**Essays on Mount Crosby - Opening of Lake Manchester**

Lake Manchester is a curious little dam; it's pretty and it's old (pretty old), but you'd be hard pressed to wring more than five megalitres a day out of it, and that's not a lot if you are trying to water a city.

When it was opened in December 1916, the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board held great hopes for it, and after its opening day was twice delayed due to rain, I suppose they could be forgiven for thinking they had built it in the best place imaginable.

The opening ceremony speech, heard at the site by Governor Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams, has survived and gives an indication of the board's thoughts and hopes for the little dam. Here are some of the best parts:

"We, the president and members of the Board desire to tender to you our best thanks for your courtesy in being present on this memorable occasion for the purpose of dedicating to the service of the citizens of Brisbane, South Brisbane, and suburbs of the metropolitan district of Queensland, this the Cabbage Tree Creek dam and storage reservoir upon which will depend in no inconsiderable degree the prosperity and health of the citizens of the metropolitan water district ...

That such a necessary and vital addition to the water supply resources of the metropolitan district has been satisfactorily completed during a period of unprecedented stress and strain to the British Empire [the First World War] is a matter of congratulation and thankfulness to all concerned.

To us, as members of the board, such services as we can render find their best and truest reward in the satisfaction attendant upon duty well and conscientiously performed. May it please Your Excellency to now declare this structure well and faithfully complete, and dedicated to the service, comfort, and health of the present and future citizens of Brisbane, South Brisbane, and suburbs [that's us]".

The Governor, on receiving the address from Mr Manchester, then, at the latter's request, turned the wheel which opened the gates and released the water from the dam.

It was a well-meaning Christmas present for the people of Brisbane and, though its capacity to deliver water has sometimes been found wanting, it remains a gift to picnickers and walkers and is very worthy of a Christmas visit.

Col Hester