

1884.

VICTORIA.

RAILWAYS CONSTRUCTION BILL.

PETITION.

WARRAGUL TO NEERIM EAST.

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

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

The Petition of the Selectors and Landholders in the Parish of Neerim :

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH—

That the proposed ten miles of railway from Warragul toward Neerim will not meet the requirements of the last-named parish, or the extensive country on the LaTrobe to the north, where about ten thousand acres of rich land has just been selected, and is at present under survey ; and that an additional length of from five to seven miles is necessary in order that the line may be carried across the “Tarwin” river into Neerim, to a point near the “Neerim East” Post-office, where both present and prospective selectors can avail themselves of its services.

The reasons why the ten miles will prove a failure, and from fifteen to seventeen miles a success, are as follows:—The ten miles as proposed end at a point west of the “Tarwin” River, in the parish of “Jindivick,” while the only outlet for traffic from Neerim is along a leading range some distance east of the river, and, owing to the contour of the country, cannot strike the proposed line until within seven miles of the existing line at “Warragul or Drouin.” As all the difficulties in the way of transit of heavy produce arise previous to this point being reached, the district will be placed in no better a position. Not one sawmill will be established in Neerim or the LaTrobe country, or a ton of potatoes or any kind of agricultural product grown for sale. The result will be (not to speak of injustice) that the line will not pay, the State will be a loser, and the only parties to gain anything, the persons living within eight miles of the present existing line, whose claims are already fairly met. In Neerim and the LaTrobe country, in the direction of Mt. Baw Baw, there is more than One hundred thousand acres of land, not better to be found in the colony of volcanic origin, and having an annual rainfall of over fifty inches ; all that is needed is a railway in order to develop its great resources. In addition to an immense quantity of useful timber, covering a large area of good land, there is at least Two hundred thousand acres of comparatively poor—and some of it—broken country, densely covered with the best kinds of timber for palings, posts, rails, and milling purposes. Twenty sawmills constantly at work for fifty years would be far from exhausting the supply. The timber traffic alone would pay the working expenses of a line of railway. On those grounds we confidently assert the line of railway for which we ask would pay and pay well.

Your Petitioners found this district—ten years ago—a wilderness of timber and scrub, and without a blade of grass and not contributing a cent to the general good ; since that time we have made roads, erected fences, built houses, and, in Neerim alone, have laid down nearly Twenty thousand acres in English grasses—this has only been accomplished at a heavy outlay of money and physical energy, and we claim the sympathies of Parliament on our behalf.

Your Petitioners are willing to accept a light line of railway, and a large section of us are willing to enter into a bond to give the land required through our respective properties free of cost. In addition, we beg to point out that the country through which the line for which we ask would run is unbroken by creeks, and would be easy of construction compared with an equal length of the ten miles proposed.

Your Petitioners respectfully pray that your Honorable House will thoroughly investigate and weigh our claims to railway accommodation, feeling assured that our claims will be recognized, and the additional length of railway we ask be granted.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

(Here follow 65 signatur.s.)

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