

DISCUSSION.

Mr. SHELLSHEAR said the subject under discussion was one of considerable importance to the colony, and he regretted Mr. Wells' unavoidable absence from the meeting. Under the circumstances, he considered all they could do was to move a vote of thanks to the author.

Mr. Henson, seconding the proposal, expressed the opinion that the subject dealt with in the paper was one of very great moment. They were only starting to deal practically with protective work of this kind in the colony. There were very large areas of land bordering our river sides, and as these lands became more valuable, people would evince more anxiety to provide against the destructive action of the river-water, as was the case now at West Maitland and elsewhere. Some cheap protective method was badly wanted. This was exemplified on the Hawkesbury River, where at certain parts the action of the river's flow was shown by the caving and falling in of the banks. Another illustration of the change which goes on where the course of river channels is not regulated could be observed by looking across the valley at Windsor.

Mr. Nicolle said that Mr. Booth, who had formerly been secretary of the Association, had written to him relative to the banks of the Suez Canal, and had ventured the opinion that iron sheathing should be used to protect the canal's banks. Such a system, however, did not commend itself. With regard to the measures advocated in the paper just read, he would point out that, while fascining work could be well applied in some instances, it would not do in parts where rivers were subject to heavy floods, as the fascining would be washed away.

Mr. Fischer pointed out the necessity for those using ti-tree for such work as that in question not to destroy the tree by

injudicious cutting, in order that the supply of that class of material might be allowed to remain sufficient for requirements. In Germany, France and other places, river channels had been successfully regulated by fascining.

Mr. Dickinson considered that Mr. Nicolle somewhat underestimated the usefulness of fascining work. He had seen work that had withstood many a flood. He was of opinion that settlers in the country districts should protect their own lands, and not fly to the Government at all times for assistance.

Mr. Haycraft considered that groins in the long straight stretches of rivers would be much preferable to fascining. As regarded the Suez Canal, there was no natural current in it, the action of the water on the banks being solely due to the disturbance caused by shipping. This was remedied by planting shrubs on the surface of banks. Relative to a reference made to France, it must be considered that that country was not subject to the periodical rains which occur in Australia.

The President suggested as a remedy to meet the requirements of districts where rivers overflow to a great extent, that canals should be cut to carry the water further into the country, where it was badly required for irrigation. To his mind, that was a question worthy of much consideration, inasmuch as it afforded a means of irrigation from the natural flow of the water. All protective works for river banks must depend greatly on local circumstances. He would commend to their attention a work by Stuart, on rivers and river banks.
