to "furnish the conference with a trial section of a race course showing a depth of not less than four feet six inches of water, and in other portions of the lagoon, a depth of from three to four feet."

When the President of the Board of Land and Works, the Hon. James Macpherson Grant, was interviewed, on July 7, by a deputation from the Conference, the President "expressed himself as much interested in the scheme, and promised to have the required survey made as soon as possible." On January 23, 1872, the plans of the survey of the lagoon made by the Assistant Commissioner of Lands and Survey, were before the Conference, and it was decided to wait on him "to discuss the matter of cost, &c." Evidently, having called upon the Government for assistance the councils feared that following the Government's usual practice when it contributed towards cost of any- work, the Government would require some readjustment of the executive, and representation on the Boards of Management, the councils, per the Conference, decided to impress upon the Assistant Commissioner, "that in the opinion of this Conference, it is not desirable that any change should be made in the management of Albert Park."

When the Conference saw the Commissioner of Lands and Survey, he received them "most favourably." The Commissioner was so by virtue of his inclusion in Sir Charles Gavan Duffy Ministry and Grant had joined Duffy in June, 1871, and he administered the Lands Department until June, 1872, when he received the Conference, "most favourably," his days as a Commissioner of Lands and Works were numbered. He told the Conference he was willing to place £6,000 upon the estimates, "if it could be shown, that for this sum any real good could be done, in making the lagoon available for regatta and general purposes." This sum was insufficient for the original scheme, and a modified plan was favoured, the purpose of which was, to reduce the span of the proposed channel to 200 feet, and to make it only four feet in depth. The cost of doing so was estimated at £6,500. This amount was eventually placed on the Parliamentary estimates and passed by the Legislative Assembly for payment.

The lagoon was known as the South Park Lagoon. At a meeting of the Conference, held on October 10, 1872, Alderman Wragge in the chair, it was moved by Councillor Lord (St. Kilda) and seconded by Councillor J. Nimmo, "that the name of the lagoon be changed to that of Albert Lake," which was carried. Common usage refused to drop the descriptive word "Park," and the old lagoon's placename partly survives in the name the Albert Park Lake.

In the year 1873 the Government Engineer-in-Chief made a report on the "Albert Lake," and in January, 1873, the Minister of Lands invited the Albert Park Lagoon Improvement Committee to attend at his office to hear the report read. The sum of £6,500 which had been voted by Parliament, was then available for the purposes of being spent on the improvement of the lagoon. The plan proposed by the Engineer-in-Chief, was to deepen the northern half of the lagoon to a minimum depth of three feet; to raise the surface level of the water by six inches. The spoil obtained from the work of dredging the lagoon was to be deposited along the margin of the lagoon, and a bank formed thereby, while, at the same time, the spoil was to be spread, in such a way, along the lagoon's margin, that the changing spread of lagoon's area would be, to some extent arrested and diminished. In that way, the engineer purposed to do away with the lagoon's shallow, waterlogged foreshore. Water to fill the

lagoon, to the required depth, was to be pumped from the river Yarra, and to be carried from the river's bank, in a twelve-inch main of earthenware pipes leading on a regularly falling gradient to the level of the lagoon. The steam engine pump, it was stated, could be also utilised to pump the river water for distribution in the Government House domain, and in the Botanical Gardens. We have a memory of seeing that pumping plant, on the banks of the river Yarra, at work, and of being told, that the water was being pumped to the Albert Park Lagoon. With an idea of economy it was suggested that it would be less costly to flood the lagoon with salt water, but the Engineer-in-Chief, was opposed to that course because, "the salt water would become, in hot weather, extremely offensive, and also being excessively salt, would injure the vegetation, on the margin of the lagoon." The object of improving the lagoon was stated to be to create a stretch of water, that could be used for sailing upon in pleasure boats. When the improvements were finished, it was estimated that at the St. Kilda end of the lagoon there would be an increased depth of six inches of water.

The Emerald Hill Council on two occasions, attempted to secure control of the South Park, extending as far as Fitzroy Street, for the purposes of converting the park into a burial ground for its dead. Had the Emerald Hill Council been successful, the park lands, bordering Fitzroy Street, from the St. Kilda Junction to the St. Kilda Railway Station, would have been a graveyard, instead of, as at present, the site of lawns, gardens, trees, a bowling green, and the Park State School. At the time of the second attempt, to secure the South Park for burial purposes, the St. Kilda Cemetery, in Dandenong Road, had been in use for nine years. That St. Kilda was saved from having a cemetery in Fitzroy Street, stands to the credit of the St. Kilda Councils of the years of the fifties, and specially to the St. Kilda Council of 1860, headed by its indignant Mayor, Councillor Benjamin Cowderoy. The other members of the Council were Councillors H. Tullett, Edward Sydes, J. H. Kelson, Florence Gardiner, J. M. Thomas, B. F. Bunny, F. Spicer, and James Mason.

In the early part of the year 1859 Charles Gavan Duffy, President of Land and Works, in the O'Shannassy Ministry, notwithstanding the protests of the St. Kilda, and Prahran Councils, sold allotments of land that he filched out of Fawkner Park. Those allotments of land had their frontages to St. Kilda Road.

The land on the west side of St. Kilda Road, Albert Park, was not then offered for sale by Duffy; possibly he wished to avoid a glut of land sales of allotments fronting St. Kilda Road. Duffy's excuse, or explanation, for selling portions of Fawkner Park was that, "the Government wanted money, and the land must therefore be sold." Duffy drafted some conditions of purchase, in an endeavor to placate the people for depriving them of a portion of their park lands. The lands, bordering on the St. Kilda Road, were plotted into 100 feet frontages, and they were submitted to auction with the riding contract of sale conditions with each Crown Grant, that the land bought must be used, only, for the erection of a dwelling place, and the house to be erected thereon must face the St. Kilda Road. Purchasers had the right, which in one, or two cases, they exercised, to build on the 100 feet frontage allotments, a terrace of houses not less than two stories in height. The design for such houses had to be approved by the authorities of the Board of Land and Works. The Crown reserved the power, in case the purchaser did not carry out the clauses of his contract, to re-enter into possession of the land, the purchaser forfeiting all his ownership rights.

Later than the year 1859, the St. Kilda Council had to fight two political opportunists, Messrs. Kerford, and Casey, who tried to sell public park lands against the wishes of the people. Casey said "he had the power to sell the lands, and he would sell them." Though Casey was a St. Kilda resident, he was not a persona grata with the St. Kilda Council.

When James Goodall Francis, described as "one of the most popular Chief Secretaries who ever held office in Victoria," resigned his office, and the Francis Ministry ceased to be, on July 31, 1874, George Biscoe Kerferd became Premier, and Attorney General. James Joseph Casey accepted the positions of Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey, President of the Board of Land and Works, and Minister of Agriculture. During the first parliamentary recess of the Kerferd Ministry, a Government advertisement appeared, foreshadowing a sale of the frontages of Albert Park to St. Kilda Road. Parliament not being in session, the Ministry was beyond the reach of public criticism in the House by the Opposition members, but Casey nevertheless felt the hot draught of the people's disapproval. He felt it necessary to give some explanation of his actions, and he offered the

statement, that the public reserves, in size, were out of all proportion to the population of Melbourne, and of suburbs. Plainly, the Honorable James Joseph Casey's vision of the futures of Melbourne, and of St. Kilda, was not of the best.

The advertisement to sell the park lands was read in St. Kilda, with astonishment and alarm. The general impression, up to that time, among the residents, was that the land for the park had already been permanently reserved, and that the Kerferd Ministry was going beyond its powers in offering any portion of the park for sale. Enquiries showed, however, that the Government was legally within its rights, though morally the Ministry was breaking faith with the public, as represented by the St. Kilda, and Emerald Hill Councils.

The position was that, in the year 1873, the Francis Ministry made certain proposals to the St. Kilda, and Emerald Hill Councils, regarding the control of the park lands. While those negotiations were in progress, notices were inserted in the Government Gazette, that it was the intention of the Government to permanently reserve the lands of the park, for the use of the public for all time. Through these advertisements the impression was created, in the minds of the residents of St. Kilda, and Emerald Hill, that the park was permanently reserved. The order of the Governor-in-Council permanently reserving the park was not made, and therefore not published. The park lands were simply Crown Lands, and they lay at the mercy of any impecunious Ministry that chose to outrage the spirit of the compact made between the Francis Ministry and the people south of the Yarra.

The Honorable J. J. Casey, Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey, and President of the Board of Land and Works, was in a fleeting expansive mood in July, 1873. He said he would vest the Albert Park in the two local bodies interested, the St. Kilda Borough Council, and the Emerald Hill Town Council, as well as in the Board of Land and Works, and further, promised that, for a period of ten years, the Government would provide half the expenses incurred in maintaining the park. The expenses of the park's maintenance, were estimated by the Assistant Commissioner, at £1,200 per year. Casey said that the Department would contribute £600, and the two local bodies would have, each of them, to pay the sum of £300. The revenue

derived from the park—grazing licences—would be taken by the Department to defray part of the expenses of the works at the lagoon.

The St. Kilda Council was astounded to learn that the Government was paying a sum approximating £1,200 per year, in wages, and other expenses, for the supervision of the park. Such an outgoing, in the circumstances of poor returns, appeared to the councillors to be ridiculous. When they sought further particulars, with a view to an understanding of how such a sum was appropriated, they were not given any information, but were told that inner workings of the park's management concerned the Department, and not the Council. In those circumstances the Council thought, that the sum of £150 was an ample subsidy to pay for a share in the control of the park. The Department's ministerial head evidently believed half a loaf was better than no bread, for in two months' time he had gone round to the Council's way of thinking.

On November 25, 1873, a deputation from the St. Kilda Council, and the Emerald Hill Council, waited on the Minister of Lands, and informed him that, in reply to communications, received from his department, the Councils of St. Kilda, and of Emerald Hill, had agreed to contribute the sum of £150 per annum each, for ten years, towards the maintenance, and the improvement of the Albert Park, the Government providing an equal sum, viz., £300, thus furnishing a total of £600 for the purpose, on the condition, that the Park be immediately conveyed to the Board of Land and Works, and to the two Council in trust for public recreation, for all time. At the end of ten years, the Board of Land and Works, was to retire from the trust, and to leave the management of the Park solely to the St. Kilda Council, and the Emerald Hill Council.

Without consulting the St. Kilda Council, the Emerald Hill Council accepted the proposal of Government' to take 'control of the park, in conjunction with the Board of Land and Works. The contract to do so was on the eve of being signed, when the St. Kilda Borough Council discovered that the Emerald Hill Council, and the Board of Land and Works had quietly agreed to obtain the control of the Alpaca (Park School) Reserve, and the St. Kilda cricket ground. The St. Kilda Council's very strong opinion was that each municipality, in conjunction with the Board of Land and Works, should have control of such

portions of the park as were within their own boundaries, and further, the St. Kilda Council objected to the Emerald Hill Council having any control of land, within the Borough of St. Kilda. The St. Kilda Council acted promptly. Next day the Mayor of St. Kilda, the Town Clerk, and the Surveyor, waited on the Minister of Lands, and Agriculture, and stated to him the views of the St. Kilda Council. It was not legal, the St. Kilda Councillors said, for the Emerald Hill Council to spend any money outside its own boundary line, and therefore the park lands in St. Kilda territory could not benefit by the control of them being vested in the Emerald Hill Council. In the end the St. Kilda Council's right to control the lands in question had to be admitted. A meeting of representatives from the three corporate bodies interested was then held, and though some of the councillors of Emerald Hill were churlish enough to object to the St. Kilda Council coming into the agreement as they asserted "at the last moment," the Minister (Casey) suggested that the two Councils should meet, consult, and agree, and afterwards submit to him a memorandum of agreement for his consideration. The two Councils did meet, and they did agree to submit the following memorandum to the Minister :-

"1. That Albert Park be permanently vested by deed of grant in the three corporations—the Board of Land and Works and borough councils of Emerald Hill, and St. Kilda for ten years."

"2. That the revenue shall be received by the said corporations, and the balance necessary for maintenance shall be borne equally by the three corporations for ten years."

"3. At the end of ten years, the park to be managed by the corporations of Emerald Hill, and St. Kilda, equally, and solely at their expense."

The Minister of Lands, and Agriculture, signified his acquiescence in this agreement, which was then signed by the councils' representatives, but not as, was discovered afterwards, by the Minister. The councillors supposed everything was in order, but at the St. Kilda Council meeting, held on September 20, 1875, the Mayor reported that the agreement was, that the Board of Land and Works, and the Emerald Hill and St. Kilda Councils, were to each contribute one third of the cost of the management of Albert Park, and to have, in return for the pay-

ments, a share in the management. Clearly that was the intention, and the agreement was signed by the councils on that understanding. The Minister had not completed the contract by signing the agreement, and the document was not a legal one. It had no force whatsoever to bind the Government since, lacking the Minister's signature, the Government was not yet legally a party to it. The councils now learnt that the Government wished to receive the councils' subsidies, but that the Minister did not intend that the councils should participate in the control of the park !

This extraordinary conduct, upon the part of a Minister of the Crown, was generally condemned, as being unworthy of a Government political departmental head. It was difficult for the councillors of a purely beneficent corporate body, like the St. Kilda Council, to understand why the Government was guilty of such covetous perverseness, displayed with regard to the Albert Park reserve since, in theory, at least, the Government was desirous of creating public parks to be used for the recreation of the community of Melbourne, that found its pleasures in out-door amusements. There could be no question of the St. Kilda Council's good faith, and that its wish to be given a share in the management of the park arose solely from the desire of the Council to improve the park lands, lands that would be to the general body of the ratepayers of St. Kilda, a source of expense, far in excess of the value the majority of them would receive from such park lands. The reservation of the park lands, for all time, lay behind the St. Kilda's attempt to share in the stewardship of the park. On the other hand, the Government looked upon the Crown lands as an asset that, did it become necessary, could be, by public auction, turned into cash, an assertion that is clearly proved by the constant nibbling of the Government at park lands. In South St. Kilda the land that is now the Brighton municipal golf links was surveyed in part for a Crown Lands Sale, which was only averted by strenuous municipal opposition.

In February, 1875, the following paragraph appeared in the St. Kilda Advertiser: "It has been decided by the Government to permanently reserve the Albert Park lagoon, and the greater portion of the park, for recreative purposes. At present, there is nothing to prevent the whole area being cut up, and sold, in building allotments. A strip of the park, facing the St.

Kilda Road will not, however, be permanently reserved, but will be sold for villa sites, on certain building conditions. By this means, it is anticipated that handsome residences will be erected there, as is the case on the opposite side of the road, and the approach to Melbourne, from the south, will then be something worthy of a great city. The sea frontage to the park will also be reserved for building sites, to be disposed of at some future day."

The Mayor of St. Kilda, Councillor Wilks, convened a public meeting of the residents of St. Kilda, on March 4, 1875, for the purpose of taking into consideration, the Government proposal to sell the frontages of Albert Park, and to determine what steps should be taken to have the whole park permanently reserved for the use of the public. The Mayor, at the meeting, reviewed the actions of previous ministries, with regard to the reservation of the Albert Park. He alluded to the notices given in the Government Gazette for the permanent reservation of the Alpaca Reserve, and the approval of the Government to the Council being made trustees of the reserve. He described the steps taken for the vesting of the Albert Park, in the Board of Land and Works, and the councils of St. Kilda and Emerald Hill. He related how in the year 1873, the Government made a proposition to the councils, that if the two local bodies each contributed £300 a year towards the maintenance of the Park, the Board of Land and Works, would add £600 per annum, and that for ten years the land should be vested in the two councils with the Board of Land and Works, but the arrangement proposed was not to the liking of the councils, and it was rejected. Notices had appeared in the Government Gazette that the land was reserved, but the notices were not "notices of permanent reservation."

The following long resolution was carried, on the motion of J. B. Hughes, seconded by J. Matheson :-

"That this meeting has heard with surprise, and regret that the Government propose to sell for building allotments the land in Albert Park, fronting the road from Melbourne to St. Kilda, and Fitzroy Street, and from that road to the St. Kilda railway station. This meeting therefore requests His Worship the Mayor, and the Municipal Council of St. Kilda, to form a deputation to the Premier to ask the Government to permanently reserve, as a public park, for the health and recreation of the people of Victoria, the

whole of the land in Albert Park, between Emerald Hill and St. Kilda ; and between the Melbourne Road, and the St. Kilda Railway, now, and for many years, set apart, enclosed, and used, as such public park; or that further action, in regard to the proposed sale, may be postponed until after the next meeting of Parliament. This meeting further requests that the corporation of Melbourne, and the municipalities of Prahran, Emerald Hill, and Sandridge, be invited to join in the proposed deputation, and this meeting pledges itself not to cease agitating until the reserves are placed in the hands of trustees so that it will be impossible for the Government to make away with them."

One speaker, at the meeting, McNaughton, said that he thought the public had a legal right to the land, because the sum of £7,000 of public money had been just spent on the lagoon improvements, and the drainage from any houses to be erected on the lots proposed to be sold, must go into the lagoon.

The Council had received a letter from the Secretary of Lands, stating that the frontages to the St. Kilda Road, and the allotments at the back of them, fronting the Albert Park would be sold, also some allotments in Fitzroy Street, the land being subject to special conditions as to the building, similar to the conditions under which the allotments, on the east side of St. Kilda Road were sold.

At the meeting of the St. Kilda Council, held on June 28, 1875, a letter was read from the Secretary of Lands, stating that the Hon. the Minister of Lands and Agriculture, had become aware, during a debate in the Legislative Assembly, that the sale of certain lots, without building conditions, was contrary to a letter written to the St. Kilda Borough Council in March, and he had therefore decided to cancel the proposed sale. Instructions had been given to an officer of the Department to so modify the survey, that the whole of the Fitzroy Street frontage, embracing the Alpaca Reserve, and the cricket ground, shall be included in the park. "The allotments not interfering," the letter said, "with the cricket ground, and Queen's Terrace will shortly be offered for sale, subject to building conditions."

The Alpaca Reserve, or Paddock, is a recurring place name in the history of St. Kilda. The Alpaca Reserve was the paddock extending from the line of railway east to the Park Road, and bounded on the north by a line running about the south base

of the Albert Park Lake, with Fitzroy Street as the south boundary of the paddock.

This place name, though now obsolete, is another instance of the often remote, and extraneous influences that are responsible for the naming of places. Before 1853, the residents of St. Kilda, and probably few in Australia, had ever heard of Don Manuel Antonio Flores of Bolivia, and it is doubtful if many of them ever did hear of him; nevertheless Don Flores was the Spanish don who was indirectly responsible for St. Kilda having its "Alpaca Paddock."

In a Hobart Town paper of June, 1853, a paragraph appears, which was copied into *The Argus* of June 11, 1853. The paragraph reads: "A correspondence has taken place with reference to a proposal made to the British Government by Don Manuel Antonio Flores, of Bolivia, to export a number of alpacas to Australia. The Duke of Newcastle referring to the subject instructs the Lieut.-Governor, should he find the colonists of this island favourable to the export, to communicate with the British Consul at Lima, who has received the necessary instructions. The subject, therefore, deserves the attention of the colonists."

The outcome was that some alpacas were imported into Victoria from Bolivia. There were nineteen animals in the herd, and they were landed from the ship "Goddess," at Sandridge, in the early morning of February 10, 1859. For a time they were confined in a paddock, at South Yarra, next to Dr. Mueller's residence. The animals were afterwards taken to the Royal Park. The St. Kilda Council always had at the back of its corporate mind the thought that a park should contain deer, and if not fallow deer, since they were unprocurable, why not "smaller deer" in the form of alpacas? The Baron, as the doctor afterwards became, was always a close civic friend of the St. Kilda Council, so it was not surprising that the Council contrived to secure some of the alpacas for the South Park. On January 8, 1864, a paragraph in *The Argus* newspaper states, "We understand that six alpacas, from the flock in the Royal Park, are to be placed permanently in St. Kilda Park, which consists of twenty acres of land, well adapted as a nursing ground for the South American strangers." Later, we learn, from a report of a meeting of the Acclimatisation Society, that the "six llama alpacas had been placed in the South Park, in accordance with

the request of the St. Kilda Borough Council." The animals did not thrive in the Park. A skin disease attacked their coats, destroying the hair. The St. Kilda Council returned the animals to the Royal Park, but the place of their enclosure in the Albert Park survived for many years in the place name of the Alpaca Paddock.

The Crown Lands Bailiff reported to the Assistant Commissioner of Lands and Survey, that Albert Park keeper Ritchie, had complained to him, that "some of the young gentlemen of St. Kilda are in the habit of playing at football, in the portion of the Albert Park, enclosed for the Alpacas, and that they cause much damage to the fences, by climbing over them in going, to and leaving the ground." The St. Kilda Council was asked by the Assistant Commissioner, in a letter dated July 21, 1864, to restrain the "young gentlemen of St. Kilda" from doing such things.

We do not purpose to review the whole of the many acts of the Albert Park Committee, a body of men, in recent years, under the chairmanship of the esteemed St. Kilda citizen, Councillor O'Donnell, that has made the Park the pleasance of public resort which it is to-day. The Committee under its wise chairman's leadership has had to fight many battles. The St. Kilda Council has always listened with interest when Councillor O'Donnell, as chairman of the Albert Park Committee, speaks of the Park and of what is being done there. On October 4, 1920, he reported to the Council that the Albert Park Land Bill had passed the Legislature. This Act provided that £1,250, being the purchase money, less £100, of the Orderly Room, would be paid direct by the Albert Park Committee for sewerage purposes. The Act also provided for an easement to enable the Commonwealth authorities to obtain access to the old Orderly Room site. The Committee, at that date, was preparing a scheme for carrying out the sewerage of the Park. On November 15, the Council received a letter, from the Albert Park Committee, stating that the laborers in the Park had asked for an increase of their wages from 12/- per day, to 13/- per day. Thirteen shillings was the basic wage per day for municipal employees. Under the arrangements that existed, the three parties to the Albert Park Trust, shared in any amount paid over the rate of 9/- per day each laborer. Seven men were concerned in the application. The Council agreed to share the additional cost of increasing

the men's wages to the basic standard. And so the tally of the work of the Albert Park Committee goes on, from year to year, under the guidance of its veteran chairman.

A fair measure of an energetic and wide awake council's business is comprised in the act of the councillors girding their loins, and going forth to interview the Ministers of various departments, who are in power, and who, in some way or other, contemplate acts that are not to the interests of the municipality the councillors have the honor to represent. Any student of municipal activities, in relation to the acts of councils, wherein the Government of the day is concerned, must come to the considered conclusion that the public at large owe more to the municipal councils than to the Government, inasmuch as the Government repeatedly designs to do acts or to undo acts, that have been done, which designs are, in either case, very often detrimental to the common welfare. Successive Governments, without local knowledge of what has gone before their advent, come to decisions to commit what are public administrative blunders, which had they fortified themselves with the necessary local knowledge would have been avoided. Perusal of an official file of papers, no doubt, discloses to the official mind, a record of transactions that have taken place, but so far as the spirit of a work is concerned the file bears about as much relation to, say a trust body's doings, as a dictionary of words does to a well written tale. The tendencies too of Governments are to float and to finance a trust responsibility undertaken jointly by a council, and say the Public Works Department, and then, when some years have passed, to intimate that the Government can no longer give any subsidies, and so, of necessity, the council must find the money for the upkeep, say of a park, over which the council only exercises a permissive control in the interests of the general public, and not necessarily for the council's own citizens, and ratepayers; indeed, such a stewardship, restricted to purely local interests, does not exist in St. Kilda, and we doubt if it does elsewhere. Yet the Government's attitude of holding aloof from pecuniary obligations, would lead one, who did not know, to presuppose that the Government was a power that had no direct obligation to do as much, and more, for the people in these trust responsibilities, than any good natured council that assumes control, and pays a portion of its rate revenue in the assumption, and rightly so, that it is serving the interests of the

general public, quite as much as the welfare of its own residents. The fact that honorary members of these trusts are well accredited men, and very often shrewd business men who place their knowledge, at the service of the public, and give their time to the work of the trust seems to be overlooked by the Government, and the Departmental authorities, who are well paid for their services, even when those services are carried out, in such a way, as to embarrass the men who are undertaking the honorary work.

The vast volume of work done for the public weal, by the great army of honorary workers, occupying positions on municipal councils, board trusts, and kindred bodies, is beyond computation. The paid parliamentarians are a mere handful of men, and it is abundantly clear that they have but a small measure of credit due to them for the social welfare of the people, compared to the debt owing to the honorary workers, whose gratuitous services must save the country every year thousands of pounds.

An instance of one of these threatened and unwarranted embarrassments, was when the St. Kilda Council was informed by the Albert Park Committee of management on November 27, 1922, that the Government threatened to withdraw its annual grant towards the maintenance, and the improvement of the Albert Park. The Hon., the Treasurer, the Council was informed, had been asked to receive a deputation on the subject, and the St. Kilda Council, being one of the trustees of the Park was asked to appoint a representative. In addition to the representatives on the Albert Park Trust, Councillor Clarke was appointed to attend the deputation. A discussion ensued in the Council, as to what would be the situation, in the event of the Government withdrawing its financial assistance. Councillor Clarke moved, and Councillor Unsworth seconded, a motion, "that the constitution of the Albert Park Committee of Management, and the St. Kilda Shore Committee, from the point of view of representation in relation to contribution be considered at the next meeting of the Public Works Committee. Councillor O'Donnell moved an amendment, which Councillor Allen seconded, "that the matter stand over pending the result of the deputation to the Treasurer. The amendment was put and lost, and the motion carried, the voting being 6 to 5, the members of the Shore Committee voting against the motion. At the St. Kilda

Council meeting held on January 22, 1923, Councillor O'Donnell reported, that as the result of a large deputation from South Melbourne, and St Kilda, the Hon. the Treasurer had agreed on the reinstatement, for the present, of the Government grant, to the Albert Park Committee of Management, the subsidy to be paid in quarterly instalments. Councillor O'Donnell stated the Minister intended to call a conference of the municipalities to consider the future of the Park. The St. Kilda Council decided to pay its subsidy to the Park Committee quarterly.