

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

FRIDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 1889

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Friday, 6 September, 1889.

Defamation Bill—third reading.—Stone in Additions to Parliamentary Buildings.—Union Trustee of Australia Company Bill.—Sale of a Water Reserve at Tabragalba.—Conservation of Forests.—Stafford Brothers Railway Bill—second reading.—Caswell Estate Enabling Bill—second reading.—Warwick Gas, Light, Power, and Coal Company, Limited, Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

DEFAMATION BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of Mr. HODGKINSON (for the Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

STONE IN ADDITIONS TO PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

Mr. BARLOW, in moving—

That there be laid upon the table of the House—

1. Copy of that portion of the tender, let to Mr. Valley or any other person, for the stone work of the additions to Parliament House, now in progress, which relates to the stone to be used, showing also whether any alternative stone was tendered for except that from Goodna.

2. A copy of that portion of the specification for the said work which relates to the stone proposed to be used, or which invites any alternative tender for other stone than that from Goodna to be submitted.

3. A statement as to whence the stone now being used in these buildings is being obtained—

said: Mr. Speaker,—I put this motion on the paper to afford the members of the Sandstone Quarries Committee and the Government, if they see fit, an opportunity of making some statement, which will have the effect of allaying a certain amount of uneasiness that has existed in the public mind for some time with regard to the quality of the stone used in the additions to this building. There has been a considerable amount of correspondence in the newspapers; and to-day the matter has cropped up again by the publication of another letter. Though the letter which appeared in the *Courier* this morning is anonymous, and, therefore, deprived of weight to a certain extent, still it is worth while to read it to the House. This is what the anonymous writer says:—

“My attention having been called to the letter on ‘Sandstone Quarries’ in last Friday’s paper, and my opinion having been asked as to the quality of the stone now being used in the additions to the Parliament Houses, I made an examination thereof, and must say that no experienced unprejudiced workman but would be of the opinion that for durability, imperviousness to wet, dressing of mouldings, etc., it is very inferior to others I have seen and worked in Brisbane, and I need only refer to the stone in the steps and pediments of railing round the new Custom-house to prove this. I speak this from long experience, both as a mason, quarryman, and builder, and am certain my views will be borne out by every experienced workman. The labour required

in producing good work from stone such as that in the Custom-house would not be half so much as that now worked in the Parliament buildings, besides making a far more satisfactory job."

In reading over the evidence taken by the select committee, who presented a progress report on this matter, I marked several passages. I may state at the outset that I believe this stone is being got from Smith and Rees's quarry, but if I am mistaken an opportunity is given to contradict what I say. At question 79 the chairman asked Mr. Valentine:—

"What can you tell the committee about Smith and Rees's quarry at Woogaroo? The face opened is 150 feet by 25 feet deep. Top rock, brown stone; underbed, pinky white; stripping or clearing, 20 feet of spoil; 8 to 10 feet of brown rock, something similar to the stone used in Parliament House, but a little coarser in the grain. A firm, hard rock. Bottom rock better cutting stone, takes a smooth surface, and polishes with water. Rather expensive to work in moulded work. Cost in Brisbane by water carriage, 1s. 10d. per foot."

Then, at question 85:—

"It is said that the stone is rising from Smith and Rees's quarry towards Jeays's quarry; if that is the case how do you account for 60 feet of stripping in Jeays's quarry? The ground is rising as well, but there is a gully between the two properties. I may mention that the stone stands the weather, works and cuts out well, and is durable in any position. It was used in Parliament House and in the Brisbane Town Hall. In the event of the extension of Parliament House I would suggest the advisability of the purchase of this ground, and completing the building with the same material."

Then again, at question 93, he is asked what he thinks of stone generally in the colony. The chairman asks:—

"I do not mean for any particular district, but taking the general quality of the stone for building purposes? If I could get Cameron's, at Murphy's Creek, I would prefer that to any other; but the supply being limited, the next would be Mr. Pearson's, both for quality and quantity; I mean Pearson's top quarry. For general cost, with due regard to colour, I would prefer the Brisbane River or Woogaroo stone, both on the score of economy and durability."

Mr. Innes is next examined, and he is asked:—

"By the Chairman: What is your opinion of the stone at Smith and Rees's quarry, Goodna? It is a very fair stone. I would have no objection to recommend it for almost any building, but there is part of the quarry at one end very inferior."

Then in reference to Jeays's quarry, at question 274, he says:—

"The only way would be for the Government to buy the land, and the whole quarry land and the 500 acres belonging to the asylum would then be in one block. The Government would then have facilities for disposing of the stone on their own ground, instead of going to the river. I strongly suggest that the Government should do that; they would then have a quarry with the best of stone. It cannot be worked by a private party at present."

The Hon. Mr. Gregory was also examined, and at question 214 says:—

"Of all the quarries you have seen, which stone do you think is the best for general building purposes? I should certainly prefer to use the coloured stone, what we term the brown-stone, from Pearson's quarry, because of the great facilities for getting it in large blocks. The abundance of good stone would reduce the risk of the workmen putting in inferior stone, and it is the most durable class of stone in the district. If white stone be a *sine quâ non*, then the only place I would recommend to be further examined would be Montgomery, McLachlan, and Sheddons's quarry, as there is a possibility of there being a fair quantity of stone, and the distance from the railway is not great. It is the strongest and best kind of white stone that I have examined in the district."

Mr. Connolly, the Colonial Architect, was also examined, and asked:—

"In view of the extension of the Parliamentary building, which has been authorised by Parliament, do you think it advisable to get the stone from Jeay's Old Quarry at a reasonable expense and uniform in colour and character? I do; I think stone could be got in the neighbourhood quite equal to the stone in this building."

That was the building he was in at the time—the Parliamentary buildings. Of course, Mr. Speaker, I do not pretend to be an expert in these matters; but as there have been so many discussions outside, and having heard the statement that there is a possibility of this stone running short, it is desirable that the members of the stone committee, and the Minister for Mines and Works, if he thinks fit, should have an opportunity of making an explanation.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no objection to offer to the papers being laid on the table of the House.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member has called on members of the Sandstone Committee to make some explanation with regard to this stone being used in the additions to this building. I do not understand the hon. gentleman putting such a question. The only members of the committee present are myself and Mr. Watson. What does the hon. gentleman want? I did not catch any particular question that he asked.

Mr. BARLOW said: Mr. Speaker,—As a matter of explanation, I desire to give the members of the committee an opportunity of expressing their opinion as to the stone which is being used in the additions to the Parliamentary buildings. They have made inquiries, and have as much information on the subject as anyone else.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to make some sort of a reply. My personal opinion of the stone—and my opinion will be almost as good as that of anyone else, with the exception of an expert—is that the stone at present going into the building is as good stone as there is in the colony. I am borne out in that assertion by the opinion of Mr. Gregory, whose opinion no hon. member of this House, or no person in the colony, will contradict. The idea strikes me that the hon. member has been got at. There are a great many people watching this stone, and there are a great many rival quarrymen—in fact, I own a quarry myself. I know of a dozen more who own quarries, and every man's quarry is, in his opinion, the best. All these letters get into the papers from the one source, but the source takes the finest care possible to put no name to the letters. It is impossible to fight a man in the dark. Let him come out into the daylight and make what objection he wishes to make. There are a great many spies that the hon. member is not aware of who are watching this stone.

Mr. BARLOW: Very necessary too.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: In reality I have been acting lately as a spy myself, and am watching the stone. I take it that, outside of an expert, I am as good a judge of stone as any hon. member of this House. The committee did all they could to get the best possible evidence regarding the stone. We had with us experts and masons who were not experts. In reality the whole committee depended upon the report of Mr. Gregory, and he was appointed with the committee for that purpose. Mr. Gregory's evidence is in black and white, and he thinks that the Woogaroo stone is as good and hard, although rough, and as durable a stone as there is in the colony. Now that the papers are going to be laid on the table of the House there is no need to follow the matter up. I only tell the hon. member that being a young member he is hot and inclined to do everything and advertise himself and his works. He is a very useful member of the House, but there is no little grievance or anonymous piece of information in the papers that he does not

immediately bring before the House. I am very glad to see so active and able a member in this House as the hon. member for Ipswich, and I hope he will live to be a long time here. I can assure him, however, that he will make no headway with this motion.

Mr. GLASSEY said: Mr. Speaker,—It was not my intention to say anything upon this question, and, perhaps, it is not desirable to say much upon it now, seeing that the Minister for Mines and Works has expressed his willingness to lay the papers on the table of the House.

Mr. BARLOW: He did not discuss the question.

Mr. GLASSEY: I know the hon. gentleman did not discuss the question, and I am only going to discuss it to a limited extent. I confess I do not exactly grasp the object my hon. friend has in view in asking for the production of these papers, and I am inclined to agree with the hon. member for Stanley that the hon. member must have been got at by some interested party. I cannot but think that, because, though I do not profess to be an expert in stone, I question very much whether there is a single hon. member of the House who has had a longer experience in sandstone than myself. Most hon. members will agree that wherever we have extended coal measures we have sandstone to a considerable extent. From my experience of coal-mining, almost weekly and daily large quantities of stone have to be blasted down in order to make roads sufficiently high to allow of horse traffic and other means to remove the coal. In consequence of that I have had for more than twenty years experience in blasting down and removing large quantities of sandstone. I have, therefore, had some experience in matters of this kind, and with respect to the stone now under discussion, I may say that, first of all, we have persons paid by the Government to see that no material is put into this building that is not of a substantial and lasting character. I presume, therefore, that unless we have some substantial reasons for thinking that those persons are not doing their duty, or are lax in its performance, or that they have some object in being lax in the performance of that duty, the least we can do is to wait until we hear some complaint from those in charge of this particular work. I am not aware that any such complaint has been made by those in charge of the work. It might appear to persons who are not experienced in sandstone that at first sight the stone going into this building is not stone of the first quality; but I venture to say that if persons interested in this matter took a little time to examine and compare this stone with stone which might appear to be of superior quality, they would be very much deceived as to how it would come out after being exposed to the pressure of the atmosphere. There are stones much finer in texture, and to the inexperienced eye very much superior to the stone going into this building, but if this stone is subjected to the atmospheric effects and evaporation, it will turn out far harder and more durable, and after testing will be found to be much superior to many stones which at first sight appear finer and closer in texture. I may say that it is one of the most deceiving sandstones I have seen in the colony. The stone going up in these buildings at first sight appears to be rough, coarse, damp, and brittle, but if you let it lie about, exposed to the action of the atmosphere, and then test it with a chisel, as I have seen it tested again and again, I will venture to say it will come out, if not of the best quality, at all events quite as good sandstone as any to be found in this part of the colony, so far as I know. That is my experience of it, and the

fact that I have taken out thousands of tons of sandstone, in connection with my work below ground, at least entitles me, I think, to express an opinion in connection with this matter, and is my apology to the House for venturing to speak upon the question. Inasmuch as the papers are to be produced, and the matter will, in all probability, be more fully gone into, when they are produced, I need say nothing further at the present time. I cannot, however, again help expressing my opinion that this is purely a matter of jealousy, because the contract for the stone has been given to a certain quarry, and not to others, and the owners of other quarries are a little annoyed in consequence. I think myself that it would have been quite time enough to take action in this matter when complaint of the quality of the stone was made by those employed by the Government to superintend the work. I think the Hon. A. C. Gregory is in a position to give an opinion, as an expert, upon the character of the stone now going into the Parliamentary buildings, and I think his opinion of that stone would be a favourable one.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—The fact that some trouble has now been raised about the stone being used in the additions to this building, reminds me that a similar objection was taken to the stone used in the new Treasury buildings when the late Government were in power. The Hon. A. C. Gregory has been referred to several times here as an expert in these matters, and I may say he was sent up to the quarry from which the stone used in the Treasury building was taken, to give a report upon the quality of the stone. That was when the building was commenced, and I had it from Mr. Gregory himself that he was sent up by the Government to report upon that stone, and to say whether it was suitable or not for the purposes for which it was being used, and whether it was likely to decay. Mr. Gregory distinctly reported dead against that stone being used. I went up with him in the train, and he showed me where stone from the same quarry had been used in some of the tunnels on the range, and was wasting away. The late Government sent him up purposely to report upon the quality of that stone, and, though he gave a report dead against the stone being used, no notice at all was taken of his report, and the stone was used for the Treasury buildings all the same.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: And is now decaying.

Mr. STEVENSON: And is now decaying. I think the late Minister for Mines and Works will be able to give us some information about it, considering so much notice is now being taken about the stone being used in the additions to this building, though it is proclaimed to be perfectly good.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: The late Minister for Mines and Works is not responsible for the stone used in the Treasury buildings.

Mr. STEVENSON: I believe it was before that hon. gentleman's term of office, but he might have known something about it. After Mr. Gregory, at the express wish of the Government, had reported against the use of the stone employed in the Treasury buildings, the contractors were allowed to continue the use of that stone. It has been said this afternoon that this motion looked as if someone had got at the hon. member for Ipswich; and I am inclined to think that, whether that is so or not, the contractor for the Treasury buildings must have got at somebody in connection with the stone used in those buildings.

Mr. HODGKINSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very sorry I cannot give the hon. member any information on the subject to which he alludes. I was not in office at the time.

Mr. STEVENSON: I withdrew the remarks I made, as the Minister for Mines and Works informed me while I was speaking that the hon. member was not in office at the time the decision was come to by the Government to allow that stone to be used in the Treasury buildings.

Mr. JORDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Bundamba, who is an expert in this matter, says that at first sight the stone now being used in the additions to the Parliament buildings would appear to a person who is not an expert to be rough, coarse, damp, and brittle. I daresay several hon. members have looked at that stone as I have myself, and, though not experts, they have probably formed some opinion on the subject. I should like the members of the select committee who reported on the sandstone quarries to examine the stone and give the House their opinion on it. With regard to the statement that the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, had been got at, I would point out that the hon. member for Bundamba has stated that at first sight the stone would appear to a non-expert to be rough, coarse, damp, and brittle, and that the hon. member for Ipswich received a letter from a man professing to be an expert calling attention to the inferiority of this stone, and mentioning other stone used in other public buildings. I therefore think it was the duty of the hon. member to bring the matter before the House. The hon. member is not an expert, but having evidence that the stone appears to be rough, coarse, damp, and brittle, and having read that letter, it cannot be said that he was in any sense got at.

Mr. HYNE said: Mr. Speaker,—I will just say a word or two on this matter. I think the hon. member for Ipswich was perfectly justified in bringing this motion before the House. There has been a great deal of doubt expressed with regard to the quality of the stone used in the additions to this building. Three weeks ago a member, not now in the House, said to me, "Are you a judge of stone? Have a look at that." I replied that I did not think myself well enough up in the matter to give an authoritative opinion on the subject, but I went to look at the stone, and to my surprise I found that there appeared to be two classes of stone out of the one quarry used in the building. I stated then, and I believe still, that the stone is a good stone. To a non-practical observer some of the stones appear soft, but no doubt they are stones newly raised and full of water, and when they are exposed to the influence of the atmosphere they will harden, and have the same appearance as those which have been exposed for some time. I have been connected with the building trade for many years, and I may say that I am perfectly satisfied with the stone that is being used, but, at the same time, I am of opinion that the hon. member for Ipswich is perfectly justified in bringing forward this motion, as many persons have expressed the view that the stone is not of the quality it should be.

Mr. MORGAN said: Mr. Speaker,—With regard to the remarks made by the hon. member for Clermont as to the stone used in the Treasury buildings having been condemned by the Hon. A. C. Gregory, I think some information on that subject will be found in the progress report of the Sandstone Committee. Mr. Gregory accompanied that committee all through their tour of inspection. The committee took the evidence of experts, practical and theoretical, and Mr. Gregory in his evidence certainly did express an adverse opinion respecting the stone used in

the Treasury buildings. But against that, the then Government had the advice of their architect, who had tested several samples of sandstone from various quarries in the colony, and his report was in favour of the stone used. In addition to that, samples of the stone were sent to Melbourne and Sydney, for analysis by the Colonial Architects' Departments in those cities, and I think, if hon. members will look at the evidence, they will find that the reports received were favourable.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: And some of the stone is now in decay.

Mr. MORGAN: Both reports were in favour of the stone. With regard to what has been stated respecting the decaying of stone in tunnels on the Main Range—which stone is said to have come from the same quarry as that used in the Treasury buildings—I would point out that that stone has been there for many years, and that it has been subject to conditions which the stone used in the Treasury buildings will not be subject to—namely, the continual dropping of water and the action of smoke from the locomotives. But notwithstanding these deteriorating influences, there is no serious defect visible in the stone now. I think that the evidence taken before the committee will show that the then Government exercised due care in adopting the stone used in the construction of the Treasury buildings; and if the stone is liable to decay when exposed to the atmosphere, there is an easy way of protecting it against the influence of the weather. With regard to the stone being used in the additions to the Parliament buildings, various opinions have been expressed, and I think that if we traced these adverse opinions to their source we should find they emanated from rival quarry proprietors, and, when that fact is established, it must be recognised that they are probably biased in their opinions, as they are not impartial witnesses. I have seen a good deal of sandstone used in buildings, and my opinion of the stone in question is that it is perfectly good stone, almost equal, if not quite equal, to the stone used in the building we are now assembled in. I think if the hon. member for Ipswich returned to mother earth a hundred years hence, and nothing in the nature of an earthquake had occurred, he would find the building which is now being erected still standing, and the stone still sound. If anyone who knows anything about sandstone stands on the veranda outside this Chamber and hears the sound of the mallet, as the stone is dressed, he must come to the conclusion that it is good stone.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Warwick stated that the Colonial Architect, under the late Government, reported favourably on the stone used in the Treasury buildings. I know for a fact that the Colonial Architect, Mr. J. J. Clark, reported strongly against the use of that stone. I know that he tested it, and gave very strong proofs that it was not of good quality, and reported to the Minister accordingly. I think it would be very interesting if the report which Mr. Clark made were added to these papers. Mr. Clark reported very strongly, before the buildings were commenced, against the stone being used, and he refused to use it. In fact, the question of what stone should be used was the cause of a great deal of trouble at the time the building was being erected. I hope the Minister will see his way clear to produce that report along with these papers.

Mr. NORTH said: Mr. Speaker,—I think as chairman of the Sandstone Committee, I should say a few words on the subject. I was not prepared to do so to-day, because the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, told me, as I

left the House last night, that Government business would come on to-day, and that no private business would be taken. Three samples of the stone were sent by the committee to Mr. Gregory for analysis, and when the papers which are now moved for are produced I shall place those samples on the table of this House. Mr. Gregory reported dead against two of those samples, and expressed the opinion that the other one was of superior quality, but none of them will be found among the stone that is now being used in the additions to the Parliament buildings. Before those additions were started, the hon. member for Stanley, the Hon. A. C. Gregory, and myself waited upon the Minister for Mines and Works and protested against the stone being used in that building. We knew it was no good from the evidence we had taken, and that evidence is borne out by this report, which anybody can see. The Minister for Mines and Works took no notice whatever of the protest put in against it, and the consequence was that we determined to knock the commission off, and not inquire further into the matter. I am quite satisfied that we obtained the very best experts to go with us and examine those quarries, besides Mr. Connolly, who I do not believe is an expert, from the evidence we procured from other people. If the Minister for Mines and Works would only look at that report, he would find that the Treasury buildings were about 7 feet high before the analyses of the stone were received from the southern colonies. The papers will show that, even if this report does not. I intend to speak again on this subject, and to produce samples of the stone sent to the Hon. A. C. Gregory for analysis, and also his analyses of the stone.

Mr. WATSON said: Mr. Speaker,—The stone being used in the new buildings is a very good stone; and there is no getting away from the fact. It was only the other day that I met Mr. F. D. G. Stanley, a late Colonial Architect, and he told me it was one of the very best stones in Queensland, and he has had a long experience. At the same time we went round the whole of the Parliamentary buildings, and we could not see one single stone that had gone wrong; but you have only to go to the Treasury buildings to see that the stone used in them is in a very bad state, even from the late rains, and before another two years are over, it will be necessary to coat that stone with paint to preserve it. I have watched the stone going into these new buildings very carefully, and have noticed that it is a little soft. The Oamaru stone, in New Zealand, is very soft, but it hardens in the weather.

Mr. BARLOW: That is a limestone.

Mr. WATSON: I have used a good deal of this stone at the Railway wharves at South Brisbane; stone which has to carry ten tons; and it is the same stone as that being used in these new buildings. There are four tons of stone in each cylinder, and the inspector praised the stone, and said it came from the best quarry in Queensland.

Mr. AGNEW said: Mr. Speaker,—I am not going to detain the House long. After what has been said by several hon. members, I think the motion should include all the papers the Government have in their possession in connection with the Treasury buildings' contract. I am sure a very considerable amount of dissatisfaction exists in Brisbane in regard to the stone used in those buildings.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: The building is finished, and we cannot alter it.

Mr. AGNEW: That may be so, but it is well that the House should be guided in future by the mistakes made in the past, and I think very serious mistakes have been made. I have been informed, although I do not know how much truth there is in the information, that a large sum of money was paid to one contractor to settle with him in connection with a claim that arose out of the manner in which the tenders were bungled. I think we should throw as much light as we can upon the matter of that contract. First of all, I understand tenders were invited, and when they were received, they were all considered too high; and when tenders were again invited, there was a distinct understanding that a particular stone was not to be used. Thirdly, when a tender was accepted the successful tenderer had used the stone that was at first condemned by one of the colonial architects of this colony. On this ground the Government, I have been told, awarded a rather considerable sum of money to the first tenderer. Now, it is pretty well understood by builders in town that the stone that has been used is after all a failure. The sharp edges are giving way in numerous instances, and it would be well, if we are to have the papers produced in connection with the additions to the Parliamentary buildings, to include all the other papers. No harm can accrue from it, and a considerable benefit may result. I think the hon. member for Ipswich might tack these words on to the 3rd paragraph of his motion, "together with all papers, or other information that may be in the hands of the Government, in respect to the stone used in the erection of the Treasury buildings, and the Custom-house also." It would be no trouble to the department, and it might set at rest a very difficult question, and give a lot of information that might be a considerable guide in the future.

Mr. BARLOW, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—If there is no other hon. gentleman who has any desire to address the House upon this subject, I will say a few words in reply. Of course, it is in the power of the hon. member for Nundah to put a formal motion upon the paper asking for the production of the papers he referred to, and no doubt they may be very interesting. I have no desire to shield any of the shortcomings of the late Government, and shall only be too happy to peruse any papers that the hon. member calls for. I am convinced from the tone of the Minister for Mines and Works, and that of the hon. member for Stanley, that there must be something in this matter. I have not expressed any opinion about the stone. I have not said that that stone is not the very best stone in the colony, and as to the question of being "got at," I would like to know how any matter is to be brought before this House unless somebody starts it; and if every hon. member who brings forward any question that he thinks should be discussed is to be accused of having been got at, they will be very chary in doing so. I have not expressed any feeling in connection with the matter. I have not said that it is not the best stone, or that it is not the worst; but I know this, that in my own garden I have a slab of Murphy's Creek stone about nine feet long, that has been exposed to the weather for several years, and it is now about the most beautiful piece of stone I have ever seen. I know what the quarries are in my own district—I consider West Moreton to be my own district, the district represented by the hon. member for Lockyer. If the Minister for Mines and Works wishes to make any explanation, some hon. member can move the adjournment of the House; but the hon. gentleman confined himself to saying that he had no objection to the production of the

papers. I gave him an opportunity of making any statement he chose, and he said he declined to be drawn. I do not wish to draw the hon. member. When the present Government takes up an attitude upon a question, to use an expression used by this morning's paper in reference to another matter, it is like putting a bread poultice upon an earthquake to attempt to draw them. It is impossible to draw the Government if they do not intend to be drawn. I have done my duty in bringing forward a matter that should be subjected to public comment. I have devoted the rest of my life to the service of the public, and I intend to be just as hot at the end of my Parliamentary career as I am at the beginning, in the interests of the public and of my constituents.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to say a few words in explanation. The hon. member says that, from the tone of the Minister for Mines and Works, there is something in this motion. What is the tone of the Minister for Mines and Works? The hon. member moved for certain papers, and the Minister for Mines and Works says he is quite willing to give them. When the papers are produced, it will be open to the hon. member, if he thinks fit, to move a motion on them. It is utterly ridiculous for the hon. member to talk as he has been doing. I said I would give him what he asked for. If I had not, he would not have been pleased, and he is not pleased because I give him what he asks for.

Question put and passed.

UNION TRUSTEE OF AUSTRALIA COMPANY BILL.

Mr. REES R. JONES brought up the report of the select committee to which this Bill was referred, and moved that the paper be printed.

Question put and passed.

The second reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Friday, the 13th instant.

SALE OF A WATER RESERVE AT TABRAGALBA.

Mr. PLUNKETT, in moving—

That there be laid on the table of the House all papers connected with the subdivision and sale by auction of a reserve containing 61 acres, parish of Tabragalba, on Bididiba Creek, between portions 33 and 39 in same parish—

said: Mr. Speaker,—I have been requested by a number of my constituents to bring this matter before the House, as the people in that thickly-populated district are not at all satisfied with the way this water reserve was alienated. It is four miles away from the nearest water, and is the only place where, in dry seasons, the settlers can find water for their cattle and for domestic purposes. The reserve was sixty-one acres in extent, and the late Minister for Lands, Mr. Jordan, decided that it should be put up to auction. As, according to the Act of 1884, not more than forty acres could be sold in one lot, the reserve was surveyed into two lots, of forty acres and twenty-one acres respectively. The sale was advertised in the *Courier* and the *Telegraph* only, and neither of the local papers in the district had any knowledge whatever of it. It was by the merest fluke that the members of the Tabragalba Divisional Board came to hear that it was intended to sell the reserve by auction. They at once objected to it, and wrote to the late Minister for Lands to that effect. A gentleman resident in the district, who was largely interested in keeping the reserve open, came to Brisbane, waited on the Minister for Lands, and told him that the people of the district were strongly

opposed to the sale, and asked him if he would withdraw it from sale. The Minister for Lands told him that if he would get a petition signed to that effect, and send it in to him, he would withdraw the land from sale. A petition was got up, was numerously signed, and was sent to the Minister for Lands; and the Tabragalba Divisional Board also wrote asking for its withdrawal. And yet, a fortnight afterwards, to their great surprise, the land was put up to auction and sold. There is no other permanent water for a distance of eight miles. The settlers were naturally very much annoyed at the transaction, and it had created a very bad feeling against the hon. member for South Brisbane. They considered that as the petition was sent, in accordance with the hon. member's own request, the reserve ought to have been withdrawn from sale. The hon. member himself promised that that should be done. There is no doubt that the reserve has now gone for ever; but I was induced to bring the matter forward, not so much to blame the late Minister for Lands as to show from the papers what a very serious mistake it was to sell the land, and also to urge that, for the future, water reserves should be placed in charge of the divisional boards, so as to prevent them from being alienated as this has been.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. H. Black) said: Mr. Speaker,—There is not the least objection to laying these papers on the table of the House. I looked at them a day or two ago, but, not anticipating that this motion would be called "not formal," I am not in possession of the particulars which otherwise I should have been prepared to lay before the House. They will be seen, however, when the papers are tabled. As far as I can see from looking over the papers, this transaction was quite a regular one. I do not see anything exceptional in it. At the request of several persons resident in the district, this land was put up to auction, and was advertised in the usual way. After it was too late, I believe, a petition was received from the divisional board protesting against it. At all events the papers will disclose that. I may say the whole transaction took place before the present Government came into office; but I must also say that I should probably have acted in the same way had the matter been brought before me. I have no doubt the late Minister for Lands saw the necessity of providing a little additional revenue for the Lands Department, and took this as one of the means to bring about a better state of affairs. With regard to the sale of reserves generally, I think hon. members are only right in protesting against the sale of reserves in large centres of population, and I trust that the House will give the Government power to sell land away from the centres of population, and not force them to sell reserves which would be far better if left in the hands of the divisional boards, or of the public for many years to come. These papers will be laid on the table of the House, when hon. members will be able to see for themselves, and form their own opinions on the matter; but I do not consider there is anything very irregular in this transaction.

Mr. JORDAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I regret that I did not know this motion was to be brought forward to-day. The wording of the motion does not disclose whether it was exclusively a water reserve or not.

Mr. PLUNKETT: It was exclusively a water reserve.

Mr. JORDAN: The motion does not say so—the hon. member simply calls it a reserve, and my memory does not enable me to give any of the particulars. However, when the papers are

laid on the table of the House we shall see what it amounts to. I was glad to hear the Minister for Lands say that he did not believe any harm had been done in this case, and that had the matter come before him he should probably have acted as I did. When I was in office I travelled in various parts of the country, and I found that there were a great many pieces of land reserved—not water reserves—which ought to be utilised; and from my own observation I satisfied myself of this. We were told the other day that there were 2,000,000 acres of land locked up in reserves, and I have observed that many of these reserves have been set apart for no special reason. They contain very rich land, and they seem to have been reserved to keep them out of the hands of the farmers. A good deal of those 2,000,000 acres might very properly be sold to persons who would put the land to some use. Many of these reserves are beautiful pieces of scrub land, which only harbour vermin, and are a source of annoyance to the farmers. If they were sold at a fair price they could be put to a much better use.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Over 100,000 acres on the Darling Downs are locked up.

Mr. JORDAN: I am speaking generally, and I am satisfied that a great many of the reserves—I do not mean water reserves—ought not to be locked up, but should be thrown open for proper occupation.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The proposer of this motion informed us that this was a water reserve, and that the nearest water to it was four miles distant. The Minister for Lands said that probably he would have acted in the same manner as the late Minister for Lands had the matter come before him, but I do not believe that at all. He has too much common sense to go and sell a water reserve. The statement was made by the hon. member for South Brisbane that he went through the country and saw a great many reserves which should be sold, as it was a loss to the country that they should be locked up. I do not think that any one man should have such power vested in him. If a water reserve is to be sold, I think the matter should come before this House to decide, because hon. members representing the various districts know better than the Minister for Lands, whether these water reserves are needed or not. So far as I can find out with regard to this particular reserve, there has been no greater job in the colony than its sale. I do not think that there is any water reserve in the colony where more settlers are dependent upon the water than in connection with this reserve. Now, Sir, going a little beyond this case, is it right that this House should give the power of dealing with such cases into the hands of a single individual—whether we call him a Minister of the Crown or not? Why should one man be able to sell a reserve, and starve hundreds if not thousands of selectors, simply because a few selectors in the district annoyed him or voted against him? We have what is termed "responsible government;" but what is the meaning of responsibility, if Ministers can play any trick or prank they like? I always thought the meaning of "responsible government" was that if a Minister openly violates the law he can be put upon his trial.

Mr. HODGKINSON: Chop his head off.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: No more open violation of the law has ever occurred than in the case of the sale of this reserve. Here is the sale of the land advertised in two metropolitan papers, in a hole-and-corner fashion, away from the people personally concerned. There are several papers in the district where the land is situated, and why was not the land advertised in some of

those papers? Undoubtedly the Ministers are not responsible. Only a short time back a Minister of the Crown went and sold some allotments in Roma street, which were actually part of the railway grounds. He sold the frontages, damaging the property of the country by so doing to the amount of thousands of pounds. How much will it cost the country to buy that land back—for it will have to be bought back? I suppose the buyers of the land will not be such fools as to sell it for less than ten times what they paid for it. We find now the Minister for Lands getting up and talking to the late Minister for Lands, telling him that there is no harm done. How long is this House going to stand this sort of thing? Is there no remedy for it? I daresay this land will have to be bought back, no matter what the cost may be. I do not know anyone more fit to do what I propose than the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Barlow, who seems to have his hand in everything; and I hope he will oblige me, and the country too, by bringing forward a motion providing that if a Minister of the Crown sells a water reserve without the consent of the House, he shall have to stand his trial for it.

Mr. GANNON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad this question has cropped up, because I think it is time the House expressed some opinion with regard to the selling of these reserves, by whatever Government they may be sold. I have heard a great deal about reserves being sold that should have been kept for the people. I think it is a very great mistake indeed, that because land may be unoccupied at the present time, the Government should pounce upon it and immediately offer it for sale; and I hope the House will express a strong opinion upon the practice, so as to put a stop to it. I remember, not long ago, having to bring strong pressure to bear on the Government to prevent them from selling a small reserve which was of very little moment, so far as the Government were concerned, but which was of great importance to the people in the locality. Because one individual wrote to the Under Secretary for Lands asking that the reserve should be offered for sale it was immediately gazetted, without any trouble at all. Although certain divisional boards and a town council wanted this reserve, it would have been sold but for the pressure brought to bear on the Government to save it. I am glad the discussion has arisen, because it will show the Government—I don't care what Government it is; although I must say it was the late Government that would have sold the reserve I refer to—that the House is opposed to the selling of these reserves; and I trust the present Government will see their way to carry on without selling lands of this description. I may say that I am a great advocate for the sale of land. It is all very well for hon. members to laugh, but I will put the matter very straight to them. I say that pieces of land, of large or small areas, close to settlement should not be sold, but that outside lands of not too large areas should be sold so that we may get some money into the Treasury to enable the Government to keep things going. In fact it has come to this, that land must be sold. We must get money from somewhere, and unless we get it by the sale of land I am afraid things will come pretty hard on us.

Mr. BARLOW said: Mr. Speaker,—I have not the slightest doubt the hon. member for Toombul takes great interest in the sale of land. I am sure we could not get a better authority on the subject; but at the same time, unless settlement is to be confined to its present areas, the time must come when it will press out into the districts which the hon. gentleman wants to see sold. The whole gist and cardinal principle of the Land Act is to provide for that pressure and settlement.

Mr. AGNEW said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to see these reserves placed more safely in the hands of divisional boards and municipal authorities. I believe if they had absolute control of the reserves in the various districts in which they are situated, they, representing the people more immediately concerned, would take more interest in beautifying them and making them more suitable for the purposes of recreation than they are at present. I know a reserve in my district upon which considerable sums of money have been expended, simply because the local authorities have got the deeds of it; but there are other reserves in the same district of which they have not got the deeds, although they are very anxious to get them. As soon as they do so they will be prepared to spend large sums of money in laying out those reserves as parks and recreation grounds, and that would not only advance the district, but be a source of benefit to children and others, besides utilising the reserves in a far better way than they are at present. I shall be very pleased indeed if the Government will in the immediate future take this question of reserves into consideration. I am sure the country will be pleased to hear the opinion expressed by the Minister for Lands, that these reserves should be allowed to remain, as far as possible, intact. I hope he will go even further than that, and grant titles to the different divisional boards and municipalities in which these reserves are situated.

Mr. PLUNKETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I am glad to think that the discussion on the motion will result in some benefit to the country. I was exceedingly pleased to hear the remarks of the Hon. the Minister for Lands, that these reserves should be placed under the control of the divisional boards, because it stands to reason that those boards must know more about the districts in which they reside and whether these reserves are required than any Minister for Lands can possibly know. If the hon. gentleman carries out his promise, which I have no doubt he will, I am sure it will result in great benefit to the country.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—With regard to the remark of the hon. member for Nundah, that he hoped the Minister for Lands would issue deeds of grant for these reserves to the divisional boards of the district, I think the hon. gentleman is not likely to do any such thing as to make those lands the freehold property of the boards or municipal councils all over the colony, and thus enable them to cut them up and sell them whenever they get into debt. That has been the effect of such a step. Whenever they get into debt they cut off a corner of a reserve, and put it up to auction. It has been done before. We have seen over and over again pressure brought to bear to get Bills passed through this House to enable all sorts of corporations to deal with land, of which they have obtained the ownership or control, by cutting it up and selling it to the best advantage. I believe the same thing would happen in the case of divisional boards. I believe the divisional boards should have the control and direction of those reserves, but that they should not have the freehold of them.

Mr. POWERS said: Mr. Speaker,—With reference to the remarks of the hon. member for Carpentaria about corporations cutting up and selling land, I would point out that, under the Trustees of Public Lands Act, they cannot sell. Although they have got the deeds they have simply the control of the reserve; and I hope the Ministry will allow them to have that control. I do not think it is intended to go fully into the question of reserves now; and seeing that corporations cannot sell their lands when they

have got the deeds, without coming to this House—and I am sure authority to do so would not be granted by this House—I should like to see the deeds granted.

Question put and passed.

CONSERVATION OF FORESTS.

Mr. HYNÉ, in moving—

That, in the opinion of this House, the present rapid rate at which the exhaustion of the natural timbers of Queensland is proceeding, and the possibility that, in the near future, serious loss and inconvenience may arise to various industries of the colony, call for some immediate action in the direction of replanting our forests, and the creation of a department of forestry—

said: Mr. Speaker,—When I placed this resolution on the notice paper I had an idea in my head that, considering the rapid rate at which our forests are being exhausted of valuable timbers, it is time that the fact should be recognised by the legislature. I may say that my object in moving the motion had been accomplished to a great extent by the declaration of the Minister for Lands to a deputation that waited upon him a short time ago from the Chamber of Commerce, to the effect that the Government had fully made up their minds to establish an office of forestry. I was very pleased to hear that they are going to do so, and I hope it will be started with no sparing hand. It will require a good deal of expenditure to start the department, but it will well repay that expenditure in future years. This subject is one that should have received much more attention than it has received from the Government. Tree planting, I may say, is recognised by every Government in Australia and New Zealand, and by almost every country in the world. It is now assuming dimensions of very great importance in most of the Australasian colonies; but in none so much as in South Australia, as I shall show directly. Under the circumstances, I would have withdrawn the motion, and not occupied the time of the House with it, but several hon. members have expressed to me their desire to speak on the question, and I am giving them an opportunity of doing so. I know no one has had more experience of our cedar scrubs than my hon. friend the member for Gympie. The hon. member for South Brisbane has also expressed a desire to make a few remarks. When we take into consideration the quantities of timber cut here annually, anyone who understands the subject must come to the conclusion that before long the scrubs containing our most valuable timbers will soon become exhausted. I will just give a quotation showing what timber was cut in the year 1887. I may say that I have got a lot of statistics, but my object having been attained by the answer of the Minister for Lands to the deputation that waited upon him, I shall simply scan them over, and not take up much time. The quantity of timber cut in 1887 in the log was: hardwood, 31,452,000 feet; pine, 58,530,000 feet; and cedar, 2,275,000 feet, of a value of £261,934. But when that timber was cut up, it represented the enormous value of £439,389, with a capital of over £1,000,000. Anyone engaged in the industry, as I am, cannot help noticing the rapid rate at which our timber forests are being cleared of marketable timber; pine, cedar, and ironbark especially. I look upon it with great alarm. I am not one of those who say there is plenty of timber for our time, and that the future can take care of itself. I do not believe in that. I think it is time the subject of forestry received the attention of the Government, and that is the object I had in view in bringing this motion before the House. I also would draw attention to the

very small area of the colony that contains valuable timber. When I called for a return showing the area of the different timber reserves set aside, I thought it would give me all the information I desired; but I very much regret that there is not set down the areas suitable for agriculture, because I wanted to point out how a large area could be set aside for reproductive forestry. I am sorry to say, however, that I omitted to ask for all that I wanted. I do not think the amount of timber that has been cut has affected the climatic conditions of the colony yet, nor do I think it will for many years. We all very well understand the importance of forestry as affecting our climate, but I do not think the amount of timber taken away from our forests has yet affected our climate one iota. Now, Sir, I have seen no record of any steps having been taken to deal with forestry since the select committee sat in 1875. That is the first evidence I can find of the subject being brought before Parliament. The committee was appointed on Thursday, 17th June, 1875, and consisted of the Secretary for Public Works, who was then Mr. McIlwraith, Mr. Bailey, Mr. Beattie, Mr. Peachey, Mr. Thompson, and the mover (Mr. Douglas), and clause 4 of the report of that committee says:—

"This evidence and these papers should, your committee think, be made the groundwork for future action in the conservation and reproduction of forests in this colony; and we do not hesitate to express an opinion that the time has arrived for special legislation in connection with this branch of the administration of the Crown lands. We recommend that the Government should now undertake to legislate on the subject."

That opinion was given fourteen years ago, and I am sorry to say that no efforts have been made since that date towards establishing a forestry department. I have gone through this report, and if I were to quote from it I could occupy the time of the House until 8 o'clock; but I do not feel justified in doing so. Therefore I shall omit most of the quotations I intended to give. There is another report on arboriculture by Mr. McDowall, which was presented to the House last year, and with which I thoroughly agree. It refers to the attempt made on Fraser's Island, and I may give one or two quotations from it. The plantation was established by the hon. member for Cambooya, Mr. Perkins, when he was Minister for Lands, and I am sorry to say that it has not been continued in the vigorous manner that he intended. Mr. McDowall says—

"The expenditure has, up to the end of June, 1888, amounted to about £1,733 10s. 3d. An area of about 500 acres has been planted with about 76,000 young trees. It is estimated that 65,000 are alive, and that a large number of them are likely to do well."

He also says—

"In addition to those actually planted, over 50,000 young trees growing in good positions in the scrub have been cleared of vines, &c., giving them a good chance of attaining maturity."

Further on he says—

"The chief object of the recent inspection (July, 1887) was to see if the growth of the earlier-planted treelets was sufficiently satisfactory to encourage the extension of the system; and I am of opinion that the experiment has proved successful, and has demonstrated the fact that many of our exhausted pine scrubs may be reforested with little trouble or expense."

I heartily endorse that statement, and am really surprised that a larger sum has not been placed on the Estimates to deal with this important matter. The paltry amount of £65 has been placed on the Estimates for the last two years. Again, referring to the same subject, Mr. McDowall says—

"The funds at present available do not admit of operations being extended, and are not quite sufficient to keep in order the work already in hand. The second plantation, of about 80 acres, begun at Tumbowah

(about twenty miles south of Bogimbah), has had to be neglected for the last two years; but upon inspection I found it not beyond recovery if prompt steps are taken to attend to it. A very small additional expenditure would enable this to be done—say £65 a year."

That £65 a year has not been granted. Now, I thoroughly agree with all those remarks. I see the importance of the subject, and must express my surprise that the present and preceding Governments have not taken steps to follow up that important experiment. Mr. McDowall also makes a footnote. He says—

"I must again draw attention to the fact that, unless the present opportunity of replanting our forests from these natural seed-beds is taken early advantage of, it will be a much more difficult operation in the future. The mature timber to provide seed is yearly becoming more scarce."

I would draw the attention of hon. members to a statement I have heard since I tabled this resolution, which was made by a gentleman in the Lands Department, whose name I will not mention. He rather pooh-poohed the idea of forestry, and said there was plenty of timber for our own time, that there was plenty of young pine growing in the colony. That gentleman evidently did not know that when we cut our scrubs down we take out all the mature timber; and what is to produce the seeds for years to come if that is done? A large space of time must necessarily elapse before seedlings will be reproduced. What is really wanted is that the Government should cause these seedlings to be transplanted now, to cause attention to be paid to them. I feel that I am perfectly justified in occupying the time of the House for a few minutes on this important subject. I shall quote something of what is being done in South Australia in this matter. I know hon. members will say: "Oh! don't do that; we can read the statistics for ourselves." I know they can, but the public cannot, and I wish to draw public attention to this matter. I shall not detain the House very long; but South Australia affords such an excellent example to this colony in this connection that I cannot go amiss in referring briefly to what is done there. In the first place, as to the planting of trees, I find that in South Australia every man planting an acre of land with trees is allowed £2 towards purchasing the public lands of the colony. That is a matter which might well receive attention when the Land Act Amendment Bill next comes on. Tree-planting in South Australia is also allowed to count as improvements by Crown lessees; and I shall move the insertion of a clause to that effect when the Land Bill comes on again. I do not know whether it would count as improvements here, and there is a doubt as to whether it would or not. They have aroused public feeling on this subject in South Australia, and we see the great effect it has had, when we find that last year 1,025 applications were received by the Government for plants, and 280,608 plants were distributed at a cost to the Government of a fraction over a farthing each. You see, Mr. Speaker, the cost is a matter of trifling importance if we encourage this great desideratum, as I call it, and that the Government cannot go too far in its encouragement. The colony of South Australia is divided into twenty-seven forests containing an area of 192,837 acres, and last year 790,157 trees were planted, of which 689,085 are living. Those are excellent results, I think, and in some plantations as high as 95 per cent. of the trees planted are living. The cost of planting was exactly 2½d. each. I was rather surprised at these figures, as I do not know how it is done for the money, but I gather this information from South Australian statistics. In addition to those planted by the State, 117,000 trees were planted by the farmers. So that not only are the Government there moving in

the matter, but the public have taken it up. This year over a million trees are to be planted, and the total cost to the colony for the work done in this matter last year was only £8,482. That includes salaries, buildings, preparing the land, horses, carts, tools, and everything necessary in connection with tree-planting. Apart from all this, the Government of South Australia have set apart a day, called "Arbor Day," in which tree-planting is undertaken by public and private bodies, and I think, Sir, we might well take a leaf out of their book and establish such a holiday here, as it would prove far more beneficial to ourselves and those who will come after us than many of the useless holidays we now have. I would myself be in favour of allowing a certain remission of rates to persons who would undertake the planting of trees in the streets and the keeping of them in order. The Government of South Australia have also taken other steps towards the education of young people on the subject of arboriculture. They have had blocks of every kind of wood in the colony specially prepared and sent to every State school in the colony. That is a very worthy policy, and will no doubt have a very desirable effect, and I do not see why we should not follow in the same footsteps here. We have a lot of valuable timbers in our scrubs and forests here which are almost unknown. We have four classes of timber made fashionable here—pine, ironbark, gum, and cedar, and if anyone introduces another tree, though it may be quite as valuable, it is scoffed at, and people will not use it. I brought in a few good trees from the scrubs lately and cut them up in my mill. They are really excellent trees for timber, and the farmers in the Isis scrub are now burning them.

Mr. AGNEW: The Government specifications will not permit of their use.

Mr. HYNE: That is just what I intend to call attention to, and I maintain that it is the duty of the Government to direct the attention of the public to the importance and value of these splendid trees. The tree I am now speaking of is called the Flindersia, after Flinders, the great explorer, and it is very plentiful in the Isis Scrub. These magnificent trees are now being burnt—it is a sin to see them destroyed in that way—and they burn easily owing to the quantity of oil and resin they contain. I had seven or eight logs of them brought in and dressed in my mill, and I never saw a better sample of timber than they turned out. This timber cannot be sold, simply because it is not known. It is unknown to the Government, and is not fashionable, and the consequence is that gum, ironbark, pine, and cedar only can be sold. I maintain it is the duty of the Government to call the attention of the public to the value of these timbers, and not confine their specifications to three or four well-known timbers. There are thousands of valuable trees now being felled and burnt off because the Government will not lead the way. The Government might adopt the suggestion I have made, and follow in the footsteps of South Australia in having blocks of all our different timbers prepared, whether polished or in the rough, and sent to the various State schools. I do not know anything which would have a more beneficial effect in educating the public as to the fact that we have many other valuable timbers besides the three or four that are fashionable at present. If anyone desired to go into forestry as a financial operation, I may say the planting of pine is bound to be a success. The trees planted in South Australia in 1880—I believe they are pine trees—have grown to the height of forty feet in eight years. In another twelve years those trees will have become a marketable commodity, and in

South Australia where timber is so scarce that timber will be worth from 4s. to 5s. per 100 feet standing, and every tree would be worth about £1. I allow twenty-five years for the trees to mature, and of course it is a long time to look forward to before the trees would attain a marketable size to cut decent timber; but I do not know of anything that would ultimately prove a more remunerative undertaking than the planting of pine. The matter is well worth the attention of the Government. While speaking on this subject I would like to draw the attention of the House, and of the Government, and especially the Minister for Railways, to the terrible spoliation of our very valuable ironbark trees that goes on for the supply of railway sleepers. I think it takes some 2,000 sleepers for every mile of railway, and on the average it takes a tree to supply two sleepers. I do not say that you would not get four out of many trees, but there are many that will not split. Then we have some 1,900 miles of railway constructed, and I am almost afraid to say how many thousand ironbark trees it has taken to provide sleepers for our railways. People would scarcely believe the figures; and I press upon the House and the Minister for Railways the necessity and importance of dealing with the matter of these sleepers, and I trust that in the future the hon. gentleman will insist that no sleepers shall be cut from saplings, but that they shall be cut out of mature trees. The timber will be more durable because young saplings have not arrived at maturity, and there is a great deal of sap in them. I drew the attention of the Minister for Railways to this matter the other day in connection with the tenders, which I believe are to be invited for 10,000 sleepers for the Gympie railway, and he acceded to my request that older timber should be specified.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have always done it.

Mr. HYNE: But it is not done as a general rule. The Mungar line is laid with sleepers cut from young saplings.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Ever since the present Government came into office only sawn timber has been used for sleepers.

Mr. HYNE: I am not attributing any blame to the present Government, but I hope it will be laid down as a general rule, and carried out, that no half-round sleepers shall be used. I do not think I need occupy the time of the House any longer. I feel confident that I shall have the assistance of hon. members in passing this resolution, and I know that if the Ministry will take the matter up with a determination to make it a success, we shall confer a benefit on both the present and future generations. I should also like to see the idea of planting shade trees adopted, with the view of forming pleasing and profitable avenues in the various parts of the colony. I now move the motion standing in my name.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said: Mr. Speaker,—There is no doubt that this is a question of very great importance to the colony, and I think the hon. member deserves credit for having brought it before the House in order to get an expression of opinion, not only from hon. members who are versed in a knowledge of the subject, but also as to the intentions of the Government in the matter. A deputation from the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce waited upon me during the current week to bring before the notice of the Government just the same question as the hon. member for Maryborough had previously given notice of motion about, and I stated to them, in effect, what I shall state to the House now. This matter has from time to time been brought before the House and previous

Governments by various persons, but no really effective steps have been taken in regard to it. The subject has been played with up to the present time. The total amount spent in arboriculture so-called, ever since separation, is something under £2,000. A forestry vote of about £65 a year has appeared annually on the Estimates for some few years past, which sum has been spent in trying experiments down at Fraser's Island. I think that unless the subject is approached in a practical manner, with the intention of dealing with it as its importance deserves, it is better to leave it alone altogether. Though the Government are no doubt expected to take the initiative in the matter, I think the timber-getters and saw-mill proprietors are very much to blame for the state of our forests, as described by the hon. member for Maryborough. If saw-millers and timber-getters, who derive considerable profit out of the timber of the colony, were compelled to plant one or two trees for every tree cut down, we should not have this complaint of the denudation of our forests. It is in districts in the vicinity of saw-mills, where the people are dependent, to a certain extent, for their livelihood on the timber industry, that this difficulty arises—about Maryborough, and round about Brisbane, where there are a number of saw-mills, and where it is found that owing to the denudation of pine and other forests, timber has to be brought from a greater distance than previously, and, consequently, at very much greater expense. I do not say that with any intention of detracting from the value of the subject brought forward. I contend that the time has arrived when the Government should take practical steps to give effect to what the hon. member desires—namely, to establish a forestry department, in which shall be vested the charge of certain reserves, and to which shall be paid the revenues derived from those reserves for the purpose of planting not only trees indigenous to the country, but also imported trees, which can be obtained from many parts of the world, and which may be found quite suitable to our climate when introduced. The South Australian Government have taken the initiative in this matter, and there is no doubt that the colony of South Australia stands very much more in need of the conservation of her forests than we do in Queensland. We have an enormous extent of forest lands in Queensland hitherto untouched, but situated at distances from a market which render them practically unavailable. There are millions of acres of most valuable pine and cedar forests in the Northern part of the colony; but then what use are they to the saw-mill proprietors and those engaged in the timber industry down here? No doubt the time will come when those forests will be valuable to the North; and before any great attacks are made upon them by timber-getters I hope a department of forestry will be established, and provision made that for so many trees cut down a certain number shall be planted. There is a system adopted in South Australia which I think might be introduced here—that is, the land order system, under which a bonus of £2 per acre is given for land that is planted with timber. The bonus is not given in money, but in the shape of a transferable land order. Not less than five acres must be planted, and anyone who plants that area obtains a transferable land order at the rate of £2 per acre, which can be made use of for the purchase of any lands, town or country, or in the payment of rents, so that practically it is £2 per acre. But notwithstanding those very liberal terms, the area planted in South Australia for which this bonus was obtained only amounts to 190 acres. There is nothing in Queensland to prevent selectors who so

desire from planting forest trees, olive trees, or fruit trees, or any trees likely to be marketable. If they do that under our present land laws, the trees so planted count as improvements on the selection; so that the hon. member need not bring in his amendment to the Land Bill, now before the House, which has already been pretty well crushed with amendments. There is another step which the Government are already taking for the purpose of preserving the forests of the colony. In order to prevent timber-getters cutting trees in the reckless manner they have been doing, and in which they are entitled to do, the Government are endeavouring to have trees in certain localities marked by the rangers before being sold, so that no trees can be cut except in certain areas, and above certain sizes. Care will be taken by that means to preserve young trees which are now frequently cut down and which do not make good commercial timber—a practice which tends to deteriorate the forests in which such trees grow. The system which prevails in South Australia, and which might be attempted with certain modifications here, appears to be as follows. I may state, first, that I have been so impressed with the importance of this subject, that I have taken the trouble to collect a great mass of information from South Australia, everything, in fact, that they have done on the subject since they initiated the department of forestry, and I have found that even from a financial point of view it is a success. It no doubt takes a little money to start it; but not very much. They commenced in the year 1876, and since then, until the end of the year 1888, their expenditure has been £72,342; but their revenue has been £81,116; so that there is an actual profit from a financial point of view. That is another reason why we might judiciously endeavour to follow in the footsteps of that colony; it would pay us to do it. Of course, hon. members must not suppose that this revenue is entirely from timber. Take the last year, 1888. The revenue for that year was £12,080, and that was made up of the following items—rents from leased lands, £4,990, nearly £5,000. Hon. members must bear in mind that that amount is taken from the land revenue of the colony. There are certain large areas set apart for the Forestry Department of South Australia, and that department is allowed to lease those lands for grazing purposes, and the rents received from the grazing lessees go into the Forestry Department instead of going into the Lands Department; so that, after all, it is robbing Peter to pay Paul. We could get up a large forest revenue here by taking away revenue from the Lands Department. It must also be remembered that, although the figures I have quoted would appear to show that it was rather a profitable transaction, that revenue was not entirely derived from the sale of timber; it is derived from the revenue which would otherwise belong to the Lands Department. Then there are rents from reserves, £193. The sales of licenses, which properly belong to the Forestry Department, amounted to £6,520; wattle bark produced £140; guano £87, and mineral licenses £82; but the last properly belonged to the Mines Department. The miscellaneous receipts were £64. The revenue, as I have shown, amounted to £12,080, and the expenditure to obtain that was £7,262, leaving an actual credit to the department for the year of £4,818. But when we consider the vast amount of good that was done, the number of trees which were distributed, and the general benefit to the colony which resulted from that expenditure, I think we may safely say that the result was eminently satisfactory. The hon. gentleman in his motion says:—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the present rapid rate at which the exhaustion of the natural timbers of Queensland is proceeding, and the possibility that, in

the near future, serious loss and inconvenience may arise to various industries of the colony, call for some immediate action in the direction of replanting our forests."

Well, I do not think any hon. member of this House will deny that, and it would be very easy to say that I quite agree with it. But I am not satisfied with doing that; I wish to impress upon the House that I look upon the matter as one of vast importance, and the Government have already taken it in hand, to see what can be done, and I believe that the effort which we have initiated will result in some real practical good to the colony. As hon. gentlemen know, we are obtaining a gentleman of reputed high scientific attainments from America, Professor Shelton, who is very highly recommended by the Agricultural Department, a State Department in Washington, and who is believed to be thoroughly conversant with the practical method of giving effect to a resolution such as that the hon. member has tabled. It is intended, on that gentleman's arrival, to place agriculture and forestry under his special control, and assuming that he possesses the attainments we have every reason to believe he does possess, hon. members can depend upon it that before next session they will see that steps are being taken to give practical effect to the very praiseworthy motion of the hon. member for Maryborough, and they must also be prepared when the Estimates come down to vote a sufficient sum of money to see that this experiment is properly carried out, and not carried out in the very small way in which it is being carried out at present.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said: Mr. Speaker,—This is a subject that has come from time to time before the House during the last twenty-five years. I think that the hon. member for Maryborough deserves great credit, not only for bringing this matter before the House, but also for the able and practical speech he made in doing so. But the hon. gentleman who has just sat down forgot to mention one very important matter to which the hon. member for Maryborough has referred, and that is that there are certain kinds of timber in the colony, particularly in our scrubs, that the Government do not recognise. That is very important, and it is a point that has been overlooked for many years. The hon. member for Maryborough, who has paid great attention to the subject, and whom I look upon as a thoroughly practical bushman, and the hon. members of this House must have seen, as I have, the large amount of beautiful timber that has been burnt and otherwise wasted in our scrubs, in many cases to comply with the conditions for selection and that sort of thing. There is the bean tree and also several others that are not recognised at all, and we have no idea of the value of the timber we have. I am very glad to hear the views of the Minister for Lands on this matter, and I am thoroughly sure he is in earnest. The two or three speeches the hon. gentleman has made on this question are the most practical speeches ever made in this House, and in his last speech he has told me something I did not know before. I was not aware that the planting of trees would count as an improvement on a man's selection. That is a most important statement, and I am positive it is not known throughout the country. Now that it is known, through the speech of the Minister for Lands, it will go all over the colony, and selectors will take advantage of it. I mention it in order to emphasise the statement, so that it may be thoroughly understood by the selectors. There is another point with regard to timbers for Government railways. I do not think the sleepers for Government railways should be confined to two sorts of timber—ironbark and bloodwood. I need scarcely say that there are other kinds of

hard timber in the colony which would do just as well—blue gum, spotted gum, ti-tree, and others—so long as they are not too young, and particularly if they are sawn. Any of those timbers can be used for the purpose if they are sawn. But you cannot get them to split after a certain age; it is only the young timber that will split. It is a wrong thing to take all the young timber because it will split, and to leave the old timber because it will not. With regard to the professor who is coming out, we seem to have got into a fashion of importing professors of everything we want done in the colony from other countries. I have only to say for myself that I hope this professor will turn out to be as good as the rest of them—I do not know whether that is saying a great deal—and that he will utilise more timbers for the Government railways than one or two. As stated by the hon. member for Maryborough, if the Government will only once recognise those timbers everybody will recognise them. I believe four-fifths of the timbers of the colony have been rejected as of no use, and set fire to, simply because the Government would not recognise them. It would be the business of the professor to examine those timbers, particularly in the ranges where our great scrubs are, such as the Blackall Range, the Herberton Range, and others. If my advice would be of any use to so great a man, I would advise him to examine a great many kinds of other timbers besides those already acknowledged by the Government, and to recommend to the Government that they be used. The hon. member for Maryborough deserves an immense deal of credit for bringing this practical motion before the House. It is not an academic motion; it is one that can be acted upon, and one which I am satisfied the Minister for Lands will act upon.

Mr. PHILP said: Mr. Speaker,—The thanks of the House are due to the hon. member for Maryborough for bringing this motion forward. There is a small matter in connection with it which I should like to bring under the notice more especially of the Colonial Treasurer. Along the coast, from Rockhampton northwards, there are thousands of islands, nearly all of which are adapted for growing cocoanuts, and we can obtain from New Guinea any amount of cocoanuts for planting. There must be at least 200 persons in the harbours and lighthouse branch of the Colonial Treasurer's Department, living on or near those islands, who, for six hours out of the eight, have nothing to do; and I would suggest that those men might be profitably occupied in planting cocoanuts. Those men must be on the spot, but there is really nothing for them to do except to polish up their lighthouses and clean out their boats. Under proper guidance those men might plant one or two thousand cocoanuts every year, and this in time would form a very considerable source of revenue. When the trees commenced to bear the islands would let for large sums, and even if we got no revenue from them, it might be the means of saving the lives of shipwrecked crews, for it is well known that cocoanuts will keep people alive for months. I hope the Government will take this into consideration; and a good opportunity offers, now that the Administrator of New Guinea is here, to arrange for getting a regular supply of cocoanuts sent to Cooktown or Thursday Island, with the view of having them planted on the islands along the coast.

Mr. AGNEW said: Mr. Speaker,—After the very favourable manner in which the Minister for Lands has expressed himself in favour of this motion, it is scarcely necessary for any member on this side of the House to accept the

invitation of the hon. member for Maryborough to support it. I do so myself very cheerfully; and would be quite willing to bring some little experience to bear upon this matter, which I have gathered not only here but in other parts of the world. It appears to me to be quite unnecessary to delay the House any longer after the expression of opinion given by the Minister, and I simply content myself by expressing my hearty approbation of the action of the hon. member for Maryborough in bringing this motion forward; for which I am sure he will receive the thanks, not only of the present generation, but of the coming generation as well.

Mr. LUYA said: Mr. Speaker,—I was under the impression that to-day was to be devoted to Government business, and in consequence of that some notes I had made regarding this matter I have not with me now—notes that I had made from my past experience. Not having them, I must make the best of it, and speak more from memory than anything else. I had some little connection with the attempt made on Fraser's Island for the propagation of pine in 1882. At that time Mr. McDowall, during a short visit he paid to Noosa, where I was living, spoke to me on the subject. After he went away I received a letter from him asking me for some information on the subject. To that letter, which reached me in Brisbane, I replied as follows:—

"South Brisbane, 23rd December, 1882.

"A. McDowall, Esq., District Surveyor, Maryborough.

"Dear Sir,

"I am in receipt of yours of the 23rd, asking for any information I can give regarding the replanting of the kauri pine. All the information I can give, you are quite welcome to. At first I tried planting indiscriminately—that is, all through the scrubs, without clearing or looking to the drainage or aspect. In a short time I found that good drainage, with an east or southerly aspect, with a moderate amount of clearing was a primary consideration to success. Dead leaves in a moist drooping season, I found the best covering for the seeds. In fact, we had no luck in dry seasons. Old roads are pretty good for planting in, but my success was best on a brush ridge with sandy soil, timbered with good scrub bloodwood and white-gum, and the usual covering of brush, but not thicker than I could ride through. On this ridge we have been obliged to thin out the young plants.

"I also tried young saplings with but moderate success. The tap root runs straight down, and is very hard to get out of the ground without breaking. But if you can sow your seed upon an old bridge, say where the planks are close, or rather closed by a deposit of manure, such as gathers on such old structures, and cover lightly with leaves, you will in a short time have plenty of plants. On the 27th of last month, when riding from Cootharaba to Tewantin, I passed over Ringtail Creek bridge, and the crevices between each log were full of plants about two inches high; the seeds had fallen from an old tree standing near—there were no young saplings in the scrub near the tree. I have noticed the same growth every year on this and other bridges and loggings, but more particularly on the bridges where the drainage is good.

"Any other information I can give I will be most happy to supply.

"Letters addressed here will reach me sooner than to Cootharaba, as my abode for some time to come will be in Brisbane.

"I am, yours faithfully,

"(Signed) A. F. LUYA."

Hon. members will observe from that, that in 1882 I took an interest in forest conservation, and that our success in planting trees was very marked. In the thick scrubs, where the soil is almost in its virgin state, the young saplings will not grow with the same freedom as on the edges of the scrub where brushwood is met with. In brushwood land the young saplings grow very rapidly with thin, straight stems. When they are seven feet high they may be found

no thicker than a lead pencil, and they keep on growing until their tops rise above the rest of the forest. If the timber is stunted and dwarfed on the ridges, then the pine which grows there will be stunted also, because it only grows to the top of the other timber, and then begins to fill out; but its upward growth is done. When the professor, who has been referred to, comes here, I hope that he will benefit by the experience we have gained in the past before he goes too far. At the same time, I recommend the Government to reserve an area for forest conservation. A place called Walvi Mountain, which is a spur of the Blackall Ranges, in the Wide Bay district, was reserved on my recommendation as a timber reserve. The top of that mountain is perfectly flat, the soil being of a rich volcanic formation, and on the top of the mountain grew plenty of large cedar. We had taken the cedar off at that time, but I noticed there was a wonderful growth of young cedars there; in fact, they were growing in thousands. I induced the Government of the day to proclaim the mountain a cedar reserve, thinking that they would take some further action in the matter. I pointed out at the time that, in order to prevent bush fires, and give the young saplings a chance, a certain amount of clearing and attention would be required, and the poor sickly plants would have to be weeded out; but I am sorry to say that from that day to this, nothing whatever has been done. I have not the slightest doubt that bush fires have travelled all over the place, and where there were thousands of young saplings, I do not suppose over ten or twelve have grown to trees. This shows that if we take any steps in this direction the effort must be sustained, as it is of no use making a spasmodic effort and then doing nothing further. Mr. McDowall made the attempt at forest conservancy in 1882—the McIlwraith Government were in power—but I am sorry to say that when the late administration took office the then Minister for Lands, Mr. Dutton, stopped the vote for this purpose, and would have nothing more to do with the scheme. I hope that we have now arrived at a better state of things than that, and that that which one Government begins their successors will not think it their duty to put a stop to immediately. Both kauri and Moreton Bay pine grow very luxuriantly, once they attain the size of 12 inches in diameter. Of course long before they are that size they have grown taller than the rest of the forest; but when they have once attained that size they commence to grow in a most marvellous manner, particularly the kauri pine. I have measured trees, and then measured them again in twelve months' time. One sapling I measured had grown 18 inches in circumference—that is 6 inches in diameter—in the twelve months. That is a most extraordinary growth, and it is going on continually in the kauri pine scrubs. The kauri pine of Southern Queensland is confined to a very small area—from a little to the north of Maroochie to Tincan Bay. I persuaded the Government to proclaim a large portion of that district as a timber reserve; but although nothing has been done since, the timber is not lost to the Government, and that will be a proper field for them to work in. That is the only home of this timber in Southern Queensland, the extent being not much more than thirty miles from north to south, and running back from the sea coast some ten miles to the low coast ranges. The range goes almost in a semicircle, and the widest part of the timber district from the sea coast to the range is not more than ten miles. On the other side of the range there is scarcely a single tree. There are immense quantities of that timber in

the district. I have an eighty-acre selection there, and off forty acres of that land I took 800,000 feet of kauri pine. Two years after that I went back and took another 200,000 feet. Considering that in average pine country the yield is about three trees to the acre, that is a most wonderful growth of timber, especially when we know that in many of those trees there are over 20,000 feet of timber. In fact the trees grow like weeds. The kauri pine is one of the finest timbers in the world for building purposes, as it grows perfectly straight from the ground, with a round barrel like the barrel of a gun. It grows 80 or 100 feet high before you come to a branch. It is like the spotted gum in the bark, with a thick fleshy leaf very different from that of any other kind of pine. At the same time it is a splendid timber. It is easy to propagate from the seed, which is contained in cones which drop to the ground. Each cone contains some millions of seeds; and if they are gathered at the proper time and spread out, it is an easy matter to grow trees from them. As I remarked to Mr. McDowall, I have found them growing on an old bridge, and it struck him as being very peculiar that they should be found growing on bridges.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: What is the proper time?

Mr. LUYA: Towards Christmas; and in a season such as we are having now there would not be the slightest trouble in growing them. The seed of the kauri pine grown on Fraser's Island I sent to Mr. McDowall from Noosa; but after being at the two places, he came to the conclusion that Noosa pine was very much superior to the Fraser's Island and Tincan Bay pine. That is to say, it grew better, the reason being that the land at Noosa is more adapted for its growth, because the other timber is lofty, whereas the other timber on Fraser's Island is rather dwarfed in comparison. It is a fine stately tree at Fraser's Island, but it is dwarfed in comparison with the Noosa pine. With regard to hardwoods, there is no doubt that the Government have been very remiss, always confining their attention to ironbark. Two years ago a number of bridges were being built in the North, and the then engineer for bridges recommended that tallow-wood should be used. We know it here also as peppermint, but in New South Wales it is not known by any other name but tallow-wood. There is plenty of that timber in Queensland, but it has been looked upon as useless. The best patch I ever saw was on Government reserves—railway reserves—and to obtain it I was obliged to get permission from the Engineer-in-Chief. When I explained to Mr. Stanley the timber I wanted, he said, "You can take that rubbish away; it is of no use to us or anybody else." Yet that is one of the finest timbers we have. I only mention this to show the ignorance prevailing amongst people who ought to know better as to the value of the timbers we have in the colony. Then, again, we have in the scrubs a most beautiful timber—the bean-tree—but it wants peculiar treatment. It must be drawn out of the scrub immediately it is cut down, otherwise the borers will get into it. There is no timber so subject to the borer as the bean-tree. The sap is very large, and the borer penetrates till it comes to the black heart, which is the fancy part of the tree. Therefore, anybody felling the bean-tree must be prepared to haul it out of the scrub before it has lain there twenty-four hours, if he wants to make it a commercial success. Then we have a timber called candoo, which is the only timber, with the exception of silky oak, that can be used in making rum casks, without giving a woody taste to the rum. It is a timber which

grows along the coast scrubs. We have also the yellow-wood, which has been known for many years and used for special purposes. It is a splendid timber. Queensland at the present time is reaping great advantage from artesian wells; but they would not have been such a success as they have been if we had not a timber in the colony really fit for the boring rods which are used. We found that timber in our scrubs, but until it was ascertained that we had a timber suitable for the purpose, the timber for those rods was imported from North America. In yellow-wood, or canary-wood, as it is also called, we have the very timber for rods used in artesian boring, and they are manufactured here, and not only sent all over Queensland, but all over New South Wales also. Experts well qualified to judge have told me that the Canadian timber is not anything like equal to our own, which can be supplied for half the price. There is also another valuable timber known as crow's ash. It is the best timber I know for veranda floors; and I should like the Minister for Education to take notice that it is the best timber that could be used for school verandas. It is not only a splendid hardwood—better than ironbark for flooring—but it always looks clean and white, and that is a wonderful property in any timber. No other timber used for flooring will keep its natural colour; but crow's ash always looks the same as when it was cut. That is a timber that is practically never used. For the last few years I have persuaded anybody I could to use it. I used it in my own house to show that I had confidence in it; and every time I look at the verandas they appear as if they had been washed a few minutes ago. I mention this because people in various departments sometimes get into such old grooves that they cannot be shifted except by an earthquake. Sometimes you find a good practical man in office, as there is now at the head of the Education Department, and I hope he will take the hint I have given. Then there is the hickory.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about box-wood.

Mr. LUYA: The box-wood in the scrubs in the Southern part of the colony is not a good timber; but the box-wood grown in the forest is an excellent timber for wedge making, and that is the best use to which it can be put.

Mr. PHILP: The box in the North is the best scrub timber we have.

Mr. LUYA: The timbers all over Australia vary as you travel North or South. What holds good with respect to timber in Southern Queensland does not hold good in Northern Queensland; and it is no use for a department in Brisbane to specify that a certain timber shall be used in the North because it happens to be the best timber for the purpose in the South, as it is sometimes the very reverse in a different part of the colony. In New South Wales the Moreton Bay ash rots six months after it is cut down; but here it is not a bad timber, and I am informed that in the North it is the best timber they have. I shall not detain the House much longer, as I know there are many hon. members who want to speak upon this interesting and very important subject to us in Queensland, especially as our supply of timber is limited to a narrow fringe along the sea-coast. Before tea I was drawing attention to some of our forest timbers, which are very good, but which are very little used, and there is a hardwood in our scrubs to which I wish to refer especially. Some time ago some correspondence took place with regard to the Cairns Railway, on which they are using scrub timbers. I am not sure whether what we call hickory down here, which

is a very good timber for poles and things of that sort, having the property of being very elastic, is the same as the hickory up North. It does not grow large enough down here to be used for the purposes for which they use it up North. At all events, I should be very chary of using any scrub timber on railway works without full investigation as to the value of that timber, especially when it has to carry heavy trains and valuable lives as well. A good many of our scrub timbers are very tough and elastic when green; but when the sap dries up they are almost as brittle as a carrot. But we have in our scrubs timbers of undoubtedly great value, that is in hardwood. I refer now more particularly to a timber the bark of which is exactly the same as the cedar-tree, only somewhat coarser. The scale is exactly the same as the cedar, but the leaf is different. I think it must be classified as one of the eucalyptus family. I recollect some years ago an officer in the Education Department, when travelling from Tewantin to Gympie, rode through some miles of this timber, and as soon as he got into town he reported that he had passed through an immense forest of cedar-trees, and induced the Government to make a reserve there immediately. But if he had taken a tomahawk and chipped off the bark, he would soon have satisfied himself that it did not belong to the cedar family, for it is so hard that no American axe ever imported into Queensland will cut it. After the first two or three strokes, the axe will fly off, and it is useless, and we have to use a crosscut saw to get through it. This timber is known to the natives of the country as "penda." I am sorry I do not know the botanical name, and by way of digression I may say, that I think the Government ought to send Mr. Bailey, the colonial botanist, into that neighbourhood. He has never been there yet, and it seems to me that that district, surrounded as it is on three sides by the coast range, and on the other by salt water, offers a splendid field for his varied knowledge. This timber is the hardest timber in Queensland. It is harder than ironbark, and is indestructible. As an illustration of how the timber will last, I may say that when it falls across creeks it remains there apparently for all time, while other trees rot away. That shows how indestructible the penda tree is. We cut it for tramways in the early days. In bringing the timber in, 13,000 feet would go upon one truck, and when the horses were running with three or four trucks behind them, the moment the trucks left the ordinary rails and got on to the penda rails the wood rattled like iron rails. That shows how hard it is. For bridge building or any similar class of work it is unsurpassed, and if any timber like that was used in the Cairns-Herberton Railway, the work will stand for ever. I doubt very much, however, whether that timber is a native of those parts. I have spoken now about our native timbers, and I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to an extract that appears in the *Telegraph* of 3rd September, so that they may read it for themselves. It is more than three parts of a column of the paper, and is one of the most interesting articles on forestry that I have ever read. If hon. members will read it they will find it well worthy of perusal. They will find in it information of a most varied character bearing upon the profits of forestry, and what they are doing in South Australia. Not only are they protecting the timber indigenous to the colony, but they are actually growing the redwood of California. That is a wood as closely allied to our kauri pine as it is possible for one timber to be allied to another. They are alike in the grain and in the manner in which they work, the only difference being that one is a light-coloured wood and the other a light red.

The redwood is absolutely indestructible in the ground. It has been tested in America; and although it was used in the earliest days for fencing, it is as sound now as the day in which it was put in, some fifty years ago. I will just read one extract from the article to which I refer, to show what is being done in South Australia. The writer says:—

"If required, I can cut a plantation planted eleven years ago at Bundaleer, and send the timber to the Barrier mines. We could realise £15,000 for that timber, which is an enormous sum, when you consider that the forest cost the Government only £300 for labour in planting. But I would hesitate as to clearing the forest just now, for I am of opinion that if the trees are left for another five or ten years they will realise double the £15,000."

Now that is a startling statement, and when I first read it I went over it two or three times to see that I had made no mistake. That shows what we might accomplish. If forest conservancy will pay in South Australia, it would pay many times better in our climate. We should only have to put in the seedlings, and give them reasonable attention, and I am quite sure we would get an enormous profit. Another portion of the article says that out of 180,000 acres of timber reserves they have only operated upon 8,000 acres, and on that they have planted 6,000,000 trees. Of course that was only done by a sustained effort; it was not spasmodic. The value they place on Mr. Brown's services in South Australia compares, I think, very well with the way we treat the gentleman we have here—Mr. Bailey. I believe he is one of the cleverest men in Australia in his particular line. The article to which I refer further says:—

"The South Australian Forest Department supply municipal corporations, farmers, schools, and the Railway Department with trees free of charge. The Jamestown Council has planted no fewer than 50,000 of such gifts during the last six years. The department has now 600,000 trees available for distribution. Mr. Brown is indeed a worthy officer. So highly are his services appreciated that when the Victorian Government offered him £1,000 per year to take charge of forestry in Victoria, the South Australian Government wisely made it worth his while to remain in his present position."

That extract will show the view they take of this matter down there. I am rather sorry this motion came on this afternoon, as I had prepared some notes which, had I known it was coming on, would have enabled me to have given the House very much wider information on the subject than they are getting to-night.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: You have done very well indeed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LUYA: This is a matter I have always taken a very deep interest in, and I trust that now the matter has again been brought forward, not only this Government, but those who may succeed them, will continue and not reverse the policy, because there is unlimited scope for good in it. Mr. Speaker, we can hardly estimate the beneficial results that will be reaped here by what has been done even in South Australia. In another part of the article to which I have referred, reference is made to one of the moors in Yorkshire which was an arid place without water, until they planted it with trees, and the result of that was that there were running streams on it in the course of a few years. Mr. Brown is quoted in this article as saying:—

"Fifteen years ago I had the management of planting about 10,000 acres of moor land in Yorkshire. At that time there were no streams or rivulets in that particular part of the country. Just before I came to this colony I visited the plantation, and was somewhat astonished to learn that a streamlet was running through all the year round, the waters being brought together from the rain falling over the plantation."

When we read of such results as that, I say we may have great hopes of the wide expanse of waterless country we have in Australia. What we do now will be only laying the foundation in this matter; but I trust we shall lay it on such a solid basis that those who come after us will have no cause to complain of the foundation-stone we lay in the present.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—No doubt most hon. members have examined or seen the excellent collection of timber made by our worthy Colonial Botanist, Mr. Bailey, some three years ago for the London Exhibition. If any hon. members did not see it, I may state that there is a duplicate of that collection preserved in the Museum, and I would recommend them to examine it. It is a beautiful collection, and shows the enormous latent wealth there is in our timber industry in Queensland. We have not made the use of our timber that we should have done, and we have not made a proper use of our Colonial Botanist either. I believe his services have been wasted in the past in this colony. There is no doubt he is a thoroughly scientific man, and a man of great energy, application, and industry, and if he had a travelling allowance to enable him to travel over this enormous territory, his services could be made of very great advantage to the Lands Department and the colony itself. That is an idea that the Minister for Lands would do well to bear in mind—that it is necessary for our Colonial Botanist to go all over the colony and find out its various timbers and plants, and report as to their qualifications. In South Australia, which is the poorest timber colony of the lot, we find that the Conservator of Forests, Mr. Brown, who is a thoroughly scientific as well as a practical man, has been able, from the resources of the department, to accept a tender from the Egyptian Government for a large amount of sleepers, and the supply of those sleepers will be sufficient to keep something like 400 men employed for the next eight or ten years, to the great advantage of the forestry department of the colony. That shows what can be done by carrying out such a work as this. I am quite certain that until we pass a similar Woods and Forests Act to that which they have in force in South Australia we shall not see the industry carried out successfully or economically. It is not so very many years since it was said that there would be no end to the supply of cedar in New South Wales, and now it is a class of timber which is almost entirely unknown in that colony, except in very inaccessible places at the heads of the Richmond River. So extraordinary has the extravagance and waste of that timber been in New South Wales that it cannot now be supplied in sufficient quantity, and they have to draw upon Queensland for it. We are following out the same plan of reckless destruction here, and most likely it will be attended with similar results. As the hon. member who introduced this motion said, this matter has been touched upon several times in this House. You, Sir, brought forward a similar motion some years ago, when Mr. Perkins was Minister for Lands, and, I believe, I myself once introduced it when Mr. Dutton was here; but it has never received from the Lands Department that attention which it should have received. I never could understand the apathy which the Lands Department exhibited towards the establishment of a forestry department. I am glad to hear the present Minister for Lands give us his assurance that the Government will direct attention to it. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman promised that a Bill would be introduced on the subject, but he certainly has promised that it will receive great attention, and that the gentleman

coming here in connection with the Agricultural Department will have it specially in his charge. I believe that is the only way in which the industry can be carried out in a thoroughly scientific manner, because there is so much connected with the forestry department. It is not alone the timber that has to be considered, but the tanning barks, resins, and oils, in which the colonial timbers are wonderfully rich; richer than the timbers in any other part of the world. All those matters appertain to the forestry department and its economical management, so that it is necessary we should have a thoroughly qualified, properly educated, and scientific man at the head of this department. The opportunities such a man will have for carrying out the industry in Queensland are unexampled in the world. I suppose the coast ridges of Northern Queensland are not to be excelled for timber in the world. It is an absolute necessity that this timber should not be wasted, and while using it at the present time it should be seen to that a continuous growth is preserved for future years. That can be done at the same time that use is made of the timber available at present. The example set us in South Australia is, that whatever the expenditure in that department has been, it has returned a hundredfold to the colony, not only in the way of the expenditure being balanced by the income, but a store of young timber has been laid by, all over the colony, which has been growing for years, and which will be worth millions in time to come. That is an example well worthy of being followed, and I recommend it to the Minister for Lands, when carrying out his promise.

Mr. POWERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to say a few words upon this matter, and I may observe that the assurance given us already by the Minister for Lands must be very satisfactory to every member of the House—that is, that the matter is to be dealt with. That assurance having been given, I will not detain the House as long as I otherwise intended to have done, because this question means the saving and continuance of a very important industry. If something is not done, there is no doubt that the timber industry will not last for many years. We know that it takes about twenty-five years for the trees to grow to maturity, and I know that any man coming from the Wide Bay and Burnett districts, or the Brisbane district, must know that, according to the way in which the population of the colony is increasing, there is not twenty years' supply of timber left, let alone twenty-five years' supply. If we go on cutting timber and destroying our forests as we are doing now, without making any attempt to replace the trees taken away, we shall soon do away with our timber industry, and instead of giving employment to a number of men in the colony, as we ought to do, we shall have to import timber from abroad. I think the Minister for Lands will excuse me drawing his attention to the results of the work at Fraser's Island. Mr. McDowall's last report on the subject is for the year 1888. I have here the report of a pressman who went down to the island in March of the present year. This report shows that our attempt at forest cultivation there is successful, and that the experience gained there is such as will be of great assistance to anyone who may have charge of a department of forestry in Queensland. I hope that, instead of the work being discontinued, it will be continued, and the number of men employed increased by one or two. The press report to which I have alluded states that—

"At the second and main plantations 100,000 trees reared in a nursery have been planted out, and about 25,000 natural trees cultivated. There, as at Yankee Jack's Creek, lanes are cut one chain apart, the trees

being planted six feet apart. Only kauri pine receives attention. We were pleased to learn that every tree under cultivation grows in a perfect state of health, in fact no single tree has died."

There we have 125,000 trees that are being attended to for the paltry sum annually voted by Parliament. Then the report refers to another plantation:—

"At the former plantation eleven miles of lanes have been cut through the scrub, and about 22,000 natural plants freed from vines and other masses of vegetation preventing their growth. Of course this work entailed a considerable expenditure of money. For several years past, however, the curator has been compelled, through insufficient labour supplied to him, to give up work in that locality, and has not been able for six months to even look at the place. When last seen, the lanes were all grown through, and the work done will be thrown away unless immediate steps are taken in the matter. In addition to his own hands, Mr. Mitchell is furnished with one man only. How much two men can do in large affairs of this kind may be easily understood."

From this report, therefore, it will be seen that in five years 22,000 trees have been planted in one plantation, and 125,000 in another, and that they are growing healthily. I think that work should have the very best attention, and every assistance should be afforded that may be required to carry it on successfully. When the trees have attained a certain height no labour will be necessary. With regard to the professor who is coming here, I think it would be a wise thing to get someone who has been working under Mr. Brown in South Australia to assist in the work of a forestry department, as he would have colonial experience, and the professor who has been appointed will have American experience. I hope the Minister for Lands will not overlook this suggestion. It is worthy of remark that wherever a forestry system has been established it has been a success. In proof of this I may refer to Sweden, even though it is far away from Australia. "In Sweden the accruing State revenue amounts to about £56,000, against an expenditure of £36,000." I have in my hand a paper on the timber industry, which states—"The German Empire still possesses a fine and well-distributed area of forest, chiefly coniferous, to the extent of about 26 per cent., or over one quarter of its entire territory. The preservation of this source of national wealth, amidst a dense agricultural population, is due to an admirable system of forest management, varying but little in the several States, and of which that pursued in Prussia may be taken as the type. The Prussian forests cover 20,400,000 acres, about half of which are private, and the rest State or communal property, the two latter included under administration. The annual revenue from these public domains amounts to about £2,400,000 sterling, being at the rate of 2s.4½d. per acre. Of this amount, something more than half is spent in the maintenance of the forest department, schools of forestry, replanting, the buying out of seigniorial and commonage rights, and numerous other expenses, leaving a net income of about £1,100,000, which is slowly but surely increasing." In the Austrian Empire the annual revenue from the State forests amounts to £400,000 as against an expenditure of £300,000. Spain is commencing work in this direction. "Even the semi-barbarous republic of Mexico . . . has recently contracted with a German expert for the planting of 4,000,000 shade and timber trees in the immediate vicinity of the capital." Ceylon has established a school of forestry. India obtained from her Forest Department in 1875-6 "a net revenue of £300,000, now much increased." Then, coming nearer home, we have the experience of the Forestry Department of South Australia. New South Wales also has acted very wisely in sending home to Germany some

person to learn all he can about State forestry in Germany. The figures I have quoted show that, although the expense of working a forestry department in those countries is greater than it would be here, yet it has paid to establish such departments. But even if we cannot get a revenue from a forestry department, and can only pay expenses and keep the great timber industry going, that will be a great benefit to the colony. I think the thanks of the House and the country, especially that part of the colony I represent, are due to the hon. member for Maryborough for having brought this matter before the House; and I hope the motion will not simply be approved of and no action taken, but that the Government will see that the proposal is carried out.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I am afraid this is one of those matters in which all Governments in the colony up to present time are to be blamed. They have not taken a sufficiently serious view of the importance of the question. I remember, more than ten or or twelve years ago now, preparing a Bill dealing with the subject, but it never came to anything. A great many times since then, somebody has moved in the matter, and I am glad to hear the Minister for Lands say that the Government have taken it in hand. Since the time I mention a great deal of information has become available with respect to the system known as afforestation, which has been practised in India, in many parts of Europe, and on this continent in South Australia, with great success. The Government have now in their employment a gentleman who has had a large experience, and a great deal of information will probably be derived from the professor who is coming from America, who is, I understand, also qualified in the same regard; so that the Government will have, very shortly, the best advice in dealing with the subject. I do sincerely hope that it will be dealt with and not simply talked about, as it has been so often before. I trust that the Government will really take it in hand. I may say that, practically, all Governments are so pressed with immediate necessities, daily necessities, that they very often have no time to deal with matters, which, if not of greater urgency, are really of greater importance, and with respect to which all sides of the House are unanimous. Before I sit down, I think I should congratulate the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Luya, upon the extremely interesting and useful information he has given to the House. I very much regret that he did not bring with him the notes which he had prepared, if he could from them have given the House still more information; but he certainly gave us more information on the subject than has ever been given in this House before. I am very glad the matter has been brought forward. It will not make much difference whether this motion is passed or not, as the Government have promised that they will consider the matter, and, if they do so, they may rest assured that they will receive every assistance from the House in dealing with it in a reasonable and satisfactory manner.

MR. MELLOR said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think there is any need to continue the debate in reference to this motion. We have the assurance of the Minister for Lands that he will consider the matter very seriously. In fact, I believe he accepts the motion, and it will be passed without a dissentient voice. I think the matter should be taken up by the Government and carried out immediately. I believe that the Minister for Lands has gone so far as to appoint a board of conservators up North; I do not know whether one has been appointed for the Southern part of

the colony or not. There has been a great deal of information given in reference to this matter, and a very valuable suggestion was made by the hon. member for Townsville, which I hope will be acted upon. If the board of conservators will plant cocoanuts on the islands from here as far as Cooktown I am sure the work will more than pay expenses. I may say that as far south as Maryborough and Woody Island I have obtained excellent cocoanuts which had come to perfection, and I believe the palms are growing there still. I have had a great deal to do with timber in my time, principally in regard to cedar, which is the most valuable timber we have in this colony, and it is becoming very scarce. I do not know what cedar there may be in New Guinea, but I believe there is a large amount. Still, Queensland, I know, is fast getting rid of this valuable timber, and some years ago I communicated with the Hon. J. Douglas, who was then in office, in reference to the conservation of cedar on the Mary River, and had the matter been attended to then, I have not the slightest doubt that the timber in that locality would have been very valuable to the State. Of course, when large scrubs are found there is a good crop of timber; and after that crop is taken off, the scrub should be reserved. In reference to the system of marking trees that are fit to be cut down, I do not know whether the Minister for Lands means to close those localities after that crop has been taken off. I am sure hon. members will believe me when I say that a great deal of valuable timber has been destroyed by cutting it before the trees arrive at maturity, and the loss to the colony in that direction has been excessive. There has also been a great quantity of timber destroyed by being allowed to lie near the water. It is well known that pine timber will not last long after it is felled—within three months if exposed to moisture it becomes blue and is useless. That system of letting the timber lie on the banks of the water, waiting for a fresh to take it down, is being carried on in some places at the present time, and I do not know whether the people who do that have to pay anything for it. I cannot say that the system of selling by auction will be acceptable amongst the timber-getters, but every precaution should be taken to preserve young trees. There are tens of thousands of young cedar trees growing up the valley of the Mary, and in a very few years they will be a valuable asset of the colony, if they are preserved. I have every sympathy with the motion, and can support it most heartily, as I consider that forest conservancy will be a great benefit to the State. The question has often presented itself to my mind, whether it would be more profitable for the State to grow timber, or to settle people on the land. We have plenty of land on the coast that is not fit for settlement, as it will not grow anything but timber. Of course, land that will grow good timber is good land for anything; but I believe kauri pine grows principally in sandy country, and we have been told by the hon. member for South Brisbane how quickly that timber grows. In reference to cedar, I believe that grows a great deal more quickly than people generally imagine. I remember a party of us went into a scrub in the valley of the Mary, and took the first crop away, and within six years there was another crop there almost as good as the first; but, of course, we had left the smaller trees growing. Considering the timber of the country, particularly in the South, is a matter of very grave importance, it is one which should receive the consideration of the Government, and I am sure it will. In reference to pine, I know there is a great quantity of magnificent pine in some places, but it cannot be touched at present, nor can it be for many years to come. There are millions of feet of

pine to be cut, but it cannot be taken away until we have railways to the places where it is growing. These are supplies that the State should be careful in guarding, and I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr. HODGKINSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I only rise to express the pleasure I have felt in listening to the hon. members who have spoken upon this subject. This question of conserving the timber of the country is one of growing importance; and it seems very strange that in almost every country in Europe that suffers from a lack of moisture, or labours under malarial conditions, they take the native Australian trees and plant them with a view of correcting these evils. There are many hundreds of thousands of different species of eucalypti planted every year in Spain, Italy, and other countries, especially in Algeria, where the climate has been completely altered in consequence. I will give a few figures that perhaps have escaped hon. members who are more immediately connected with this matter. Of course, we are perfectly well aware that the chief reliance of the French for fuel is on timber-charcoal, and therefore, what may be termed the management of forests in that country has become a perfect science. The State or communal forests of that country cover no less than 8,000,000 of acres, the produce of which is valued at £15 per acre; and that is, of course, the French valuation, where the purchasing power of money is at any rate much greater than it is in Great Britain or in this colony. Since the year 1848 there have been no less than 9,000,000 of acres of land kept continually planted with forests, land unfit for ordinary agriculture; but suitable for the production of timber. The rental from that land, without interfering with the annual supply, is at the rate of 7s. per acre, and when it is considered that the consumption of fuel in Paris alone amounts to the produce of 50,000 acres of land annually, it will give the House some idea of the importance of forest conservancy in that country. But great as may be the resources of France in this direction, those of Russia are immeasurably greater. Russia has more acres of forest in her territory than the whole area of Queensland, and even in that vast and semi-populated empire, that forest land produces a return of 1s. per acre. Russia employs a whole army of "wood police," who have the care of the forests, and of the preparing of the produce for market. There are no less than 27,000 of these wood police employed by the Russian State alone, altogether independent of the large landed proprietors, some of whose estates are real principalities, and the amount of wood that is cut in the State forests alone is 12,000,000 tons annually, valued at 2s. per ton. In Scotland, as hon. members are doubtless aware, several attempts have been made to convert hitherto barren land into profitable forests. The Duke of Athol, at Dundalk, has planted no less than 28,000,000 trees on 16,000 acres of ground, which hitherto has produced nothing but a few stags and grouse for sporting purposes. The Earl of Seafield, at Inverness, has planted 60,000,000 trees, on 40,000 acres. In the adjoining country of Ireland, Lord Powerscourt has planted 1,000 acres with trees at a total cost of 66s. per acre, which produces now, in the twenty-fifth year since planting, an annual return of 8s. per acre—a return which compares very favourably, I imagine, with the average rents received by the proprietors of agricultural land in the same country. I merely give these figures to show that the subject is worthy of the greatest consideration by the House, especially when we bear in mind the very great extravagance with which we are consuming our raw material. There is not the slightest doubt that while it is necessary to

establish a forestry department, and to take steps to replenish the proper and legitimate consumption of timber, it is also necessary to check the wholesale waste that is now going on. When we remember that the saw-mills of Maryborough and Gympie alone consume an average of 200 trees per working day, which, for 300 days, comes to 600,000 trees per annum, and that these trees, before they are removed from the forest, must be of marketable value, there is not the slightest doubt that they represent the picked timber over a very large area of land. In the Northern district, with which I am better acquainted, there are at the present moment, I think I may say without exaggeration, many millions of feet of valuable cedar lying rotting in the scrubs, in the vicinity of Cairns more especially. There has no doubt been a great oversight committed by the Government—I am not referring to this Government in particular, but to all Governments—that for the sake of a temporary revenue from the annual fees, they have allowed the destruction of such invaluable material. In another way, Government—not this Government, but Governments generally are great sinners, and that is in the consumption and destruction of unfit wood for railway sleepers. That operates badly in two ways. It destroys a large quantity of immature timber, and it involves an unnecessary expense in the maintenance of lines, especially in the Northern districts—where every sleeper has to be imported from the South—by exposure to the weather and the ravages of white ants. Whatever hopes we may entertain from the extended use of steel sleepers, we must for many years rely to a great extent on our timber resources. It would certainly be the duty of the Government to prevent, as far as possible, any waste. I have very great hopes that the motion proposed by the hon. member for Maryborough, and so ably spoken to by the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Luya—from whom every hon. member must have derived a large amount of instruction—will eventuate in the result we have at heart, especially after the speech of the Minister for Lands, who is a gentleman who is not in the habit of saying things he does not mean.

Mr. HYNE, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I must say I feel extremely gratified at the support my proposition has received from both sides of the House; and I am specially obliged to the hon. member for South Brisbane, who has enlightened the House very much on timber generally. If what the hon. member for Burrum stated is correct, and I have no doubt it is, unless something is done very soon we shall not have timber to provide for our own future requirements, and we shall be importers of timber instead of exporters of it. The Minister for Lands alluded to what he termed the wilful waste of timber by timber-getters and saw-millers. I can assure the hon. gentleman that no blame can be attached to the saw-millers, because the matter is entirely out of their control; and I know from my personal experience that timber-getters are exercising much greater care in securing timber than they did some years ago, simply, I believe, because it is getting scarcer. But these things can be remedied under a proper system of forest conservation. One good thing at least will come from the hon. gentleman's speech; it will inform the farmers and selectors all over the country that tree-planting may count as improvements. I am certain it is not known.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is provided for both in the 1876 and the 1884 Acts.

Mr. HYNE: It is not generally known, and when it becomes known many farmers and selectors will take the opportunity to plant trees

to shelter their farms from the westerly winds which are so destructive in many parts, especially on the range this side of Toowoomba. If they knew the effect a row of pine trees has on cultivation they would set about the work heartily. Without wishing to trouble the House with more statistics on the subject, I would recommend the Minister for Lands and hon. members generally to refer to the evidence gathered by the Select Committee that sat in 1875 on forestry; it contains a vast quantity of most useful information on the subject. I will not detain the House longer. If we can only arouse public interest on the question of tree-planting we shall see a very pleasant change over the face of the country in a very short time.

Question put and passed.

STAFFORD BROTHERS RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. SMYTH said: Mr. Speaker,—In moving the second reading of this Bill, I do not intend to go through the Bill clause by clause, as is the custom in this House. It is a Bill containing eighteen clauses, and is similar to many other Bills passed periodically authorising the construction of branch lines of railway. The Bill was brought forward last session, but the forms of the House would not allow of its being put through in sufficient time to pass the other Chamber. The necessary advertisements which have been inserted in the *Government Gazette*, and in the local papers, occupied a certain amount of time, and therefore Stafford Brothers, having a coal mine which they wished to develop, and having large contracts, obtained the sanction of the Government to construct the line, so that the Bill before us now is altered somewhat in wording. In fact, this is really a Bill of indemnity, and merely sanctions what has already been done. The Government authorised the construction of the line, and their officers have seen that it was constructed in a proper manner, and according to the requirements of the Railway Department. The line is thirty-three chains in length, and branches off from the Southern and Western line between Bundamba and Dinmore. Messrs. Stafford Brothers are persevering, hard-working men. There are four of them, and in addition to working in the mine themselves they employ about forty men. They have, I believe, possession of one of the best coal beds in the West Moreton district, and this line has brought a great deal of revenue to the Railway Department. Stafford Brothers have sold to the Government many thousands of tons of coal, and I consider that, in addition to having been a source of revenue to the department, it has also been of great benefit to the district and to the colony generally. I have been over the line in company with other members of the committee, and we saw that everything was what it was represented to be. The line follows the surface as nearly as possible, with a rather steep grade, till it comes to the top of a hill, when it runs on a level, and provision is made that the trucks cannot run down and get on the main line. I have given notice here that, in the event of the Bill passing its second reading to-night, the House will consent to going into committee, so that we may get the Bill off the notice-paper. I would very much like to see it done with, and I dare say the Government would like to see the notice-paper as clear as possible. I have very much pleasure in moving that the Bill be now read a second time.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. M. Nelson) said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know of any objection to the second reading of this Bill; but I think it would have been

better if the plans, sections, and book of reference had been laid on the table of the House. That does not appear to have been done. I think it would be only due to hon. members that they should have an opportunity of examining them. It has been the practice for some time past to introduce private Bills of this nature, for the construction of branch lines, but I do not think it is in accordance with the provisions of the Railway Act. According to my reading of that Act, the Governor in Council should be requisitioned in the case of such lines, and if the requirements of the Act are complied with, and the necessary steps taken, it then becomes the duty of the Government to introduce a Bill to carry out the railway. I admit that such has not been the practice adopted hitherto, although I have not the slightest doubt that that was the intention of the Railway Act. Before the Bill goes into committee, I shall devote some time to an examination of the Bill, as I have hardly had an opportunity of doing so yet. I have not the slightest doubt, however, that it will be in accordance with the requirements of the Act, and I have no objection to the second reading of the Bill.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I think that the Minister for Railways ought to express his opinion more fully than he has done about this Bill. I do not quite agree with him as to the application of the provisions of the Railway Act of 1872 to this subject. That Act contains certain provisions under which private Railway Bills may be brought in with the sanction of the Government, but they have never been followed yet.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, last year, when we introduced the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham Gold-mining Company's Railway Bill.

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Then that was the first line, but the practice has not generally been followed. The peculiarity about this Bill is that the railway has already been constructed, and the Bill legalises the running of trains upon the line. Of course, there is no reason why a man should not make a railway through his own land, provided the running of the trains is not a nuisance to anyone else. This is really an indemnity Bill. The railway has been constructed without any objection on the part of anybody. It has been constructed with the sanction of the Commissioner for Railways, on the assumption that it would be agreed to by Parliament. It is a very short line—only 33 chains in length. Of course the running of the trains may frighten horses, and the engines may emit sparks, and all that sort of thing would be a public nuisance, perhaps, and therefore the real object of the Bill is to make it lawful to run trains along the line. Otherwise, the Bill is in the ordinary form, and I see no reason why it should not pass. If we say that it is lawful to run trains over the line, that is all that is required by the Stafford Brothers. I do not see any objection to the Bill passing its second reading.

MR. BARLOW said: Mr. Speaker,—I quite agree with what the Minister for Railways has said on the subject of having an opportunity to look at the plans; but as the session is now approaching its close—

THE HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: You are very sanguine.

MR. BARLOW: As the session is now getting on, and the private business paper is somewhat obstructed, I do not see why we should not pass the Bill through committee, especially when we take into consideration the fact that this is only

an indemnity Bill. We may postpone the third reading for a week or a fortnight, and then there would still be an opportunity of negating the Bill if necessary; but these men, who are very hard-working men, have been put to considerable expense in having had to introduce this Bill twice, and I should be very sorry to see it jeopardised for this session by not passing it at once. That would put them to still further expense in having to bring in the Bill again next session.

MR. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—Two Bills similar to this have already been passed by this House, and this is the third that has been introduced. The firm of Stafford Brothers are very anxious to have the matter settled as soon as possible; and as the Bill is drawn on the same lines as Bills that have already become law, I do not think any harm can be done in passing the second reading. According to the 3rd clause, it is provided that the railway shall be constructed of sound material, and upon the gauge upon which the Government railways are at present constructed, and shall, in regard to strength and durability, be equal to such railways. I have seen the railway myself, and have ascertained the opinions of those who are in a position to judge of the matter, and I can assure the House that the provision contained in that clause has been complied with by the firm. I hope, therefore, that the Bill will be passed with as little delay as possible.

THE PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—It is hardly any excuse to say that this Bill is only a little one—that excuse has been given before under different circumstances. If the Bill is as innocent as the hon. member for Gympie represents it to be, it can be passed through committee very easily later on; but it is hardly fair to ask hon. members to go into committee on it immediately after the second reading, assuming that it will pass its second reading to-night. Time should be given to hon. members to look through a Bill of this sort before we are asked to consider it in committee, which is after all the crucial test. A measure which may contain some debatable matter should not be hurried on, especially in a thin House, by reading it a second time and passing it through committee on the same evening. I trust the hon. member will accept my assurance that there is no intention on the part of the Government of putting any improper obstruction in the way of the Bill passing through; and that being so, I think he should be content to have it read a second time to-night, leaving its consideration in committee till a future occasion.

Question put and passed.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

CASWELL ESTATE ENABLING BILL.

SECOND READING.

MR. POWERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move the second reading of this Bill, which is a Bill to authorise the mortgage of certain real and personal estate devised and bequeathed by the will of Henry Drew Caswell, deceased, and to enable the trustees under the said will to carry on the business of the said Henry Drew Caswell, deceased, and to indemnify them for any loss or damage by reason thereof. Bills containing similar powers to those contained in this Bill have already been passed by this House, and I do not intend to do much more, in moving its second reading, than refer to two or three

points in the evidence taken by the select committee, to show the object of the measure. This evidence will be found at question 62 :—

"Did you see whether you could get that power without coming to Parliament? Well, we did not apply to the court, because we were told it was simply useless to apply. I saw Messrs. Hamilton, the solicitors, about it; and they looked back to a number of cases for several years past and they told me that in no case could they find that the court gave that power. In all cases the court absolutely refused it, and told the applicants that they must apply to Parliament, as the court would not give or grant a power which was not given by the will."

Then there is this at question 84 :—

"You are satisfied that the sale of these properties would result now in a great sacrifice? I am certain it would; the private estate particularly."

"Do you think you are justified in maintaining this partnership with Mr. Mackay? Quite so. We could not close the partnership without selling the station; we are not in a position to buy him out, and I know Mackay is not in a position to buy us out."

Then this evidence will be found at question 65 :—

"By Mr. Chubb: You ask for powers to carry on until the youngest child is twenty-one years of age; but you do not propose to carry on if you can realise meantime? We propose to sell as soon as we can get what we consider a favourable price, and to invest the money in such a manner as may be found best to enable the family to draw an income."

"The Bill asks for the power to mortgage the estate, for the purpose of paying off existing liabilities, and others incurred for managing the concern. The present liabilities, I think, you have stated, in one case, are £10,000; and in the others, £3,858;—about £14,000 altogether? Under £14,000."

"Do you wish to increase the liabilities beyond that sum? No; we want to reduce the liability."

The petition states the ground upon which the Bill is asked for, and the report of the select committee shows the necessity for it, as far as the trustees are concerned. Mr. Chubb, as counsel for the parties interested, appeared before the committee and explained the petition, and after hearing the evidence the committee satisfied themselves that the preamble was proved, and made the amendments shown in the Bill, which, if it pass the second reading, I shall recommend to the Committee for approval. Hon. members will see that Clive Elliot Caswell is introduced as a new trustee to act with the trustees under the will, and also that all the persons interested over the age of twenty-one—four out of seven—are willing, and are asking that he should be appointed. In fact, the estate could not be properly carried out without this Bill. I move that it be now read a second time.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I have always, when a matter of this sort has been brought before the House, expressed the opinion that, unless under very exceptional cases, the desire of the testator should not be interfered with by any Act passed by this House. But this is a perfectly different case. I understand from the evidence and the petition that the executors, and all who are beneficially interested in the will, are of opinion that the realisation of the estate at the particular time fixed by the testator should not take place; and I think that, under the circumstances, the executors, of whom I observe you, Mr. Speaker, are one, have exercised a very wise discretion in asking this House to extend the time. I think there can be no objection to the Bill.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—It is a very serious thing to alter a testator's will, but unfortunately testators often make wills, or wills are made for them, which do not by any means give effect to what they really intended.

The PREMIER: There is no alteration of that kind in this case.

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The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I say such cases often happen. But I do not see the necessity for this Bill at all. Only within the last week I was consulted on a will almost exactly the same as this and asked if the parties had power to mortgage, and it did not take me very long to advise them that they had. I do not see any difference in this case. I based my opinion upon the decisions of two very eminent Lord Chancellors of England. I really do not think the House should be called upon to pass laws to give effect to what is already the law of the colony. I shall be very glad to give the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill the names of my authorities before the Bill goes into committee. I think before it is passed we should satisfy ourselves on that point, because it would be very unfortunate to have the legislature passing laws assuming that the existing law cannot be applied to any particular case.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

Mr. POWERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that the committal of the Bill stand an Order of the Day for Thursday, the 19th September. I may say that I shall be very glad to have the cases referred to by the hon. the leader of the Opposition, and if it is found that there is no necessity for the Bill I do not think it will be proceeded with. Hon. members will see that counsel appeared before the select committee and gave his reasons for the necessity of the Bill, and that is all I know about it.

Question put and passed.

The consideration of the Bill in committee was made an Order of the Day for Friday, the 13th instant.

WARWICK GAS, LIGHT, POWER, AND COAL COMPANY, LIMITED, BILL.

COMMITTEE.

On the motion of Mr. MORGAN, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider this Bill in detail.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1—"Power to manufacture gas"—passed as printed.

On clause 2, as follows :—

"It shall be lawful for the said company, notwithstanding any statute or law to the contrary, and notwithstanding any clause or provision herein contained, to purchase or acquire, take, hold, and enjoy, to them and their successors for any estate, term of years, or interest, such lands, buildings, works, mains, pipes, and apparatus as they may think requisite for any of the purposes of this Act."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he thought the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill should tell the Committee something about its provisions.

Mr. MORGAN said the Bill was practically a copy of other Bills which had been passed on behalf of gas companies carrying on business in various towns of the colony, and, notably, of the South Brisbane Gas Company's Act. It was almost an exact copy of that Act, passed in 1885, with the exception of clauses 33 and 34, which gave the company power to adopt electricity as an illuminant, and consequential alterations rendered necessary by the insertion of those clauses.

Question put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 9, inclusive, passed as printed.

On clause 10, as follows :—

"Power to erect gasometer, etc., break up soil, pavements, and material of streets and bridges."

Mr. MORGAN moved the insertion in line 28 after the word "reservoirs" of the words "electric lines."

Mr. McMASTER said if they passed the clause they would commit themselves to clause 33. Was it desirable to give a monopoly to one gas and electric light company? He thought the question ought to be left to the local authorities. The Committee had no right to create a monopoly. There were two gas companies in Brisbane; they had joined hands recently and raised the price of gas by 2s. 6d. per 1,000 cubic feet, and there was no guarantee that they would not clap on a higher price. If they passed that clause, when the next Gas Company's Bill was before them they would be told it was all right, as it was exactly similar to the Warwick Gas Company's Act. He thought the Committee ought not to hand over such large privileges to a private company.

Mr. MORGAN said he would like to say that the company was not asking for a monopoly. It was proposed to insert a clause giving the corporation of the municipality power to acquire the property of the Gas Company. It might clear away the objection of the hon. member, who was such a stickler for the rights of local authorities, if he assured him that he (Mr. Morgan) occupied the position of Mayor of Warwick, and was not at all likely to propose anything that would do an injury to the local authority or the citizens of Warwick. The local authority was quite willing that the company should have the powers asked for, and had gone to the extent of asking the gas company to tender for the supply of electric light in place of gas. The clause as proposed simply gave power to the company to manufacture electricity as well as gas. The local authority could even take either or neither, or get someone else to supply light. As a matter of fact the corporation had had quotations for electric lighting with which they were not so well satisfied as with the quotations for gas. He thought there was no danger in passing the clause, especially as a clause giving the corporation power to acquire the company's plant was to be inserted.

Mr. PHILP said if they gave the gas company power to apply electricity as well as gas they would never have electricity at all in Warwick. He did not think it desirable to give them the double power, as it would prevent opposition.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 11 to 33, inclusive, passed as printed.

Mr. PHILP said he scarcely thought it desirable to give the company power to supply both gas and electricity.

Mr. MORGAN: Clause 33 has been passed.

Clause 34—"Company may lay pipes and electric lines"—passed with a verbal amendment.

Mr. GLASSEY said that on looking over the Bill he discovered that there was no provision made in it for the municipality or local authority purchasing the plant and material belonging to the company. He had a very great objection to monopolies of any kind, and he thought gas and the electric light being prominent elements in civilised social life, they should be to some extent controlled by the people. He held the same opinions with respect to railways and water. He had suggested to the hon. member for Warwick that the omission of such a clause as he had referred to was a defect in the Bill, and the hon. member offered no objection to an amendment of that kind. The clause he had to submit was the same as that appearing in the Act conferring powers on the South Brisbane Gas Company, and was as follows:—

At any time after the expiration of fourteen years from the passing of this Act, the corporation of the Warwick Municipality or other local authority within

whose jurisdiction the company carries on its operations, may purchase and take from the company the whole of the lands, buildings, works, mains, pipes, lines, and apparatus of the company, on such terms, as to ascertainment and payment of the purchase money, as may be from time to time prescribed by Parliament.

He thought himself that the term of fourteen years was rather too long to allow the works to remain in the hands of the company without the municipality or local authority having the power to purchase from them.

Mr. MORGAN said he would offer no objection to the insertion of that clause. In justice to himself he might state that he suggested to the framer of the Bill that such a clause should be inserted; but when the Bill was presented to him to take charge of he found it was not there. He thought the local authority should have the power to purchase.

New clause put and passed.

Clauses 35 to 39, inclusive, passed as printed.

Clause 40 passed with verbal amendments.

On clause 41, as follows:—

"This Act shall be styled and may be cited as the Warwick Gas, Light, Power, and Coal Company, Limited, Act of 1899."

Mr. McMASTER said he did not notice anything in the Bill limiting the charge which might be made for the gas by the company, and he would like to know if there was any restriction in that respect.

Mr. MORGAN said, so far as he was aware, there was neither a maximum nor minimum limit. The company might charge 1s. or 15s.; the price would, to a large extent, depend on the cost of the material from which they manufactured the gas or electricity, and on the consumption.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: What are they charging now?

Mr. MORGAN said he believed it was 12s. 6d. per 1,000 feet. They had to carry their coal 165 miles; but they might get over that difficulty by finding coal nearer home.

Mr. McMASTER said he believed the Brisbane Gas Company Act limited that company to the payment of a certain dividend, and he did not think they should make fish of one and flesh of another. It would be quite sufficient if the company were limited to 10 per cent., otherwise they might tax the ratepayers to the extent of paying dividends of 20 or 30 per cent. He did not oppose the Bill, but merely pointed out that matter.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he thought the point raised by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was a very important one. It was not so much what the company charged for the gas; but he did not think they should be allowed to pay more than 10 per cent. in dividends. When a company was in a position to pay more than that it should reduce the price of gas to the consumers.

Clause put and passed.

The preamble was passed with consequential amendments.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

The report was adopted, and, on the motion of Mr. MORGAN, the third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. The first Government business on Monday will be the consideration in committee of the Message in regard to the Decentralisation Bill; then the Legislative Council's amendments in the Brisbane Water Supply Bill, and after that the Estimates.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past 9 o'clock.