

MAY, 1901.

The monthly meeting of the Royal Society of Tasmania was held in the Art Gallery at the Museum on Monday evening, May 27th. His Excellency the Administrator, who was to have presided, was prevented from attending by slight indisposition, and the Bishop of Tasmania occupied the chair.

Congratulatory reference was made to the honour recently conferred upon His Excellency the Administrator.

#### Timber in Tasmania.

A discussion took place on a paper written by Mr. W. Heyn, of the Timber Department, Admiralty Harbour Works, Dover, on "The present and future prospects of timber in Tasmania."

Mr. E. A. Counsel said he was of opinion that some points in Mr. Heyn's paper were likely to lead to erroneous impressions without further explanation. With regard to ring-barking, he was unaware of that process being carried on to the extent mentioned. There was no large extent of marketable timber of value in Tasmania that was wantonly destroyed by the selectors; they were too anxious to benefit by its proper treatment. Although quantities of blackwood and pine timber had been destroyed in the north-east of the State, it was too far from a market to pay for cartage, valuable as some of it was. The best land produced the best timber, and especially was this the case in the matter of blackwood. Mr. Heyn's limited experience in Tasmania had misled him into making the statement that very large quantities of timber were, at times, destroyed by bush fires. This was not so, for, although the fires traversed bush country, the timber of large growth was, at times, only blackened. The time was opportune for initiating an experimental plot, in order to propagate a number of the most suitable kinds of timber.

Mr. L. Rodway said he took great interest in the matter of planting forest lands in Tasmania. A country could not be denuded of its timber without affecting the climate. This was the experience of all

countries. In Australia, the vegetation was not well suited for the purpose of retaining water on the land. If planting were indulged in to any extent, exotics must be chosen, and it would be necessary to import. This could not be done, however, unless a State nursery was established. To establish a State nursery was a matter that required caution, as there would be no apparent return for some years to come; but the expense would not be great. If we had a State nursery, seeds and plants could be obtained from all parts of the world, but special attention must be given to the varieties that gave the best results. He had passed through the Huon district some time ago, and was astonished at the neglected appearance of the orchards. If a State nursery was established, the matter of orchard growth must be taken into consideration, and all useful information given to orchardists.

Mr. R. E. Macnaghten said he had lived for five or six years in the district referred to by Mr. Heyn. He did not think the damage done by ring-barking was extensive, but the injury done by bush fires was enormous. He thought that Mr. Heyn's advice and suggestions should receive careful consideration, and he did not think such a valuable paper should be confined to Tasmania, but that it should, if possible, be produced in some of the English magazines.

Mr. R. M. Johnston said he had stated many years ago that the waste of valuable timber in Tasmania was too great, but he realised that the cost of sending the timber to a market was excessive. That was a position many settlers had to face, and was one of the causes of so much waste. He would like to know if areas could not be planted with some of the foreign soft woods plants, that would eventually obviate the necessity of importing such timbers. Although there was plenty of certain varieties of timber at present, it was essential that the future should be studied.

Discussion of the subject was adjourned until a future meeting.