

1884.

VICTORIA.

RAILWAYS CONSTRUCTION BILL.

PETITION.

ONDIT ROAD RAILWAY STATION TO BEEAC.

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 22nd October, 1884.

TO THE HONORABLE THE SPEAKER AND THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The Humble Petition of the undersigned inhabitant residents of the districts of
Ondit, Beeac, Weering, Warrion, and Colac.

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH—

That the abovenamed districts have been for a long number of years settled under the various Land Acts which have from time to time been in force in this Colony; that the settlement has been of the most *bonâ fide* character, resulting in the establishment in these districts of a numerous and prosperous population.

That the burdens of taxation, incident on such settlement, have been borne by us for periods ranging from 1849 to the present time; and that, until the extension of Railway communication to the town of Colac, no participation in the general scheme of Government expenditure had been shared in by us beyond the appropriations made through the Local Municipality.

That for years past we have felt the great disadvantage under which we laboured for the want of Railway communication between Beeac and the Ondit Road Station, and our claims for same were felt to be so strong and just that they were included in the Government Bill of 1882, and the section embodying these claims successfully passed through Committee in your House as well as in the Legislative Council.

That we deplore to observe that in the present Railway Bill the line between Ondit Road Railway Station and Beeac is not proposed for construction.

That such line should, in our humble opinion, be so included as being one which would not only pay for the cost of construction, maintenance, and working *per se*, but prove a most valuable feeder to the lines already constructed.

That the country which would be tapped and benefited by this line is one thickly inhabited by farmers and graziers; that the land is of exceptional value, ranging up to £28 per acre; that the greater proportion of same is eminently suited for agriculture, and would be so applied were it not for the difficulty of conveying such produce to markets.

That the line proposed would specially accommodate the traffic to and from the salt factories at Ondit, which is fully up to 12,000 tons dead weight per annum, besides being a natural and native industry seeking nothing more than reasonable traffic facilities from the Government, and these industries would be largely augmented in numbers if increased facility were given for carriage of firewood to them, and for salt from them.

That some idea of this traffic, and of the difficulty of providing for it from local resources, may be gathered from the fact that the maintenance of the road leading thereto from the Ondit Road Station, about 9 miles in length, costs the local council upwards of £2,500 a year, and that this expenditure cannot be further borne by that body without recourse by way of subsidy from the central Government; that there are no engineering difficulties in the way of this line, and that if such a course is possible, or is rendered possible by special enactment, the Local Council is willing to guarantee to the Department, by way of special appropriation from the shire funds, such a sum as for the five years immediately following the opening of such line will recoup the Department for any possible loss up to Four per cent. upon the cost of construction.

The premises are therefore most respectfully submitted for your consideration, and your Honorable House is asked that such necessary provision may be made as will insure the inclusion of the line between the Ondit Road Railway Station and Beeac in the Railway Construction Bill now receiving your attention.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

(Here follow 588 signatures.)

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