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1896.

SESSION II.

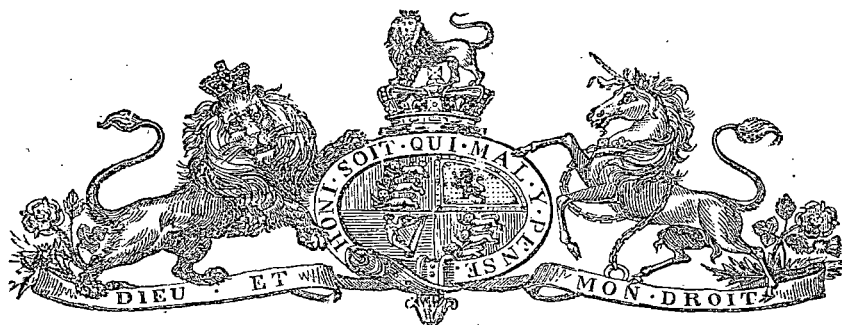
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND COMPANY WARATAH AND
ZEEHAN RAILWAY BILL, 1896, (PRIVATE):

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE, WITH MINUTES
OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND EVIDENCE.

Brought up by Mr. Fenton, August 6, 1896, and ordered by the House of
Assembly to be printed.

Cost of printing—£1 16s.



SELECT COMMITTEE appointed, on Wednesday, the 5th August, for the purpose of examining into and reporting upon a Bill, intituled "A Bill to revive a Private Act of the Parliament of Tasmania which was passed in the Fifty-ninth year of the Reign of Her present Majesty Queen Victoria, and which was intituled 'An Act to authorise The Van Diemen's Land Company to construct and maintain a Railway from the Town of Waratah to the Town of Zeehan.'"

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.

MR. LEWIS.
MR. MACKENZIE.
MR. HARTNOLL.

MR. BARRETT.
MR. FENTON. (*Mover.*)

DAY OF MEETING.

Thursday, 6th August, 1896.

WITNESSES EXAMINED.

Mr. J. W. Norton-Smith, Manager Van Diemen's Land Company; Mr. Robert Quiggin.

R E P O R T.

Your Committee, having taken evidence in support of the allegations contained in the Preamble of the Bill, have the honor to report that the said Preamble has been proved to their satisfaction.

Your Committee having agreed that the Preamble should stand part of the Bill, then entered into consideration of the several Clauses, and agreed that they should stand as printed.

Your Committee have the honor to present the Bill for the favourable consideration of your Honorable House.

C. B. M. FENTON, *Chairman.*

*Committee Room, House of Assembly,
6th August, 1896.*

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 1896.

The Committee met at 12 o'clock.

Members present—Mr. Lewis, Mr. Hartnoll, Mr. Barrett, Mr. Mackenzie, and Mr. Fenton.

Mr. Fenton was appointed Chairman.

Order of the House appointing the Committee was read by the Clerk.

The Chairman laid upon the Table the Petition asking for leave to bring in the said Bill.

Mr. J. W. Norton-Smith, Agent and Manager of the Van Diemen's Land Company, was called in and examined.

Mr. Norton-Smith withdrew.

Mr. Robert Quiggin, Timber Merchant, Table Cape, was called in and examined.

The Committee deliberated.

The Committee entered upon the consideration of the Bill.

Preamble agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 5 agreed to.

Draft Report submitted and agreed to.

The Committee adjourned *sine die*.

EVIDENCE.

THURSDAY, 6TH AUGUST, 1896.

JAMES WILLIAM NORTON SMITH, *called and examined*.

1. *By the Chairman*.—What is your name? James William Norton Smith.
2. And what is your position? I am Agent and General Manager in Tasmania for the Van Diemen's Land Company.
3. You know the Bill to revive an Act of Parliament to authorise your Company to construct and maintain a railway from Waratah to the town of Zeehan? Yes, I have read the Bill.
4. State the objects your company have in promoting this Bill? Well, the main object is to open up the country and get a connection with the West Coast and to develop the producing country between, and the mineral fields.
5. *By Mr. Lewis*.—What has the Van Diemen's Land Company done since the Act was passed through Parliament last Session? Well, the company tried to push the work forward, but found more difficulty than was anticipated in raising the necessary money at home. They had arrangements nearly completed at the time—that was in April—but meeting with difficulty, they applied through the Agent-General to the Government seeking an extension of time for paying the deposit of £5000, I believe for ninety days—I am not sure whether it was ninety or sixty days—in which time they had hoped to complete the arrangements already begun. A reply was sent home that, the period being fixed by the Act, Ministers could not grant an extension of time. It was laid down in the Act that the deposit must be paid within six months—for that reason amongst others they now promoted this Bill, and asked to be allowed to pay the money at the present time.
6. And if this Bill became law, what is the prospect of the company carrying out the object? They have every prospect of doing that now. Although a refusal of extension was given at the time, the company has kept the money in the colony, and it is here now, so that it could be paid over as soon as we get permission. It has always been in the colony, and it can be paid over at once. It is my intention to deposit it with the Treasurer so soon as the Bill is set down for second reading.
7. The Bill provides that it may be paid at any time before the 30th April, 1897: would you be agreeable to have an earlier date fixed? I would not object; but I would rather have it left there as it is. My intention is to hand the money to the Treasurer before the second reading comes on. I had rather the time was not altered. I believe the company has everything ready now for going right ahead. The six months' time originally given was rather short. I could not get the Bill to send home until the middle of November; it had to wait for the Governor's assent, and so the time went along.
8. Then you think if this Bill passed there is a reasonable probability of the work being commenced within the time stated? Yes, I believe the work will be commenced before Christmas this year. I am instructed that everything is ready, and all arrangements made to commence as soon as I telegraph that the Bill has become law.
9. *By Mr. Hartnoll*.—I have heard outside, Mr. Smith, that the only reason the Company did not take immediate action and commence work under the Bill was purely a legal one. It is said that the powers they hold under their Charter do not permit them to go out of the boundaries of their own ground: is that so? Yes; they could not do it themselves.

10. But for that the work would have gone on? Yes. They could not go out of their own ground they could not go to Zeehan, but could have made arrangements for doing so.

11. *By Mr. Mackenzie.*—Your Directors have never abandoned the idea of making this railway? Never, that I am aware of. The money has been kept in the colony ready to be paid over; it has never been out of the colony.

12. And in consequence of the period fixed hardly giving sufficient time to do what was required, it was not paid over? That is the fact.

13. But there is reasonable prospect now of the Company going on with the work as soon as the Bill is passed? Yes.

14. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—Under the first Bill there was a good prospect for the Company in taking up selections of mineral lands; it was in a better position to do this then than it would be at the present time, as so many selections have been taken up by other people in the interval, the value of the right to take up these lands would have diminished: do you think this likely to operate against you? No. I suppose the Company always looked upon that as something; but I don't think the opportunity having diminished would operate against us. Besides, under the Act the plans of the railway must be in the hands of the Minister a certain time before the Company could take up any ground.

16. Of course you would advise the Company as to what quantity of land has been taken up by lessees under the Crown? Yes, I have kept them fully advised from time to time as to all these facts as we go along.

17. The leasing of these lands might, from their point of view, be improving the prospects of the railway? It might. The main object is to get the country opened up and to get traffic for the railway; but of course we should like something good for ourselves.

18. Of course. If you could have a Mount Lyell mine thrown in, you would not object? No, I suppose not.

ROBERT QUIGGIN, *called and examined.*

19. *By the Chairman.*—What is your name? Robert Quiggin.

20. And you are a resident at Table Cape? Yes.

21. You gave evidence last year before a Select Committee appointed to enquire as to the desirability of allowing the Van Diemen's Land Company to make a railway from Waratah to Zeehan? Yes.

22. Are you aware that an effort is being made by a Bill to revive that Act, as it has lapsed through the deposit not being paid in time? Yes, and I have read the Bill.

23. Do you believe it is right to revive that Act? I certainly am of that opinion.

24. You are of opinion, as a resident of the North West Coast that a railway should be taken from Waratah to Zeehan? Yes.

25. *By Mr. Mackenzie.*—Are you well acquainted with the mineral fields of Zeehan? Yes, I am particularly well acquainted with them, and if I was asked I would fully confirm now what I said last year.

26. Have the prospects of the West Coast improved? They certainly have improved very much.
