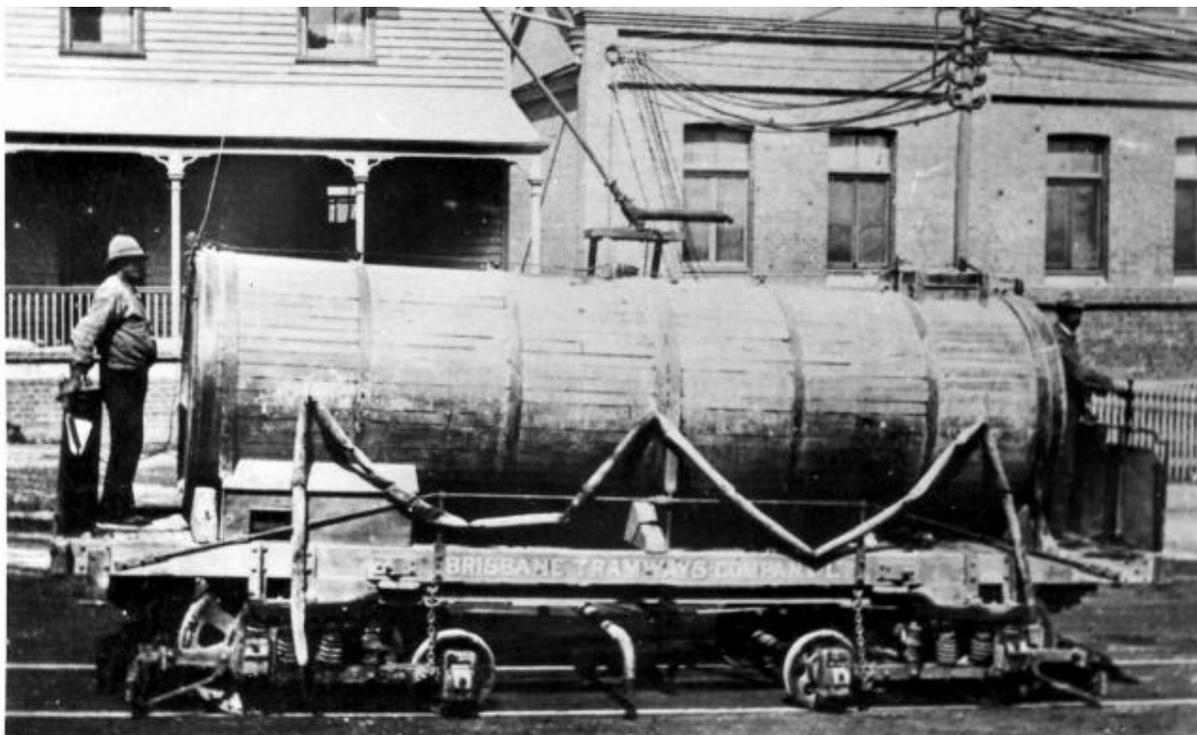


# Street Watering and the Dust Problem from the Brisbane Town Council Mayoral Report of 1911.

One of the most difficult problems which presents itself to the City Council for solution is the dust nuisance, but only to the Council is its difficulty obvious and real. To the mate in the street, and the occupant of art editorial chair perchance, the method to be adopted for its abatement is absurdly simple, and its effectiveness beyond question, but the failure of these pavement and armchair critics to impart their methods to the Council in the interest of the Citizens, and for the benefit of their fellow citizens, says little for their humaneness, and discounts their assumption of knowledge

Dust may be said to be composed of specks, but it is by no means spectral, and cannot be composed or laid in like manner to a spectra. We have to remember that dust is not of local production only, and that it cannot or will not be localised. Much of the dust that pervades the City atmosphere at times, comes from beyond our boundaries, and there are occasions when the whole face of the country appears to be moving City-wards. The problem is just as difficult in other countries where climatic conditions are more favourable than in Brisbane, and the columns of the English and American journals and papers which deal principally with municipal matters are rarely entirely free of reference to some new proposal or experiment for allaying dust. Street watering appliances, from small hand-carts to motor and electric wagons, figure on their pages; and the experiments range through all classes of road-making materials, and the treatment of road surfaces with oil, tar, and chemical products galore. However, I have no intention of posing as an apologist, and I must admit that the Council has not done all that might have been done, there has been a lack of enterprise, and a tendency to wait and see what others are going to do before venturing ourselves.



Car 202 Sprinkler car in original form at Countess St - BCC

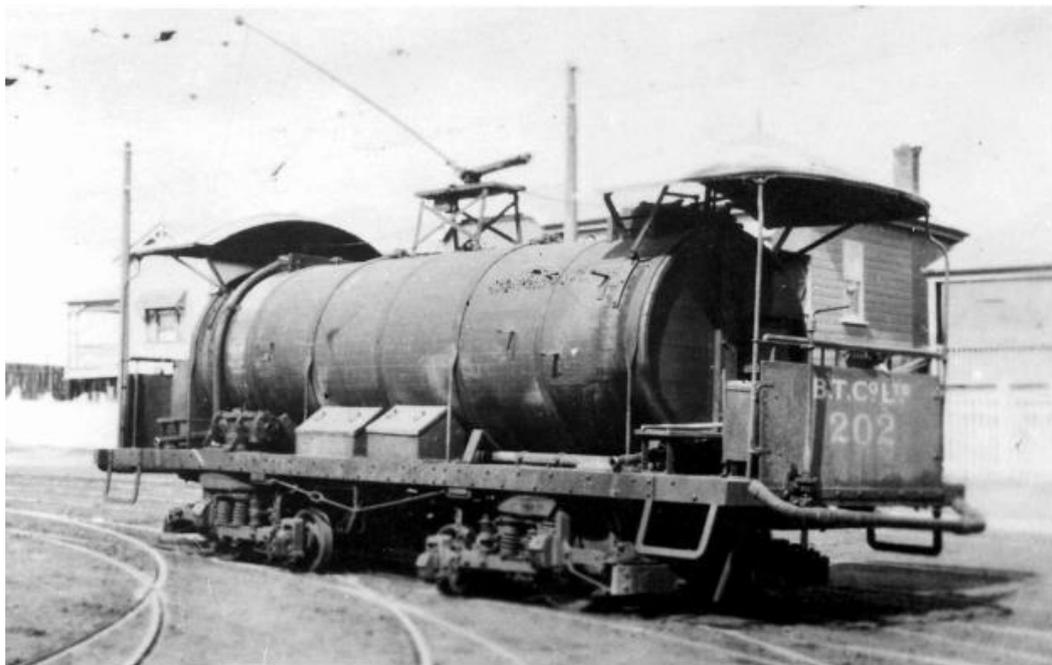
Street watering is possibly the most primitive method of dust prevention, and yet it is the one most in vogue; there is, however, a vast difference between applying water to the roads with an old fashioned watercart, and the latest design of motor wagon sprinkler; of course one costs money, and the other more money, but which is the most economical, all points considered, is only a matter of calculation

Several years ago the Council came to an agreement with the Brisbane Tramways Co. Ltd., whereby the Company undertook on exceedingly reasonable terms to pump water from the river at North Quay to a reservoir at the highest point of Spring Hill, and subsequently a scheme was evolved for the purpose of taking advantage of that agreement., and delivering river water to the City Baths, and also to standpipes and hydrants at convenient points for street watering purposes.

The following excerpt from a report of the Ferries and Baths committee of 21st July, 1910, sets forth the proposal concisely:

Tile works involved are, briefly, the construction of a covered concrete reservoir with a capacity for 276,000 gallons at the junction of Wickham Terrace and Leichhardt Street, the laying of a rising main from the Tramways Power house to the reservoir, and the laying of mains from the reservoir to the two City Baths, and to various parts of the City where standpipes will be located for the supply of water to the street watering vehicles. The distributing mains will also be furnished with a hydrant about every five 'chains, for gully flushing, etc.

It is estimated that the amount of water required daily for all purposes will, if a swimming bath for ladies is erected at Wickham Street, as has been suggested, range from '70,000 to 350,000 gallons, but a much larger quantity (say 550,000) can be made available, the smaller capacity of the reservoir being no bar if an electric water indicator be fixed at the power house.



Car 202 Sprinkler at Paddington - BTMS Archive

Included in the scheme is of course the discontinuance of pumping at Petrie's Bight, the sale of the plant and the saving of the upkeep, renewals, working expenses, etc., thus effected

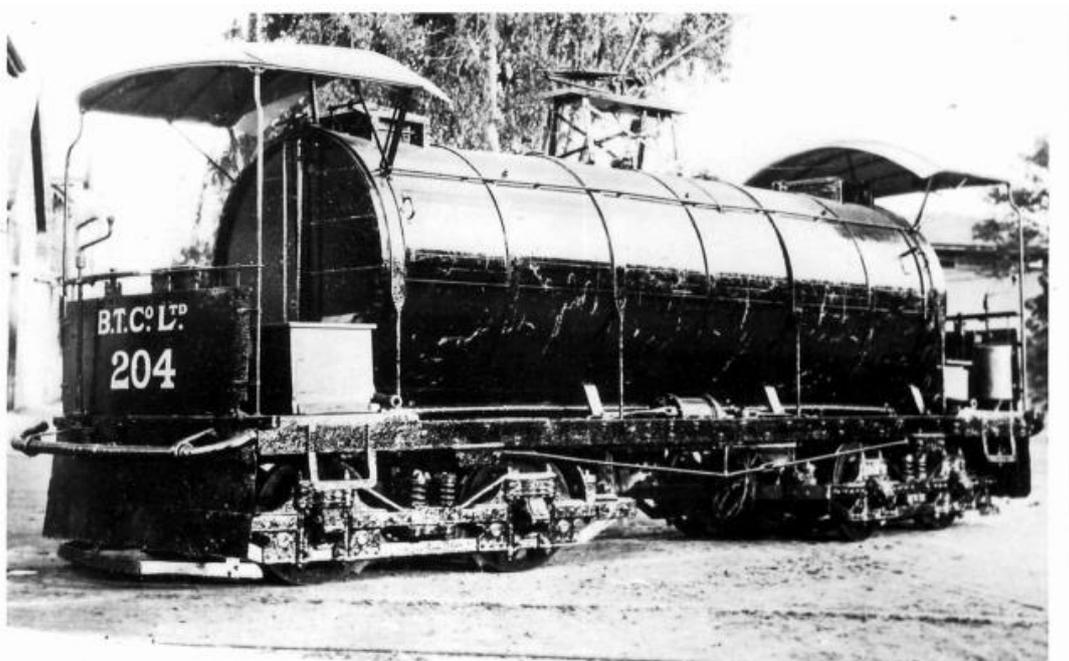
The principal advantages of the scheme are a liberal supply of healthful salt water to the baths, also an ample supply of water for street purposes better adapted for dust laying than fresh water, and possessed of germ destroying properties which make it peculiarly suitable for gully and channel flushing in addition to which it is estimated that a considerable saving will be effected.

The estimated cost of the works above set forth, and as shown by plans and specifications herewith submitted, is .£13,000; and your Committee recommends approval of same, and that notice be given of the Council's intention to borrow the amount, on debentures for the purpose of giving effect to the scheme. The amount named formed part of the Loan of £115,000 which the Council was authorised to raise, and which the AMP Society agreed to take up, at the latter end of 1910, but the project is still 'in an embryonic state.

In November, 1910, 1 tabled the following motion :-

That as the watering of the City streets, especially in the East and West Wards, is unsatisfactory because of the inadequate and obsolete appliances in use, and the failure to keep down the dust results in the dissemination of disease germs, damage to the stocks of merchants and shopkeepers, and annoyance to ratepayers and citizens generally, the question of improving upon the existing system of street watering, by the provision of plant more in keeping with present day methods and requirements, be taken into consideration, with the view to the inclusion of an amount sufficient for the purpose in the Estimates for 1911.

The motion was referred to the Works Committee, and in due course the matter was considered, but the only practical outcome has been an addition to the street watering plant of two horse drawn waggons, with patent attachments for regulating and directing the flow of water, and a consequent slight extension of the area of watering.



Car 204 Sprinkler in Countess Street- BTMS Archive

Following the matter up, I took action in the direction of providing additional facilities for loading the watercarts and wagons, and it occurred to me that an arrangement the Council had with the

Brisbane Tramway Co for the watering of certain tramway routes might be extended with advantage, and after some preliminary inquiries, I brought the subject before the Council on 2nd October last, in a Minute as under:-

In order that time might be saved in re-filling the street watercarts, I have authorised the erection of four stand-pipes, at the corner of Margaret and Albert Streets, the corner of Adelaide and Creek Streets, the corner of Eagle Terrace and North Quay, and the corner of East and Ann Streets, respectively. These standpipes for the present will be connected with the mains of the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board, but actually form part of the authorised scheme for supplying river water for street watering purposes, and the cost will accordingly be defrayed by loan moneys.

Attention having been directed to the very dusty condition of Countess Street, which now carries a very large amount of traffic, I have entered into an arrangement with the Manager of the Tramways Company to water that thoroughfare three times a day.

At the present time the Tramways Company is, by arrangement, sprinkling the following thoroughfares once a day :-

Breakfast Creek Road, from the bridge to the junction of Ann and Wickham Streets.  
Wickham Street, from Breakfast Creek Road to a point two chains north of Brunswick Street.  
Ann Street, from Brunswick Street to Commercial Road.  
Commercial Road, front Ann Street to Florence Street.  
Brunswick Street, from the Valley Railway Station to Gregory Terrace.  
Bowen Bridge Road, from Gregory Terrace to Campbell Street.  
The total length of these roadways is approximately 31 miles.

The necessity for adopting improved methods of laying the dust has become a much-vexed question, and it is my earnest desire that immediate action be taken in the direction of affording relief to the long suffering rates payers in greater measure than has hitherto appeared to be practicable.

I am, therefore, endeavouring to make arrangements with the Tramways Company to undertake the sprinkling of practically all the streets within the City in which tramway rails are laid, exclusive of the wooden block pavements of George, Queen, and Wickham Streets. This would provide for the more effectual watering of those particular 'thoroughfares, and would release the appliances now being used thereon for service elsewhere, enlarging the scope of the street watering operations very considerably, and conferring benefits far in excess of the expenditure likely to be involved, and for that area actually less than at present.

The Manager of the Tramways Company has expressed his preparedness to undertake the watering of all such roadways three times a day, at the rate of 1s. 3d. per mile for each sprinkling', exclusive of the cost of the water, but he states that to carry this out it will be necessary to build another sprinkler, which could -not be done in less than four months, as a large proportion of the equipment would have to be imported. He is prepared to put the building of this sprinkler in hand at once.

The following are the roadways which would come under such an arrangement:-

Roma Street, from Railway Gates to Petrie Terrace Railway Bridge 33 Chains  
Toowong Road, from Petrie Terrace to Hale Street 12 Chains  
Petrie Terrace, from Railway Bridge to Hale Street 52 Chains.  
Caxton Street, from Petrie Terrace to Hale Street - 13 1/2. Chains.  
Countess Street 33 Chains.  
College Road, from Countess Street to Gregory Terrace 21 Chains.

Wickham Terrace, from College Road to Leichhardt Street 17 Chains.  
Leichhardt Street, from Wickham Terrace to Brunswick Street 71 Chains.  
Wharf Street 29 Chains.  
Edward Street, from Leichhardt Street to Queen Street 35 Chains.  
Edward Street, from Queen Street to Alice Street 27 1/2 Chains.  
Brunswick Street, from Barker Street to Gregory Terrace 94 1/2 Chains.  
Bowen Bridge Road, from Gregory Terrace to Bowen Bridge 46 Chains.  
Barker Street 13 1/2 Chains.  
Moray Street, from Barker Street to Merthyr Road 58 1/2 Chains.  
Merthyr Road, from Moray Street to terminus at N.E. end 17 Chains.  
North Quay and Ann Street, from Queen Street to George Street 17 Chains.  
Ann Street, from Brunswick Street to Breakfast Creek Road 56 Chains.  
Commercial Road, from Ann Street to terminus 47 Chains.  
Wickham Street, from Brunswick Street to Breakfast Creek Road 54 Chains.  
Breakfast Creek Road 52 Chains.

It will be seen that the total length of roadway on the tramway routes is a little over 10 miles, and to sprinkle this three times a day would involve an expenditure of £1 17s. 6d. per day, exclusive of the cost of the water, 4d. per 1,000 gallons, which is a very much lower cost than with the ordinary watercarts, as well as adding to the comfort of the citizens. The cost of the water will be very much reduced when the Council's supply is in operation.

It was gratifying to have my action confirmed, and to receive authority for proceeding with the arrangements for watering all the tramway routes, and I trust that ere long we shall realise the anticipated benefits; I hope also that the improvements I have outlined are but the harbingers of others further calculated to provide for the comfort and conserve the health of the Citizens.

The City Engineer has been instructed to make an experiment with calcium chloride, which is said to have proved effective in other places as a dust preventive; and also to test a sample of bituminous matrix for its road binding properties with the same object.

From the Archives of the Brisbane Tramway Museum Society.