

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

*Mixed Bathing—The New Pastime Confronts the St. Kilda Council—Open Sea Bathing—Regulations Made—Regulations Criticised—Ladies' Baths' Question—Dressing and Bathing Shelters—West St. Kilda Progress Association—The "Meeting of Defiance"—A Laughable Sequel—Open Sea Bathers' League—Sea Bathing at Elwood—Deputation to Council—A Progressive Scheme—Plans Prepared.*

**M**IXED bathing, that is the bathing of the sexes in the sea, at the same time, and place, crept into practice, along the shores of Hobson's Bay, in a sporadic, and unconventional way, in the year 1908. At first, a great many people were shocked at the intimacy of communal bathing, more especially those whose early years belonged to the Victorian period, when strict chaperonage was in force for young ladies. At that time, there were in being certain prudish prejudices, that would to-day be described as false modesty. Other days, other manners. The introduction of mixed bathing was a social revolt, and even more than that, a bathing revolution by the new generation, against the restraining customs of the old generation. The propelling force of the innovation was so great, that no protests, on the score of improper behaviour, and that "such things were not done," by their grand-parents, prevailed with those who were becoming accustomed to mixed bathing. Supported with a strong body of sectional opinion, having its headquarters in church communions, and other kindred Christian bodies, civic officialdom, having control of the beaches, looked askance at the new movement, and councils hesitated to countenance the practice of mixed bathing, lest the whole thing might degenerate into the scandal, it was already declared to be by its most uncompromising opponents. Public opinion, as voiced by the youthful exuberance of young men and young women swept the chorus of protestations away by their refusal to listen, and more practically by continuing to bathe. To the unbiassed observer, strolling along the beaches, the mixed bathing was conducted with decency, and, notwithstanding the forebodings of

the "purity and decorum leagues," nothing of a dreadful or of a shocking import happened.

The St. Kilda Council, more than any other seaside council, was, as a body, in troubled waters, with the tide of the movement coming to its shores, and demanding a decision on its part, whether, or not, as a council, it would countenance mixed bathing? Hard pressed on the one hand, by sectional opinion, it had, on the other side, numbers of people who were beginning to indulge in mixed bathing, without any pretence, other than being a law unto themselves, so far as sea bathing in the open was concerned. An opinion was current, that if open sea bathing was to be permitted, it should be regulated, in such a way, that those who were not in favor of mixed bathing should have areas set apart for them. The St. Kilda Council, confronted with the new condition of things, sought in its legislation to deal equitably with those who were likely to be affected by it. A sub-committee of the Council met on September 26, 1914, to consider proposed amendments of bathing regulations, including the provision of dressing shelters, and the patrol of the foreshore. The sub-committee placed its report before the Council on October 26, 1914.

The sub-committee stated, in its report, that it was concerned, in an attempt to devise regulations that would effectually control open sea bathing. To do so it deemed it necessary to fix the boundaries of areas whereon bathers should be restricted during certain hours, and to provide dressing shelters, with attendants. Areas for open sea bathing, within certain times were specified. Separate bathing areas for sexes were provided, with specified hours for sea bathing, and on the beaches, so set apart for open sea bathing, "the sexes were required to bathe separately in their respective areas." At this time the bathing evolution that was taking place only had one phase so far as the authorities grasped the position. Open sea bathing, with sex apportioned areas, superficially appeared to meet the demand for greater liberty in public bathing, but the evolution that had quickened was more comprehensive than merely seeking official recognition of open sea bathing. The pith of the whole movement was open sea bathing, without any restrictions, upon the sexes to confine their bathing to areas specially set apart for them. We have said that the bathers "sought official recog-

tion," but that is describing the movement as if it was one that was timorous, lest official action should restrict it; perhaps even, with restraining by-laws, crush it altogether. The movement was a strong advancing wave of public opinion, a revolutionary wave, that was powerful enough to sweep aside every restriction, and to ultimately prevail. It is not difficult to see clearly, at this time, that such was the case, but when the St. Kilda Council drew up its regulations, the position was not so transparent. Open sea bathing was the question that filled the minds of the councillors, and not the innovation of mixed sea bathing.

The Council's Bathing Committee, attached to its recommendations, an explanatory note, detailing the various areas, the times of bathing, and the statement that no restriction was to be placed on children up to ten years of age, bathing on any portion of the foreshore. No bathing was to be permitted, on any portion of the beach, after 10 a.m. on Sundays, Christmas Day, or Good Friday, nor between the hours of 10.30 p.m., and 4 a.m., on any ordinary night, or morning. A dressing shelter was to be provided, in each of the four sex areas, and the shelters were to be available to the public, without charge, during the bathing season, to commence on October 1, and to close on March 31. An attendant, of the relative sex, was to be appointed for each shelter, who would be required to patrol the beach, and to enforce the provisions of the bathing regulations. Clauses, relating to suitable bathing dresses, defined in former regulations were to remain in force.

At the same Council meeting (October 26, 1914) the question of the enclosed Ladies' Baths was considered. Councillor O'Donnell moved, and Councillor Gibbs seconded, this motion: "That the Council recognises the necessity for providing baths for the exclusive use of women, and that steps be taken to acquire a lease of the site, formerly held by the proprietors of Hegarty's Ladies' Baths, and to purchase the buildings thereon." This motion was halted by an amendment to the effect, "that consideration be postponed for fourteen *days*, to allow of inquiry to be made of the authorities of the Lands' Department, as to whether in the bath area lease, recently issued to Mr. William Kenney, there was any provision, that the use of his baths must be restricted to one sex only, or has he

the permission to use such baths for mixed bathing?" A reply was received, from the Lands' Department, stating that there was no provision, in the lease of Kenney's Ladies' Baths, restricting the use of such baths to one sex only. The Council's inquiry evidently showed to the Lands Department authorities what they, on reflection, considered to be an omission. On January 18, the Lands Department expressed its opinion, to the Council, saying that any lease, for a bathing area to be enclosed, should contain the condition that mixed bathing shall not be permitted within such area. The Council had passed, on December 7, 1914, a resolution to that effect, and this resolution remained unassailed until June 8, 1915, when Councillor Gray gave notice that he would move: "That the Council's resolution of 7th December, 1914, expressing the opinion that any lease for a bathing area to be enclosed should contain the condition, that mixed bathing shall not be permitted, within such area, be, and is hereby rescinded, the Lands Department to be informed that the Council had rescinded the resolution, and that it would offer no objection to the issue of a lease, free from any condition restricting the use of the baths to one sex only." At a subsequent meeting of the Council the motion, which was put to the vote, was lost.

In the midst of the various agitations, that found a fruitful forcing place in the sand of the seashore, the Council endeavored to carry out its intentions to give facilities to bathers, but it cannot be said that the Council received any thanks for its labors. On November 23, 1914, the St. Kilda Fore Shore Committee informed the Council that, the Council's proposed bathing screens were not in keeping with other structures on the beach reserves under its control. A ratepayer wrote, protesting against the erection of a dressing shed for open sea bathers on the Beaconsfield Parade, opposite his dwelling house. And so little fires of protest were lighted, concerning almost every move by the Council, until, in the end, the whole length of the beach front, was aflame with debatable questions. Unmoved, to any noticeable extent, through the turmoil walked the Council's own special committee—the Open Sea Bathing Special Committee—formed to report upon, and to deal with pressing questions of the beach and beach control. The Committee was formed of the Mayor (J. H. Hewison), Councillors Allen, Gibbs, Hart and

O'Donnell. Councillor Edward O'Donnell was the most experienced councillor of the group, well versed, for many years, in all the phases of public life. He was not the councillor to be hurried into a course of action. Civic questions were quite safe in his custody. His many years of ceaseless service in the interests of St. Kilda bore witness to that. Not only was he, in point of years of service, the father of the Council, but he was also its mentor. No one, who knew the St. Kilda Councillors, supposed that the critics, who denounced the Council, nor the dissatisfied bathers, nor the members of the sea shore leagues, all of whom proclaimed themselves as the threatening precursors of an August municipal election Nemesis, were going to have beach questions settled in the way they shouted for, nor to have bathing shelters built, where they indicated, nor to have greater schemes of bathing facilities, involving thousands of pounds, carried out because they wanted them.

By virtue of a recommendation made by the Public Works Committee, in July, 1915, the Council gave orders to its surveyor to proceed with the construction of Bathing Shelters, in such positions, as to conform with the provisions of Bathing Regulation Number 21. A new clause in the bathing regulations, provided for the Council's power, from time to time, by resolution, to fix, to alter, or abolish fees for the use of dressing shelters, and also, to charge bathers fees for the safe custody of clothes, and valuables. A re-definition of bathing areas for men, and women was made on November 8, 1915. Further emendations in the Regulations were gazetted, on April 5, 1916. They had reference to areas prohibited to horse owners, bathing their horses. This amendment was made, at the request of the Ports and Harbours Branch of the Public Works Department, so it will be seen that the beach had not been left without a plurality of controlling bodies, the interests of which have not always been identical. By inheritance, by propinquity, and by permitted control of Crown shore lands, the St. Kilda Council is the natural guardian of the seashore, which forms the western boundary line of the municipality. Lines of demarcation of Crown lands, or shore lands, are arbitrary, and have no legitimate claim to exist, 'twixt land, and water, on the boundary line of the municipality of a local corporate power.

Bathing facilities, on the West Beach, were the subject of a deputation of Open Sea Bathers, that waited on the Council, on Monday evening, December 12, 1921. Councillor Thomas Unsworth introduced the deputation, and the Honorable Agar Wynne, M.L.C., urged the Council, on behalf of the Open Sea Bathers, to provide adequate accommodation, for their needs, which were enumerated as—increased bathing shelter accommodation; facilities for the storage of life saving appliances, and gear; installation of electric arc lights, or high pressure gas lamps; men's conveniences in the vicinity of the bathing area ; separate bathing shelters for children ; provision of showers ; provision of portable refuse bins, and other steps, necessary to secure cleanliness of the beaches. Six hundred members of the Open Sea Bathers' League represented the league's roll call. The demeanour of the speakers, who followed the Hon. Agar Wynne, was provocative. When one speaker asserted that the council was "splitting straws," the councillors resolved, that the speaker be no longer heard, whereupon the deputation retired.

A note is made, in the minute book of the Council, that the Honorable Agar Wynne was not among the offending members of the deputation from the West Beach, a place that held some sea bathers, who were noisily hostile to the Council's regulations regarding beach areas for bathing. The Honorable Agar Wynne was an old resident of St. Kilda. His father was Edward Agar Wynne, who came to the colony, in the year 1853, and settled at Ballarat. He was in the Eureka Stockade riot on December 3, 1854. Coming to Balaclava, he resided in a house he named "View Hill," which he subsequently sold, when the values of properties were soaring, in the "land boom" of the years of the eighties, for the large sum of £16,000. Later, he moved to Grey Street, St. Kilda, to the dwelling called "Montacute," where he resided until his death in December, 1898, at the age of 75 years. The Honorable Agar Wynne was his eldest son.

Because some of the members of the Open Sea Bathers' League had not observed the respect, that is due to a body of honorable men as a civic body, the Council did not reply in kind. On the contrary, the Council promised the league that it would build the shed for the housing of men's life saving appliances. The Council received the league's thanks for doing so. At the

same time the secretary of the league, asked the Council to pay an account, for the purchase of life saving appliances, the league had obtained. Payments had been made to other life saving organisations on the St. Kilda Beach, but the payments so made were to provide first aid outfits, to be available, in case of accidents, but the Council did not pay for life saving appliances. About this time (February, 1922) some inciting articles appeared, in The Age newspaper, containing statements criticising the St. Kilda Council, in connection with the beach, and open sea bathing, that were incorrect. They were a part of a campaign of inspired criticism that the St. Kilda Council had been subjected to, ever since the controversies had arisen, regarding beach provisions for open sea bathing. In the articles, said Councillor Hewison, commenting, there were "wilfully inaccurate and misleading statements regarding bathing on Sunday afternoons. The Council's regulations were framed as far back as 1915, but for some years, the clause relating to bathing on Sunday afternoons had not been enforced. There were wise and good reasons for the framing of the regulations, but the Council had not, and would not, enforce the prohibition of bathing, between one o'clock and five o'clock on Sunday, while good behaviour ruled."

An inflammatory newspaper paragraph stated that the members of the West St. Kilda Progress Association were to make a preliminary demonstration against the bathing regulations, that were still under discussion of the Council. Instructions were given to those, who were to rise up in revolt, to meet at the St. Kilda railway station, at 10.30 o'clock, on Sunday morning, January 22, 1922. The gallant band of beach insurrectionists was to march to Beaconsfield Parade. Once there the heroes were to undress, with such gravity, as became the occasion of enacting a solemn rite of defiance, to a municipal phantom by-law that at the time was not in existence. This particular Sunday morning dedicated by the Progress Association as a by-law breaking day, happened to be perversely inhospitable. The sea water, too, looked with a cold shimmer at the bathers. Both day, and water, combined were more than enough to damp the fevered emotions of the members of the West Beach Progress Association. Almost all the members decided the water was cold enough to keep them out of it. About 500 people watched, and waited, for the heroes of a water-

less bathe to plunge into the sea. A dozen of these breakers of regulations entered the water, and nothing more serious happened than that they quickly came out again. No municipal representative was in sight; no policeman took their names. Nothing hostile happened. The crowd dribbled away. The progressives went home, too, to take stock of themselves.

We seek to make the position quite clear, by stating that the Special Committee of the Council, on the subject of the regulation of bathing, had submitted its report to the Council, and that the report had been made public, in open Council. Its provisions had raised a storm of protests, but the protests were directed at something the objectors feared might happen, and not at something that had been passed into Council law, by the statutory legislation of adopted regulations, by publication, in the Government Gazette. The absurdity of the farcical exhibition on the Beaconsfield Parade is self-evident. If any ratepayer considered any by-law, or regulation, of the Council to be outside the Council's powers, his remedy was to seek an injunction from the court, but that was not done, nor was such a course, so far as we know, even proposed. That the Council was within its powers, in making the regulations, was not questioned by anyone acquainted with a municipal council's powers under the Local Government Act. At this stage of the agitation, the regulations were still under consideration, and the aim of any protest could only be, to ask the Council to abandon its manifest intention to adopt, and legalise, the challenged regulations. The fact was, that the demonstrators were only a noisy minority. Councillor Unsworth, one of the representatives of the West Ward, gave the Council his assurance "that 95 per cent. of the members of the Open Sea Bathers' League were disgusted with the two or three executive officers, who either wrote, or inspired the defamatory newspaper articles. He told the Council that the "meeting of defiance" was a direct manufacture by "The Age" newspaper. The crowd, he said, assembled, at the pier, only for the purpose of having a photograph of the league taken.

This theatrical display of dissatisfied bathers did not impress any common-sense person, since it did not bring them any nearer to the attainment of their wishes. Only through constitutional methods was it possible for them to lay

their pleas for unrestricted sea bathing, before the Council with any prospect of success. Buffooning on the beach, was simply a claptrap appeal to a section of public opinion that had no material power, in the case. At a subsequent meeting of the Council, a deputation, composed of citizens of St. Kilda, interested in sea bathing was received. The Mayor, in receiving the deputation, said he desired to anticipate the remarks, that might fall from the speakers, remarks that seemed to him to be inevitable in view of recent events. His Worship stressed the fact, that the Council had given the subject of sea bathing a lengthy consideration. The report of a special committee had been adopted, and a direction given to the by-laws committee, to frame an amending regulation thereon. With regret he referred to an unseemly demonstration at Beaconsfield Parade on Sunday. An honest effort was being made by the Council to deal with the important subject of sea bathing. Had the ringleaders of the scene, on Sunday, realised the position, there would hardly have been an organised defiance to a regulation, which had not been passed. There was a constitutional way to proceed when the exact position was ascertained. The Elwood Bathing Association had adopted the constitutional method. "If," said His Worship, "the Council was not, in the opinion of the ratepayers, amenable to reason, the legislation for the regulation of bathing on the St. Kilda beaches could be tested in a court of law. It was not a question of dignity hurt, but the matter of conducting the business of the city in a constitutional manner." The Mayor also said "that no speaker would be heard by the Council, on behalf of the deputation, that evening who did not avow complete disassociation with Sunday's incident."

A deputation, from the Elwood and South St. Kilda Progress Association, waited on the Council to express the views of its members on open sea bathing. The Association was strongly opposed to the restriction of open sea bathing, as proposed by the new regulations of the St. Kilda Council. In support of its case, the speakers, for the Association said that mixed bathing was becoming universal, and the provision of shelters, along the whole of the beach frontage, was essential. They regarded the restriction of bathing, implied by the regulation that bathing had to be done before ten o'clock on Sunday morning as

especially irksome. Reference was made to the popular bathing resorts adjacent to Sydney—Manly and Coogee—at which places the regulations dealt only with the control of the conduct of the bathers, and were silent regarding the questions of when and of where bathers might bathe. A resolution, passed by the Association was handed to the Council. It was a protest, and a request in a concrete form covering what the speakers had said. A petition handed in, at the same time, contained 300 signatures. The petitioners prayed to the Council not to restrict open sea bathing on Sundays, to before the hour of ten o'clock, in the forenoon. On the other hand, letters supporting the Council's action were received from the Prahran and St. Kilda Ministers' Association.

We have not yet conveyed to the reader the suppressed excitement there was in the Council chamber, during the reception of the deputation, and while the champions of unrestricted liberty of sea bathing were speaking. The Council chamber was filled and overflowing with interested people, representing both sides of the question. The scene was one of tense interest from a civic standpoint. An issue of greater moment might have been at stake, so electrical, with human expectancy, was the chamber. When those present considered anyone speaking on their behalf made a point, they applauded. The Mayor prohibited applause, deeming it unseemly in the Council's deliberative chamber. Though the ratepayers', and bathers' gathering, was parochial in its formation, it was far from being so in its objects, and the reversions it sought to obtain. Those people who were present formed the speaking head of a large following of sea bathers, whose homes were distributed well over most of the metropolitan suburbs. Uncommon interest was aroused throughout Melbourne. The localism of St. Kilda had no place in the assumption that St. Kilda, and its beaches, belonged to Melbourne citizens, and the St. Kilda Council, on this question, had to accept the position of a paramount Parliament, and adjudicate for Melbourne itself. The St. Kilda councillors felt the pressure of the protesting numbers, seen and unseen, but, while the councillors did so, they did not act hastily, nor did they allow those who clamored so insistently, to snatch a revision of the bathing regulations, before the Council had an opportunity to consider the whole question, in the calm

atmosphere of a committee-room. Therefore it did not come as a surprise to those, who were familiar with the procedure of the St. Kilda Council, when the Mayor announced that, "considerations of all the questions involved were deferred to the next meeting of the Council."

The fortnight intervening between the meetings of the St. Kilda Council, allowed the bathers, and their leagues, to gather opinions, protests, and resolutions, almost without number. Swimming clubs, progress associations, and others, protested, and condemned the St. Kilda Bathing Regulations. Letters appeared in the newspapers. Scarcely anyone, outside the church associations, had a good word to say for the regulations, that had been prepared with so much labor, and care by the Special Committee of the St. Kilda Council. When the Council met on November 23, 1914, the chamber was filled by the bathers. The tension once more made itself felt. Those people present nearest the rail bar scanned the faces of the councillors, in the hope of detecting some *sign*, that would give to them a clue to the Council's decision. Routine business of the Council proceeded much as usual. Though the bathers fretted at the delays, they had to wait until, under the Orders of the Day, Councillor Gray moved the momentous test motion, that was to leave the whole of the St. Kilda Beach, with one restriction, open to mixed bathing. His motion was in substance: "To allow mixed bathing along the whole of the foreshore, except between Cowderoy Street, and Shakespeare Grove, between the hours of 4 a.m. and 10.30 p.m. daily, except between the hours of 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Sundays."

The motion was defeated, as was *also* a subsequent amendment. The St. Kilda Council had faced the storm, and its assailers found that they could not dragoon the Council into accepting their opinion.

The Council's position remained unchanged. The Town Clerk was instructed to inform the executive officers of the Royal Life Saving Society, the Prahran and St. Kilda Ministers' Association, the West St. Kilda Life Saving and Swimming Club, the Surrey Park Swimming Club, the Fairfield Park Amateur Swimming Club, the West St. Kilda Progress Association, and the Elwood, and South St. Kilda Progress Association, of the majority decision of the Council to make no changes in the new

bathing regulations. We have recorded the list of the clubs, and the associations, to show what a solid press of semi-official, and club opinions, was brought to bear on the Council, but it must not be supposed that was the whole volume of influence, directed towards the councillors, with the intention of causing them to weaken in their resolution to uphold the unpopular regulations. Editors of newspapers joined with the opposing forces, and they opened their columns to a guerilla-like correspondence, by all sorts, and conditions of bathers, who fired criticisms at the Council, and they chose to do so, in many cases, from behind the hedges of anonymity. At the Council meeting, held on December 21, 1914, the By-laws Committee of the St. Kilda Council, submitted to the Council its draft amending Bathing Regulations. Upon the motion of Councillor O'Donnell, seconded by Councillor Love, the draft amending Bathing Regulations were received and adopted, and that finalised the Bathing Regulations' battle, leaving the St. Kilda Council the master of its own seaside city, and the regulation of its seashore appurtenances.

Year by year the strength, and importance, of the sea bathing problem, grew so lustily that it clamored for solution. Though there was a multitude of counsellors, there was not much wisdom apparent in their advice, so freely hurled at the St. Kilda Council. While the majority of the critics supposed, that the St. Kilda councillors were worried with the problem, that Melbourne thought was too big for them, they, on their part, were mustering the reports upon other watering places throughout the world, and learning from the experiences of those distant and fashionable watering places, what was best for St. Kilda. The Town Clerk (Mr. Fred. W. Chamberlin) saw to that. There was little the leading councillors of St. Kilda did not know that had any bearing on the subject, a fact its critics were unaware of, or perhaps they would not have rushed in so freely to where others feared to tread. At the Council meeting, held on February 20, 1922, Councillor Hewison moved: "That a committee be appointed to consider and report upon the provisions of facilities for bathing on the beach on the Esplanade frontage." Councillor Hewison admitted that the Council had felt a want of complete satisfaction with what had been accomplished, in the way of bathing facilities, but that feeling came not by the

way of recent criticisms. A tremendous amount of work, he said, had been done during the past ten years. Bathing shelters had been provided, at a cost, approximately, of £3000, for use by the public, free of all charge. As an expedient the bathing shelters had served a useful purpose, but the Council could not be altogether satisfied with them, as a permanent provision. The Council had endeavored to keep pace with the growing popularity of open sea bathing, but it had been handicapped, in having to accept conditions, existing before that form of bathing became the fashion. Enclosed baths, and kiosks, had been erected, on the portions of the foreshore, which would have been perhaps, the most suitable places for bathing in the open. The Council knew the position in regard to the Ladies' Baths, and it was aware, when the baths were purchased, that they were worn out. They had served their day. If the baths' area remained, the buildings would have to be rebuilt. Neither of the baths was structurally worthy of the position they occupied. The way that open sea bathing had developed could not have been foreseen when the baths were erected. Councillor Hewison outlined a progressive building scheme, that would lend itself to sectional additions, and when, eventually, the blocks of buildings were finished, the whole mass would make a complete, and harmonised structure. To complete it out of hand was financially impossible, since perhaps the sum of over £100,000 might be involved. The St. Kilda Council had no warrant, from its ratepayers, to pauperise itself, in dressing its shop windows, beyond its civic means.

Councillor Hewison said that the proposed building was to be of concrete, somewhat on the lines of a like structure at Coogee, N.S.W., which provided shops on the frontage to its Lower Esplanade, and dressing shelters in the rear. The contemplated building was to have a flat roof, where band music and resting accommodation would be provided, and many other details. By permission, Councillor Hewison amended his motion, and, by so doing, he was the councillor who brought into existence the Council's Special Sea Bathing Committee that was to do so much spade work. The motion, which was carried, was :-

"That a committee be appointed to consider, and to report, upon the provision of facilities for bathing on the beaches."

Opinions were expressed that representation should be made to the Government, to the Tramways and to the Railways authorities for substantial financial assistance in the execution of such a scheme. On the motion of Councillor Renfrey, seconded by Councillor O'Donnell, the personnel of the newly-created Open Sea Bathing Committee was arranged to be Councillors Alford, Gray, Hewison, Hughes, and Unsworth.

On December 11, 1922, the Open Sea Bathing Committee submitted its report to the Council. Broadly, the plan brought forward, by the Committee, was to build a structure between the ladies' baths and the refreshment kiosk, having a frontage of 440 feet, the building to be constructed of reinforced concrete. Provision was made for two shops, and a cigar kiosk, at the main entrance, that would lead to a main cafe, with an area of 68 feet by 32 feet. Ample provision was made for the convenience of women, and men bathing. The details of the whole structure was very complete. A rough estimate of the cost of the completed scheme was £45,000. Councillor Hewison, as Chairman of the Committee, after explaining the proposal, referred to the criticisms in a section of the Melbourne newspapers.

We rest here, for a small space, to say, that councils, like lesser things, have their barren years, and their years of fruitfulness. The Council that best serves the ratepayers is the one that "hastens slowly." Ratepayers, were they wise, would appreciate cautious men, who hold moderate views towards untried acts, and improvements that are being clamored for by a section of irresponsibles, who sometimes call themselves progressives. Councillors of St. Kilda have, from the beginning of St. Kilda's civic life, had their full share of the public's hostile clamor, with newspapers leading at one time, and following at another, the hue and cry, the object of which has been to jockey the Council into doing things, specially on the beach front, which the Council's finances would not permit of being done. It has been the apparent possession of the foreshore front by the St. Kilda Council as a part of the municipality that has been the source of so much criticism, by the man in the street, who knows in a day's visit so much more of how to beautify, utilise, and commercialise St. Kilda Beach, than the Council that has studied the question for over half a century of civic contemplation.

Councillor Hewison stated the Council's point of view, when he said that in years past, the Council had spent thousands of pounds, in providing facilities for open sea bathing, for which there had not been one single penny of financial return. The Council quite recognised that it would have to go considerably further, and it was in that spirit of recognition, that the scheme was put forward. After explaining the financial aspect, and that the bathing scheme, if carried out, would leave an annual charge, on the municipal funds, of £2000 per annum, he moved the following resolution:—

"That this Council approve of the provision of bathing accommodation, on the lines of the plan prepared by its Surveyor, and on the necessary consent of the St. Kilda Foreshore Committee being obtained, proceed to consider same, with a view to the final adoption of such plan, with or without modifications, and to the carrying out of the same."

This resolution was carried. A further resolution was passed to take steps to secure the consent of the St. Kilda Shore Committee to the proposal. At this point of our narrative the position is clearly defined that the St. Kilda Council was willing to obtain the "consent of the St. Kilda Foreshore Committee to the proposal." How long this position was to remain, as time passed, will be seen later.