

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

MONDAY, 21 DECEMBER 1908

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STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL.

RETURNED FROM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly returning this Bill without amendment.

JOINT COMMITTEES.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. A. H. Barlow) moved—

1. That, in the opinion of the Council, it is desirable that the gentlemen constituting, respectively, the Joint Library Committee, the Joint Refreshment-rooms Committee, and the Joint Buildings Committee, should continue to control during the recess the several matters committed to their charge as such committees during the session.

2. That the above resolution be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly, by message, inviting their concurrence therein.

Question put and passed.

KINGSTHORPE TO GOOMBUNGEE
RAILWAY.PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF SELECT
COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION presented the report of the Select Committee on this line, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

ADOPTION OF REPORT.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I beg to move that the report of the Select Committee be adopted. This is a railway from Kingsthorpe to Goombungee and the Main Range. The Select Committee were unanimously in favour of constructing the line. It is 20½ miles long. The character of the country is blacksoil; beyond Goombungee, red volcanic soil is the rule. A good deal of agriculture is in evidence on the Gowrie Repurchased Estate. The grades will be equal to 1 in 50 on the straight. The curves between Kingsthorpe and Goombungee will be easy and even; in the section beyond Goombungee nothing sharper than 8 or 10 chains radius will be required. There will be no works of any importance, only a few bridges being required, while the excavation will nearly all be soft, and none of the cuttings of any great depth. The cost of land resumption will be considerable, as it has all been alienated from the Crown. The total area required will be about 162 acres. The estimated cost of the line is £72,532, or at the rate of £3,495 per mile, of which £2,805 per mile is for the main line, and £690 for stations and water supply. The rolling-stock which will be required is one engine, two carriages, and thirty wagons, costing, say, £8,500. The Commissioner's report then goes on to define the railway district and the betterment area, and concludes with the following paragraphs:—

It is difficult to estimate the revenue with the reports at my disposal, but, comparing similar districts, I estimate it at £6,500, and similarly the expenditure at £4,000. I do not expect the first year's results to be up to the estimate, but I have no hesitation in saying the estimate will be more than fully justified within three years after the opening.

I recommend the building of this railway.

HON. A. NORTON: I do not intend to say much about this line, because there is very little to say. It appears to me that the evidence and the report of the Select Committee are about the shortest we have ever had upon a railway. I presume the Committee found, after examining the witnesses, that they had a good deal of knowledge of the facts with which they had to

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MONDAY, 21 DECEMBER, 1908.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Arthur Morgan) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table, were ordered to be printed:—

- (1) Rule of the Supreme Court directing that Mr. Justice Chubb be the vacation judge.
- (2) Rules of the Supreme Court setting forth the legal calendar for the year.
- (3) Report of the Marine Department for 1907-8.
- (4) Annual report of the Inspector of Orphanages for 1907.

deal. Were it not so, I am quite sure they would not have reported in favour of the line, as they have done. I do not know anything about the line myself, and I can only say that—as it has been decided to deal with the matter in an off-hand manner, because the Government have determined to close the session before Christmas, and as they have been forced, by circumstances which fortunately do not often occur, to push the business on as rapidly as possible—I intend to give the railway my support.

Question put and passed.

APPROVAL OF PLAN.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I move—

1. That the Council approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed branch railway from Kingsthorpe to Goombungee and Main Range, in length 20 miles 60 chains, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on 17th December.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly, by message in the usual form.

Question put and passed.

WARWICK TO MARYVALE RAILWAY.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION presented the report of the Select Committee on this line, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

ADOPTION OF REPORT.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I beg to move that the report just tabled be adopted. It also is unanimous. The report of the Commissioner on the line states that the branch will leave the Southern line at Killarney Junction. It will go in a north-westerly direction up the valley of Glangallan Creek to the terminus, which will be on the Maryvale Repurchased Estate; the distance from Killarney Junction being 18 miles 67 chains. After crossing the divide, black soil downs country is traversed throughout. It is closely settled until the Maryvale estate is entered near the terminus, and all the farms are more or less under cultivation. Except for a short piece of 1 in 40—which, being compensated, will not affect the load—the ruling gradient will be equal to 1 in 50 on the straight. Curves, generally, will be flat, with only a few of 10 chains radius. The principal work will be a heavy cutting through the ridge at 1 mile 5 chains, which will be about 25 feet deep. Very few bridges will be required. The width of formation will be 14 feet, and the permanent way will be laid with 4½-lb. part-worn rails on 2,640 sleepers, and 1,100 cubic yards of ballast per mile. Provision has been made for five wayside stations and the terminus, also for a water supply, it being probable that the distance from Warwick will be too great for the locomotives to do the round trip without replenishing their tenders. The resumptions will be considerable, the total required area being about 135 acres. The length of the branch is 18 miles 67 chains, and the estimated cost is £67,541. The rolling-stock will cost about £6,000, the two together being equal to £3,592 per mile. The Commissioner says:—

REVENUE.—The country traversed is much the same as the Killarney branch, but I do not anticipate so high a revenue for some years to come. For the present I estimate it at £3,700 per annum, and the expenditure at £2,500, leaving £1,200 to meet the interest on cost of construction and equipment, namely—£67,541. This,

on the basis of 3 per cent., will mean a loss of £825 per annum to be borne by the railway district, which includes the town of Warwick.

The recent acquisition of the Maryvale Estate by the Government, and its early settlement, will have an important bearing upon the earnings of this branch, and must before long reduce the estimated loss—in fact, I believe the loss will be altogether wiped out in a few years.

There are about 38,500 acres of land selected within the area that will be benefited by this railway. There are 4,000 acres open for selection, 12,500 acres vacant land, and 25,000 acres set apart as reserves.

I fear that the district to be served by this line, notwithstanding its many advantages, is not sufficiently extensive to afford enough traffic to pay interest and working expenses so long as it remains only a short branch, and I question whether its construction is justified until the Government is prepared to undertake the whole length of the "Direct Line to Warwick," of which the proposed Maryvale branch will ultimately form a part.

Seeing that the Maryvale Estate has been repurchased by the Government and that the benefited area includes the town of Warwick, I recommend that the proposed line be constructed.

HON. G. W. GRAY: I have very much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Committee's report. This is a line which will certainly commend itself to the people of Queensland. It is a guaranteed line, and is the beginning of what it is generally expected will be the *via recta* railway—a railway which we have been looking forward to for many years, and which will shorten considerably the distance between Brisbane and Sydney. The section it is now proposed to construct will open up the Maryvale Estate, which consists of about 30,000 acres. This estate I have known for the last thirty-five years, and I believe that with the construction of this railway a very large and prosperous farming population will be settled on the repurchased land, and from that settlement the whole country will benefit. If the line is continued, as I have no doubt it will be, across the range, the result will be a considerable increase in the railway revenue. The Government are justified in this proposal, seeing that they have such a substantial guarantee from the districts that will be benefited, which include the town of Warwick. I shall support the construction of the railway.

HON. T. A. JOHNSON: This is a very important line extending from Warwick to Maryvale. I know the route well, having been over it many times, and I think the line is one that the Government are justified in constructing. I notice that it was unanimously approved of by the Legislative Assembly, and I am pleased to find that the Select Committee appointed by this Chamber to inquire into and report upon the proposal have unanimously recommended the building of the railway. I intend to give the line my hearty support. I wish just now to make a few remarks on the speech the Secretary for Railways made when introducing this railway in the Legislative Assembly. The Minister gave some very strong reasons why the line should be constructed, one of which was that the Government had repurchased the Maryvale Estate, and that the terminus of this railway would be in the centre of that estate, so that its construction would greatly increase settlement and production. I know from personal experience that a large number of people have come up from the other States to examine the Maryvale Estate, which is to be thrown open to selection next month, and they are anxiously waiting the result of this railway proposal. The passage of the line will be a factor in inducing them to purchase land in that locality and settle upon it. Another reason given by the Minister for the construction of this railway was that it would be the first section of the *via recta*, which, when completed,

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will shorten the distance between Warwick and Brisbane by about 60 miles. The time saved in travelling would be nearly three hours between those places, and the saving in distance and time would apply to overland passengers to and from Sydney and Brisbane. I had a conversation recently with one of the railway surveyors, and he informed me that when the Maryvale Railway is built there will be only 46 or 47 miles required to complete the *viâ recta*. The *viâ recta* may be truly called a national line from the great benefit it will be to many portions of Queensland. For instance, that line, together with the Goondiwindi line, will assist in conserving and bringing to the port of Brisbane the trade from that fine South-western country extending from Inglewood to Goondiwindi and along the border. The merchants of Brisbane have already realised how much the shipping trade will be increased at the port of Brisbane by the construction and completion of the *viâ recta* line, as it will bring wool, stock, and all kinds of agricultural produce to the port from the Downs and the splendid border country, a good deal of which was sent to Sydney in former years. When the *viâ recta* line is completed we may expect to see another new line of steamers between Brisbane and London. Queensland has been shamefully kept out of this *viâ recta* line for the last twenty-five years. Twenty-five years ago the money was put on the Estimates and borrowed, and Parliament sanctioned the construction of this line; but by a political shuffle the money was misappropriated or used in another part of the State. Credit will now be due to the present Kidston Government for, in some measure, making reparation for the delay and gross injustice done to the old residents of the Downs and other parts in not constructing this line for a quarter of a century. The Minister for Railways, in introducing this line in the Legislative Assembly, mentioned that there would probably be a loss on this section until the line was constructed further over the Range. He further stated that although this line will go through some of the best agricultural land in the State, yet in the first year, or for some time, the traffic may not be sufficient to pay interest on the outlay; but any deficiency is to be guaranteed by the benefited area. In reply to the Minister for Railways on this anticipated loss, I would respectfully suggest that the Government proceed as soon as possible with the next section of the *viâ recta* railway over the Main Range, and complete the extension. When completed, I have no doubt the *viâ recta* will be one of the best-paying lines in Queensland, as, by shortening the distance to the port of Brisbane by 60 miles, it will ensure to Brisbane the traffic and trade of that grand grazing and agricultural district on the Macintyre and round Goondiwindi, and on the border of New South Wales, a good deal of which formerly went to Sydney. As a proof of this statement, I have only to point to the manner in which the wool sales have increased in Brisbane since the line has been started and opened to Goondiwindi. Another part of the speech of the Secretary for Railways to which I wish to refer is that dealing with the division or distribution of the anticipated loss on this section to Maryvale. I notice that he proposes to put seven twenty-fourths of the loss on Warwick, or, if it should be necessary, to make the town of Warwick pay six-tenths of the amount. Either of these propositions is out of proportion to the benefit Warwick would derive from the construction of the railway. The first-mentioned proportion would be nearly one-third of the loss, and the second—six-tenths—would be more than one-half of the total loss. Surely the Minister has not given

this matter careful consideration, or he would never have put such a large proportion of the burden on Warwick. Several other towns will benefit quite as much by the construction of the *viâ recta* as Warwick, as, for instance, Goondiwindi, Inglewood, and Stanthorpe; also the residents and producers in that splendid grazing and agricultural country, 120 miles in length, between Warwick and Goondiwindi. The residents along the new line from Goondiwindi to Talwood will also benefit by the construction of the line, and Brisbane will benefit by it more than all the towns mentioned put together. I trust, therefore, that a more equitable and just division of the anticipated loss will be made than the one foreshadowed by the Minister for Railways. I shall give the proposal my hearty support. The construction of the *viâ recta* has been long delayed, and the building of this section will in some measure compensate for the delay of a quarter of a century which has occurred in connection with the greater work.

HON. A. NORTON: This is another case where the report and evidence submitted by the Select Committee to the Council are extremely brief. They say brevity is the soul of wit, and I shall try to exhibit a little of that soul in the remarks I am about to make. I intend to support this proposal, not because of what is contained in the report and evidence before us, but because I anticipate that the line will be continued, if not now, at any rate later on, in the direction of the metropolis. I think you, Mr. President, will remember that at the time the Thane's Creek Railway was before this Chamber, I supported it because it was a link in a more direct route to Brisbane than that followed by the existing railway. I am quite sure that those hon. gentlemen who constituted the Select Committee have acted in this matter with a full sense of the responsibility they took upon themselves in making this report. At any rate, I accept their recommendations, and I shall be glad if the Government will take steps to initiate the work as soon as possible. I think the people of Warwick have their wits about them just now. They seem to be doing very well. I do not know what the Toowoomba people think about the matter.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: When the evidence was being taken by the Select Committee, the Hon. Mr. Carter and the Hon. Mr. Fahey questioned Mr. Pagan as to whether the line would pay, and he said it would not [4 p.m.] pay at present, nor for the next two or three years, and probably much longer than that. I should like to ask some hon. members who know more about the Warwick district than I do whether a similar line—namely, that to Killarney—has been payable since it was opened. I am told that it has not paid since it was built.

HON. F. T. BRENTNALL: No.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: And not only that it has not paid interest on the capital expenditure, but that sometimes it has not paid even working expenses. I suppose the line from Warwick through the Maryvale Estate can hardly pay as well as the Killarney line. The Hon. Mr. Johnson made some remarks about the *viâ recta*. We have the expensive line from Toowoomba to Warwick; and, if a line is built from Warwick to Brisbane, and the Tweed line is also connected with the New South Wales railways, we shall have three routes from Brisbane into New South Wales; and the money that is spent on those three lines will leave the railways in a very pitiable condition. We see by the Commissioner's report lately published that the New South Wales Parliament has

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authorised the construction of a line to connect Grafton with Maitland, and then the only portion to be constructed will be the short distance from Murwillumbah to Tweed Heads; and once the line is constructed from Grafton to Maitland, I am sure the New South Wales Parliament will make the other connection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Sydney and the southern part of New South Wales will not let them.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: From Murwillumbah to Tweed Heads is only a short distance, and I think it is likely that that connection will be made before the other line is built. I am not going to oppose this railway. The more railways we have in the interior the better, so long as they open up the country in all directions; but I am afraid the Hon. Mr. Johnson's prediction that we shall see the *viâ recta* in twenty-five years is not likely to be realised.

Hon. T. A. JOHNSON: The Secretary for Railways has promised the first section of the *viâ recta*, and, in justice, it should be built, as the money was borrowed for it.

Question put and passed.

APPROVAL OF PLAN.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I beg to move—

1. That the Council approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway from Warwick to Maryvale, in length 18 miles 67 chains, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on 17th December.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly, by message in the usual form.

Question put and passed.

TEMPORARY ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If hon. members will excuse me for a few minutes, I will go to another place and ascertain the state of the barometer there. (Laughter.) When I come back, we can decide whether to remain this evening or adjourn until to-morrow. The hon. gentleman then left the Chamber, and on returning, said: I have ascertained that there is just a probability of being able to finish to-night. If that is so, shall we meet at 7 o'clock or half-past 7, or do hon. members prefer to adjourn until to-morrow?

Hon. G. W. GRAY: I think most hon. members can meet to-morrow.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I only want a bare quorum this evening. If we finish the business to-night we can close the session. Unless hon. members have important engagements, I should be inclined to adjourn until 7.30.

Hon. F. T. BRETNALL: I think you had better adjourn until half-past 7 o'clock, and, if you have not got a quorum, it will not matter, so long as nobody calls attention to it.

At ten minutes past 4 o'clock,

The PRESIDENT said I shall resume the chair at half-past 7 o'clock.

The PRESIDENT resumed the chair at the hour named.

ADJOURNMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I am sorry to say that our good intentions are frustrated. There is no prospect of the Appropriation Bill to-night, unless we sit up till the early hours of the morning. I therefore beg to move that the Council do now adjourn. Of course, I rely upon hon. members forming a quorum to-morrow afternoon.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at twenty-nine minutes to 8 o'clock.

[Hon. W. H. Campbell.]