

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

THURSDAY, 1 DECEMBER 1870

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 1 December, 1870.

Traffic between Ipswich and Brisbane.

TRAFFIC BETWEEN IPSWICH AND
BRISBANE.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON moved—

1. That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into, and report upon, all matters connected with the passenger and goods traffic, both by river and road, between Ipswich and Brisbane; the probable expense of completing the Southern and Western Railway to the latter place in the most economical manner; and as to the possibility of the work, if undertaken, being made self-supporting; with power to call for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment.

2. That the Legislative Assembly be invited to join in this inquiry.

3. That the members of this committee be eight, four to be a quorum.

4. That the members of this House (four) to serve on the said committee be appointed by ballot.

5. That the proposal of the said joint committee be communicated to the Legislative Assembly, by message in the usual manner.

He remarked that he did not purpose to take up the time of the House on these resolutions; but there were a few observations which he felt he ought to make in explanation of his reasons for starting such action, which reasons the House ought to be aware of before electing the committee. It always appeared to him that there had been two sets of persons who took part in the controversy with regard to the continuation of the railway from Ipswich to Brisbane: one who advocated or opposed it on political grounds, that it would or would not do good to one place or

another; and another who advocated or opposed it upon the principle whether it would pay or would not pay. He confessed himself to be one of the latter. If such a work could be self-supporting, there was no doubt that it would be judicious and beneficial, not only to Brisbane and Ipswich, but to the whole colony. If it was an undertaking likely to impose a further drain on the community, it would be disadvantageous, in his opinion. The powers of a committee were such that they ought to be able to get at the truth of the matter—to ascertain whether the amount of traffic was such as would render a railway between the two places of such importance as was stated. With those views he had put the resolutions on the paper. He might say that he was not committed to the terms or particulars of them, but merely to the general principle. His own opinion was, that the railway would pay its expenses, and something over. It might be proved on the inquiry that it would not pay, in which case he would be ready to renounce the views he held, and admit that those who had opposed the railway hitherto were in the right. On fair inquiry, he thought it would be proved to be a self-supporting work, if carried out. He trusted that the House would agree to the motion. Had it been possible, he would have included an inquiry into the extension of the northern line also; but from the distance the committee would have to go for statistics, and the short time he was informed that the session was likely to last, they would hardly do anything in connection with that line. If any honorable member wished, he should have no objection to do so. He had no knowledge of the traffic on that line, and he did not know whom to apply to for information. Therefore, he had limited the inquiry to the line between Ipswich and Brisbane, at present. It was quite possible, from what he had heard, that the session would be concluded before it was practicable for the committee to close the inquiry. Still, he thought a great deal might be done in a short time; and supposing that the session did close, the fact of having started the inquiry this session would enable the House to go into the question further in a future session, which, he understood—if the present intention was carried out—would be after a very short recess. Their going into it now could not prejudice the question, but would, in all probability, facilitate it. For the purpose of setting the ball rolling, he moved the resolutions, and hoped that the committee would do a sufficient amount of work this session to forward matters if they could not conclude now.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he did not intend to oppose the motion. He thought a great deal of good might be arrived at, and very little harm could be done; and he believed that the opinions he had before expressed in the House would be shewn to be

the correct ones, and that his honorable friend would join him in them. He suggested that the members of the committee should be appointed without going to the ballot.

The Hon. H. G. SIMPSON accepting the suggestion made,

By leave of the Council, the motion was amended, and the following members were appointed to the committee:—Messrs. Prior, Roberts, Fitz, and Simpson.