

1882.  
 VICTORIA.

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RAILWAY DEPARTMENT—PURCHASE OF EARTH AND STONE  
 FROM LAND KNOWN AS KENSINGTON RACECOURSE.

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RETURN to an Order of the *Legislative Assembly*,  
 Dated 14th November 1882, for the—

PAPERS relating to the purchase by the Railway Department of the right to remove certain earth and stone from the land known as the Kensington Racecourse.

(*Mr. Longmore.*)

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*Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 23rd November 1882.*

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(Copy.)

48 Queen street, Melbourne, 12th May 1882.

Peter Yoe, late Robert Kerr, Estate Agent.

*The Honorable Thomas Bent, Commissioner of Railways, Melbourne.*

SIR,

I have the honor, in reference to the block of land at Kensington, consisting of 160 acres, about which I had an interview with you recently, to state that the owner of this land is willing to sell it to the Railway Department, at the rate of £325 per acre. If you are inclined to entertain this offer, I shall have much pleasure in waiting on you with a view to supplying you with any further information you may require.

I have to request that you will regard this communication as confidential, except in regard to the Cabinet, as the owner has no intention of placing the property on the market.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

PETER YEO.

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Cabinet declined to purchase freehold, but if arrangements can be made to purchase material at fair prices suitable for filling up yard at Spencer street and Jolimont station, do so.

THOS. BENT.

9th August 1882.

(Copy.)

48 Queen street, Melbourne, 15th May 1882.

Peter Yeo, late Robert Kerr, Estate Agent.

*The Honorable Thomas Bent, Commissioner of Railways, Melbourne.*

SIR,

I have the honor to send you herewith a plan of Doutta Galla, on which the land known as the Kensington Racecourse is colored yellow. The area shown by the plan is 188 acres, but the quantity I am offering you is 160 acres, the difference, I believe, is accounted for by the quantity occupied by the Railway lines through it. As the time is so short I am not able to give you any further information at present, but should you require it, I shall be happy to forward you any particulars I may be able to obtain, as well as a plan showing a proper survey of the property as it now stands.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

PETER YEO.

(Copy.)

Confidential.

13th June 1882.

*Re J. R. Murphy's land, at Kensington, 3 allotments.*

I estimate approximately the value of materials which may be obtained from this property by cutting away the surface to the level of the Essendon and Williamstown Railways, as follows :—

1,310,000 cubic yards of filling material, at 3d. per cubic yard	...	...	£16,375
50,000 cubic yards of ballast, at 3s. per cubic yard	...	...	7,500
		Total	£23,875

The triangular shaped piece of land between the two lines of railway would doubtless be of great value to the Railway Department.

W. H. GREENE.

The Honorable Thomas Bent, M.P.

(Copy.)

Melbourne, 14th June 1882.

*Memo. for the Honorable the Commissioner of Railways.*

I have been over the property of Mr. J. R. Murphy, extending from Batman's Swamp to Kensington, and comprising about 180 acres, Taking the high ground and the flats and considering the state of the property as severed by the two lines of railway, I estimate the value of the whole at *Forty-nine thousand pounds.*

B. COWDEROY,  
Government Valuer.726/82.  
SIR,The Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioners' Office,  
Melbourne, 29th June 1882.

I have the honor to transmit to you, for the information of the Hon. Commissioner of Railways, a copy of a resolution duly passed at yesterday's periodical meeting :—

"That the attention of the Hon. Commissioner of Railways be called to the fact that a gang of laborers, with locomotive and trucks, are still employed removing earth from the immense excavation made in the West Melbourne Swamp, a work which will greatly add to the expense of constructing the docks designed by Sir John Coode C.E.; the Commissioner of Railways to be informed, at the same time, of the desire of the Trust to supply the Department with a large quantity of earth, which will require to be removed from the adjoining bank of the river, for the purpose of harbor improvements, on the same terms as those arrived at between the Government and the Commissioners in December last."

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) R. FORD, Secretary.

P. P. Labertouche, Esq., Secretary, Railway Department.

(Copy.)

*Memo. for the Hon. the Commissioner.*

## MURPHY'S PADDOCK.

I estimate the value of this land, if purchased, and the high land cut down to the level of the main line and the North-Eastern, to be as follows :—

(In blue pencil on margin.)  
£11,500 depreciation cutting down plus 2 years' loss of time and interest.

Low land, about one half, 90 acres	...	...	...	£15,000
High land, after being denuded of soil above railway level, 90 acres	...	...	...	£22,500
				£37,500

B. COWDEROY,  
26th July 1882.

Cabinet declined to purchase freehold, but if arrangements can be made to purchase material, at fair prices, suitable for filling up yard at Spencer street and Jolimont station, do so.

THOS. BENT,  
9th August 1882.82/6983.  
82/7539.  
SIR,Railway Department, Secretary's Office,  
Melbourne, 24th August 1882.

Adverting to my letter of the 18th inst., respecting material to be obtained from land at Kensington, I have now to beg that you will be so good as to favor me with an interview, relative to the agreement which it will be necessary to prepare.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

W. H. Croker, Esq., Solicitor, William street.

P. P. LABERTOUCHE, Secretary.

Railway Department, Secretary's Office,  
Melbourne, 18th August 1882.

82/6758.

SIR,

Adverting to previous verbal negotiations, respecting certain land at Kensington, when you offered to supply ballast and ordinary filling from it at certain places; I am now desired by the Minister to enquire whether your client is prepared to accept 3s. per yard for the former, and 4d. per yard for the latter, material.

I would explain that the estimated quantity required is 50,000 cubic yards and 1,000,000 cubic yards, respectively.

I have the honor to be, Sir,  
Your most obedient servant,

P. P. LABERTOUCHE,  
Secretary.

W. H. Croker, Esq., Solicitor, William street.

(Copy.)

Railway Department, Office of Engineer of Existing Lines,  
Melbourne, 18th Sepr. 1882.

MEMO.

With reference to the proposal of which I was verbally informed by the Secretary, to pay the sum of £17,000 for the right of removal from allotments 17, 18, and 19, section 2, parish of Dousta Galla (Mr. J. R. Murphy's land at Kensington), of filling material and ballast; if suitable material for the latter should be found during the progress of the excavations, I beg to point out that, valuing the whole of the material to be used at 4d. per cubic yard, it will require that one million and twenty thousand (1,020,000) cubic yards be taken, before the Department is repaid, and that there is no room for any such quantity in filling up the Spencer street and Princes Bridge Station yards to the formation level. About 200,000 cubic yards of material will be required for raising the St. Kilda and Sandridge lines, between the new bridge over the Yarra and Emerald Hill, but a great portion of this may be obtained, more economically, from Sandridge than from Kensington. The results of a rough calculation show that the quantity required for the Spencer street yard and South Suburban lines will not exceed 600,000 cubic yards. I have also to point out that the cost of excavation, filling, hauling, and depositing One million cubic yards will be, at least, £50,000; I understand that it is proposed to limit the time for the removal of the whole quantity to a period of two years from the 1st January next; it will be almost impossible to remove, by railway appliances, the whole of this quantity in that time, even if it should be required for railway purposes. If any portion of it should be required by the Lands Department for the reclamation of the swamp in the neighbourhood of the Moonee Ponds Creek; the necessary works should be commenced at once in order to have the whole of the material required by both Departments removed within the period mentioned, and to recoup the Government the money it is proposed to expend.

W. H. GREENE,  
Engineer for Existing Lines.

The Secretary.

(Copy.)

Victorian Railways, General Traffic Manager's Office,  
Melbourne, 20th September 1882.

*Memo. for the Information of the Hon. the Commissioner.*

I have the honor to report that I consider it would conduce much to the safer working of the traffic, both on the North-Eastern, and the Northern and Western lines, if the point of high land at the Essendon junction could be cut down as near as possible to the railway level, so that the drivers and guards could obtain a view of the approach to the junction on each line of rails.

JOHN ANDERSON,  
General Traffic Manager.

The Secretary.

T. Bent.

82/8186.

(Urgent.)

Victorian Railways, Secretary's Office,  
21st September 1882.

DEAR SIR,

Mr. Bent has, after conferring with the Honorable the Treasurer, arranged to pass an account on Friday next (to-morrow), in favor of Mr. John Straker for £17,000 for ballast and other filling material purchased in globo. The necessary agreement will be signed same day, but I am afraid that the second Order in Council covering £14,000, which Mr. Bent has signed, will not be granted before Monday next. I hold one for £3,000, which, it was intended, should be the amount of the first payment. The whole is chargeable to item 4 of appropriation of £200,000 under Act 729.

Faithfully yours,  
P. P. LABERTOUCHE,  
Secretary.

E. Symonds, Esq., Under Treasurer.

(Copy.)

AGREEMENT made this twenty-second day of September One thousand eight hundred and eighty-two, between John Straker, of the Town of Emerald Hill, in the Colony of Victoria, landowner, of the one part, and the Board of Land and Works (hereinafter called "the Board"), of the other part. Whereby it is agreed as follows:—

1. That the said John Straker shall sell, and the said Board purchase for filling and ballasting purposes all the surface soil to the level of the adjacent rails of the Melbourne and Williamstown line of railway upon those portions of Crown allotments seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen, parish of Doutta Galla, county of Bourke, lying to the northward of the said Melbourne and Williamstown line of railway. And also upon those portions of the said allotments adjoining the southern side of the said line of railway and extending to a distance of two chains therefrom, and which lands are colored red on the map in margin, at the prices following (that is to say):—

*Plan of allotments 17, 18, and 19, parish of Doutta Galla, county of Bourke, appear on margin.*

For ordinary filling up material (computed at one million cubic yards), at the rate of *Fourpence per cubic yard.*

For gravel taken out and used by the Board for ballast (computed at fifty thousand cubic yards), at the rate of *Three shillings per cubic yard.*

But if the gravel so taken and used be more than fifty thousand cubic yards, then the price for the excess over that quantity shall be at the rate of *Two shillings per cubic yard.*

2. That the said John Straker shall give to the Board possession of the said land on the date herein provided, and he guarantees that the Board shall have, during the excavation and removal of the soil for filling in and ballast, quiet and peaceable possession of the said land, and the Board shall have full right of ingress, egress, and regress to and from the said land for the purposes of excavating and removing the aforesaid soil for filling in and ballast, and shall be allowed a period of two years from the second day of January next for excavating and removing the whole of the said soil from off the said land, but if the said soil shall not have been removed within the said period, then the Board shall have such further time, not exceeding six calendar months, for the purpose of excavating and removing the said soil, and the Board shall pay to the said John Straker the rent or sum of Fifty pounds for each calendar month for such further time.

3. That from time to time as portions of the said materials shall have been excavated and removed the Board shall leave the under-surface level and cleared, and from time to time give full possession of such cleared portions (as the Board shall not require for roads, tramways, sidings, and other modes of access to the uncleared portions) to the said John Straker.

4. That the Board shall at the end of each quarter furnish to the said John Straker a correct return or statement of the quantities of the several materials excavated and removed.

5. That the Board shall make to the said John Straker the following payments for and on account of the purchase money for the said soil, namely—the sum of Seventeen thousand pounds upon the execution hereof, and the sum of Three thousand pounds upon the second day of January One thousand eight hundred and eighty-three. If the said soil excavated and removed by the Board from the said land during the said period of two years, or such further period as aforesaid, shall be less than the quantity herein estimated, then the said John Straker shall refund to the Board the sum paid in excess; but if the said soil so excavated and removed shall be greater than the quantity herein estimated, then the Board shall pay for such excess quantity at the prices stated herein. And the said John Straker, for himself, his executors, administrators and assigns, covenants with the Board that he now hath full power to sell to the said Board the said soil and doth warrant the said sale accordingly.

In witness whereof the said John Straker has hereunto set his hand and seal, and the said Board hath hereto set its common seal the day and year first above written.

Signed, sealed, and delivered, by )  
the said John Straker, in the ) JOHN STRAKER. (L.S.)  
presence of )

P. P. LABERTOUCHE.

The common seal of the Board of Land and Works, was hereto affixed this Twenty-second day of September One thousand eight hundred and eighty-two, in the presence of the undersigned two members of the Board.

(L.S.)

THOS. BENT, Vice-President.

A. MORRAH, Member.

Duty stamp  
J. S.  
22.9.82.

Received on the day and year first above written of and from the said Board, the sum of Seventeen thousand pounds, being money expressed to be paid by it to me on the execution hereof. } £17,000

JOHN STRAKER.

P. P. L.

Exd. J. M., 7.11.82.

(Endorsement.) Mr. John Straker with the Board of Land and Works.

AGREEMENT made this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ One thousand eight hundred and eighty-two, between John Straker, of the town of Emerald Hill, in the colony of Victoria, landowner, of the one part, and the Board of Land and Works (hereinafter called "the Board"), of the other part, whereby it is agreed as follows:—

1. That the said John Straker shall sell and the said Board purchase for filling and ballasting purposes all the surface soil to the level of the adjacent rails of the Melbourne and Williamstown line of railway upon those portions of Crown allotments, seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen, parish of Doutta Galla, county of Bourke, lying to the northward of the said Melbourne and Williamstown line of railway; and also upon those portions of the said allotments adjoining the southern side of the said line of railway and extending to a distance of two chains therefrom and which lands are colored red on the map in margin, the prices following (that is to say):—

For ordinary filling up material (computed at one million cubic yards), at the rate of *Fourpence per cubic yard.*

For gravel taken and used by the Board for ballast (computed at fifty thousand cubic yards), at the rate of *Three shillings per cubic yard.*

But if the gravel so taken and used be more than fifty thousand cubic yards, then the price for the excess over that quantity shall be at the rate of *Two shillings per cubic yard.*

2. That the said John Straker shall give to the Board possession of the said land on the date herein provided, and he guarantees that the Board shall have during the excavation and removal of the soil for filling in and ballast, quiet and peaceable possession of the said land, and the Board shall have full right of ingress, egress, and regress to and from the said land for the purposes of excavating and removing the aforesaid soil for filling in and ballast, and shall be allowed a period of two years from the second day of January next for excavating and removing the whole of the said soil from off the said land, but if the said soil shall not have been removed within the said period, then the Board shall have such further time, not exceeding six calendar months, for the purpose of excavating and removing the said soil, and the Board shall pay to the said John Straker the rent or sum of Fifty pounds for each calendar month for such further time.

3. That from time to time as portions of the said materials shall have been excavated and removed, the Board shall leave the under-surface level and cleared, and from time to time give full possession of such cleared portions (as the Board shall not require for roads, tramways, sidings, and other modes of access to the uncleared portions) to the said John Straker.

4. That the Board shall at the end of each quarter furnish to the said John Straker a correct return or statement of the quantities of the several materials excavated and removed.

5. That the Board shall make to the said John Straker the following payments for and on account of the purchase money for the said soil, viz.:—the sum of Seventeen thousand pounds upon the execution hereof, and the sum of Three thousand pounds upon the second day of January One thousand eight hundred and eighty-three. If the said soil excavated and removed by the Board from the said land during the said period of two years, or such further period as aforesaid; shall be less than the quantity herein estimated, then the said John Straker shall refund to the Board the sum paid in excess; but if the said soil so excavated and removed shall be greater than the quantity herein estimated, then the Board shall pay for such excess quantity at the prices stated herein. And the said John Straker, for himself, his executors, administrators and assigns, covenants with the Board that he now hath full power to sell to the said Board the said soil and doth warrant the said sale accordingly.

In witness whereof the said John Straker has hereunto set his hand and seal, and the said Board hath hereto set its common seal the day and year first above written.

Signed, sealed, and delivered, by }  
the said John Straker in the }  
presence of }

(L.S.)

The common seal of the Board of }  
Land and Works was hereto }  
affixed this \_\_\_\_\_ day }  
of \_\_\_\_\_ One thousand }  
eight hundred and eighty-two }  
in the presence of the under- }  
signed two members of the }  
Board. }

(Copy.)

Secretary's Office, 7th November 1882.

Re Kensington Hill.

Would the Engineer Existing Lines be good enough to have a supplementary report prepared as to—

1. The comparative value of the material from the Kensington Hill and from the excavation known as "Woods' Dock," having reference to the works to which the material from each site may be applied.
2. The sufficiency of the time allowed for removal of the material by both the Lands and Railway Departments.
3. As to the value of ballast at 3s. per cubic yard, if such can be found in the excavation.

T. BENT.

The reclamation of the portion of low-lying land between the North Melbourne Railway Station and Arden street on the east side of the Coburg Railway (which reclamation should hereafter be extended so as to embrace all the low-lying land up to the line of the Macaulay road) will be a fitting completion of

the measures taken in former years towards the abatement of the nuisance created by the stagnation of water over the extensive area known as the West Melbourne Swamp.

In its present condition this land can be applied to no useful purpose, but, if reclaimed by raising it to a level above extreme flood-mark, it will at once become valuable for building purposes, for which, from its direct contact with the West Melbourne Railway Station and the densely-settled portions of west Hotham, it is well adapted.

Material for this desirable work of reclamation could not be obtained from any other source of better quality than that to be procured from Kensington Hill, and from no other point could material of any quality be obtained at so cheap a rate of conveyance.

The price paid for the material being at the rate of 4d. per cubic yard, and the estimated cost of conveyance from the hill to the swamp being 9d. per yard, the work will be cheaply executed, and the result to the department most advantageous.

The quantity of material required for the portion of reclamation proposed to be undertaken at present will be 260,000 cubic yards, and the area reclaimed for building purposes will be 36 acres, at a total cost of £14,083.

As one acre of land can be divided so as to produce 264 feet of frontage, the result will be that 9,500 feet will be available for sale, which will return a gross sum of £38,000, assuming that the low average of £4 per foot frontage only will be realized at auction.

This result will follow from the expenditure of £14,083 in the reclamation of land for which, in its present condition, an offer would scarcely be obtained.

A. J. SKENE.

7th November 1882.

#### North Melbourne Reclamation Works.

The portion of low-lying land at the North Melbourne Railway Station on the east side of the Coburg line, which it is proposed to reclaim, measures 36 acres. In its present condition it is almost without recognizable value. To raise it to a level above extreme flood-mark, 260,000 cubic yards of material will be required. Taking the first cost of the material at 4d. per cubic yard, and to this amount adding 9d. as the cost of conveyance from Kensington Hill to the swamp, the total cost of reclamation will stand thus:—

260,000 cubic yards at 1s. 1d. ... .. £14,883 6s. 8d.

When reclaimed, this land, from its proximity to the North Melbourne Station, will at once come into request. If the reclamation were completed, and the land available for sale at the present moment, an average of £4 per foot at least would be realized.

As one acre of land divided into suitable building sites produces 264 feet of saleable frontage, this block of land (36 acres) will represent;—

9,500 feet frontage at £4	...	...	...	...	£38,000
Present value of the land, £150 per acre	...	...	...	...	£5,400
Cost of reclamation	...	...	...	...	£14,083
					<u>£19,483</u>
Gain to the Government	...	...	...	...	<u>£18,517</u>

A. J. SKENE.

6th November 1882.

48 Queen street, Melbourne, 8th November 1882.

The Hon. Thos. Bent, Commissioner of Railways.

SIR,

With reference to your request for permission to lay before Parliament my letters to you on the subject of the Kensington Park sale, I have the honor to say that as these letters were written on the understanding that they were to be regarded as confidential, I cannot consent to their publication in any form. As, however, the negotiations were conducted almost entirely by personal interview—the object of the letters having been merely the formal offering of the property to you—my refusal to allow the disclosure of their contents will not necessitate the withholding of any material point in your explanation to Parliament.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) PETER YEO.

MY DEAR BENT,

Market Square, Collins street west,

Melbourne, 10th November 1882.

I saw Mr. Murphy on the subject of the production of the correspondence *re* Kensington. Mr. Yeo has not yet communicated with Mr. Murphy, but I have his instructions to the effect that you are at liberty to produce everything, and as Mr. Yeo was only agent for Mr. Murphy the latter's authority covers everything.

I may add that Mr. Murphy, in view of the public discussion which has ensued upon the sale, is anxious that all correspondence should be produced.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) W. LYNCH.

The Hon. T. Bent.

1144/82.

*Memorandum to the Secretary,*

Engineer-in-Chief's Office, Railway Department,  
Melbourne, 14th Nov. 1882.

From the best information I have been able to obtain since the matter was first referred to me, I estimate the cost of getting and loading into trucks the material at Kensington Park, at 9d. per cubic yard (measured in trucks), and the hauling and depositing in the swamp about 4d per cubic yard; to this must be added 3d. per cubic yard royalty. I assume the 4d. per cubic yard royalty is for "cutting measurement," and that one yard of cutting will make  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cubic yards of bank; thus 3d. is the royalty instead of 4d. For filling the Melbourne yard, the getting, filling, and the royalty will be the same as above; but the hauling and depositing will be 9d. per cubic yard instead of 4d., or a total of 1s. 9d. per cubic yard.

The material from Woods' Dock cost rather less than 1s. per cubic yard, but it appears that the Harbour Trust object to the removal of any more from this source; they, however, offer to supply the Department with a large quantity of earth from another source at about 4d per cubic yard, delivered in the trucks; to this must be added 9d. per cubic yard for hauling and depositing; but without seeing the material which the Harbor Trust propose to supply I cannot form an opinion as to its suitability for filling in the Melbourne yard. (The silt which was on a former occasion supplied by the Harbor Trust was not satisfactory; it slipped and depreciated in quantity, when dry, about twenty-five per cent.) I am informed that this material will be excavated from the north bank of the Yarra, and will probably be similar to that taken from Woods' Dock, which has made as good an embankment as could be wished for.

Several years ago I had under consideration the desirability of purchasing the fee simple of the land at Kensington Hill and cutting it down to the level of the rails, believing that the land would be as valuable after the hill was cut down as before; but the idea was abandoned, as it was found that the material could be procured at less cost from another source.

It is impossible, at present, to say how much of the material it will be desirable to use for ballast, or the cost of getting it and preparing it for use; it is equally impossible to say how it will compare as to quality with broken bluestone or gravel.

Mr. Skene estimates that 36 acres of land, when reclaimed, will be increased in value from £5,400 to £38,000, and I am informed that Mr. Laurens, M.P., considers that the value per acre would be increased from £200 to £800? taking either estimate as correct, there can be no doubt that the purchase of the material is a very advantageous one for the Government, as far as the reclamation of the land is concerned.

ROBT. WATSON,  
Engineer-in-Chief.

*Memo. for The Secretary.*

Railway Department, Office of Engineer of Existing Lines,  
Melbourne, 14th November 1882.

In reply to the Hon. the Minister's memorandum of the 7th inst., I have the honor to inform you that it is intended to use the material removed from Kensington Hill by the Railway Department in completing the embankment between North Melbourne and Essendon Junction, and in making up the embankment connecting the Coburg Railway with the main line, in reclaiming the railway reserve in the neighborhood of Adderly and Dudley streets, and in making an approach from the Footscray road to the new bridge to be built over line at North Melbourne; also in filling up the low ground between the passenger and goods lines north of the engine sheds.

Comparative cost  
of excavation as  
compared with  
that from  
Woods' dock.

The material hitherto used for filling in the Melbourne yard has been obtained chiefly from the excavation known as Woods' dock. The cost is estimated by the inspector who has had charge of the work at the rate of 10½d. per cubic yard, but this price does not include the cost of laying, altering, and removing the necessary railroads or pumping out the dock, and is arrived at from truck measurement, the average being stated at 7 cubic yards. A truck, however, can only be loaded with 6 cubic yards of the material measured *in situ* before excavation. About half the material is removed from the space intended for a dock. The bottom stuff remains to be removed, and will cost, both for excavation and haulage, considerably more than that which the top material has cost for removal.

The men filling from Woods' dock are paid 6d. per day beyond the current rate of wages owing to the difficulty of working in the material.

The Kensington Hill material is measured in excavation, and increases materially in bank, measuring about one-sixth more in embankment after deposit. It is all above the level of the rails, and can be cast into trucks from above, and there are four deep "faces," upon which large numbers of men may be employed; whereas the material now left in the dock is more than an average of 14 feet below the sidings on the surface. It should also be borne in mind that the cost of keeping the dock pumped dry—it has already once been filled by the overflow of the Yarra—must be added to the cost of the excavation. I have no doubt that an equal bulk of embankment situated between the two sites may be made more economically from the hill, including the royalty, than the dock excavation, taking also into consideration the fact that one-third of it will be used for reclamation purposes by the Crown Lands Department. I think there can be no difference of opinion as to the suitability of the hill excavation for obtaining material for reclaiming the North Melbourne Swamp land.

I should also point out that the further excavation of the dock will entirely destroy Sir John Coode's scheme, unless it is filled in again; and that, whatever plan of docks is adopted, the whole of the material to be obtained from their excavation will be required for raising the surrounding roads and adjoining swamp lands to the Harbor Trust flood level, the present level of the surface round the dock being three feet below the flood level.

Judging from the sections of the railway cuttings and surface indications, there is every probability of suitable ballast, similar to that obtained from the railway cutting through the same hill, being found during the progress of the excavation, and this ballast will, if obtained, be used on the North and South Suburban lines.

Value of ballast.

If the Department decides to use it, it may be obtained at the rate of about 3s. 6d. per cubic yard, loaded into trucks. The price paid for 2½-inch hand-broken metal, which is not so suitable for ballast, has lately been contracted for delivery at Spencer-street Station at from 6s. 6d. to 6s. 11d. per cubic yard. It should, however, be stated that machine-broken 2½-inch ballast can be obtained at Newport at, say, 5s. per cubic yard, to which must be added the extra cost of haulage as compared with Kensington.

Sufficiency of  
time.

I have arranged for the delivery of the permanent-way material, consisting of worn 50-lb. rails and fastenings, with second-class sleepers, which are required by the Public Works Department for the removal of earthwork at Kensington Hill for reclamation purposes.

The operations of this Department will now be confined to the removal of the materials on the south-west side of the Essendon Railway, and, as the whole of that on the north side of the line, with the exception of any suitable railway ballast which may be found in excavation, is to be removed by the Public Works Department, there will be no difficulty in obtaining the entire quantity within two years from the 1st January next provided there be no interruption of the work.

W. H. GREENE,  
Engineer for Existing Lines.