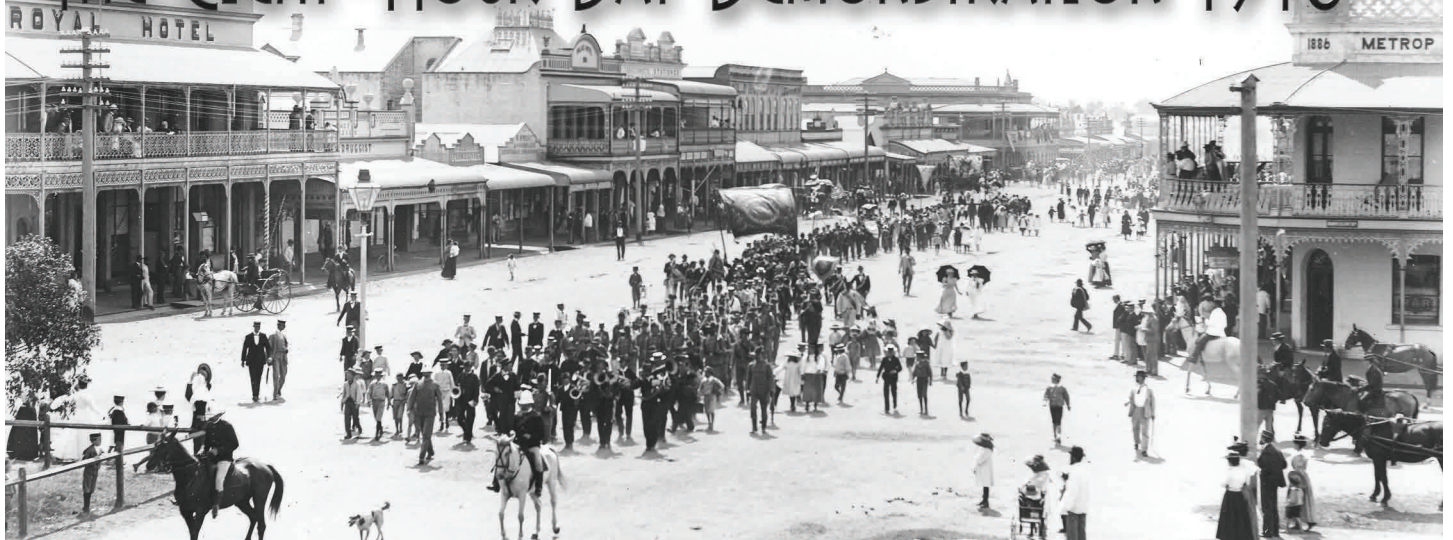


History Bytes

THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY DEMONSTRATION 1910



Bundaberg's first Eight Hour Day demonstration and sports day on Monday 8th May 1910, started out with "beautifully fine and clear weather", which boded well for the planned procession through the main street.

Trade Unions had organized the demonstration, and planned to end the procession at the showgrounds, where a sports programme had been meticulously organized for the expected crowd of up to 3000 spectators. It didn't quite go to plan.

The procession went off very successfully, with the newspaper reporting that crowds had lined Bourbon Street to watch the vehicles and workers from trades as diverse as tin workers, stockriders, butchers, cane cutters, jewelers and firemen.

On arrival at the showground bookmakers refused to pay the 3 guineas the Committee demanded for their fees, and instead offered the sum of one guinea to bet. The Committee stood firm, and bookmakers then appealed for help from the pedestrians and cyclists. The competitors supported the bookies, and what turned into a strike by the bookmakers and competitors took place, as competitors refused to face the starter.

In true Bundaberg spirit "...public feeling ran high, booing, booting and fighting taking place in various parts of the ground. Matters assumed such a serious form that another detachment of police was sent out from town. Most of the bookmakers left the ground, and those who remained to bet were turned off..."

The pedestrians who refused to compete on the day were disqualified for 12 months and the 30 recalcitrant cyclists were each fined 3 pounds for their part in the debacle.

Sue Gammon - Bundaberg Library

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Eight Hour Day
March*

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Eight Hour Day
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Eight Hour Day
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References:
The Brisbane Courier. May 10, 1910.
100 Years of News. 2000. Bundaberg Newspaper Company, Bundaberg.