

1891.
—
VICTORIA.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

FROM

SECTIONAL COMMITTEE (No. 2)

ON THE

PROPOSED AILWAY

FROM

DONALD TO WIRRUMBIRCHIP;

AND

APPENDIX.

By Authority:

ROBT. S. BRAIN, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

No. 3.—SECTIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS.

TUESDAY, 4TH AUGUST, 1891.

DONALD TO BIRCHIP LINE.

Mr. Groom moved, by leave, That in view of the additional evidence obtained on the subject of railway construction since Sectional Committee No. 2 reported in December last, on the proposed line from Donald to Birchip, the Report on that line be referred back to Sectional Committee No. 2 for further consideration.

Mr. McIntyre seconded the motion.

Question—put and carried.

MEMBERS OF No. 2 SECTIONAL COMMITTEE.

The Honorable WILLIAM AUSTIN ZEAL, M.L.C., Chairman.

The Honorable William Anderson, M.L.A.

The Honorable Henry Gore, M.L.C.

John William Taverner, Esquire, M.L.A.

Alexander Young, Esquire, M.L.A.

The Honorable George Young, M.L.C.

SECTIONAL COMMITTEE (No. 2).

RAILWAY FROM DONALD TO WIRRUMBIRCHIP.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT.

THE SECTIONAL COMMITTEE (No. 2) to which the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways referred back the Report on the proposed line from Donald to Wirrumbirchip for further consideration, in view of the additional evidence obtained on the subject of railway construction since the Sectional Committee reported in December last, have the honour to submit the following Supplementary Report :—

1. The statistics prepared by the Government Statist last year, and appended ^{Statistics.} to the first Report, were worked out by proportion; but the Committee have now obtained more reliable statistics, based on the last census returns. Following the practice recently adopted by the General Committee, a plan—showing the route of the proposed railway, and having the area which would be served by such line marked thereon—was sent to the Statist, and he was asked to supply information respecting the population, cultivation, &c., within the area referred to, which is specifically defined as follows:—Starting from a point on the proposed line 5 miles north-west of Donald, to a point 16 miles beyond the projected terminus at Birchip; on the west to a line running midway between the Birchip railway and the Warracknabeal line; on the east to Lake Buloke, and thence to a line running about 10 miles from the proposed railway in a northerly direction from Lake Buloke.

The return furnished by the Statist is attached hereto (*vide* Appendix). The population within the area above described is stated to be 1,887 persons; 261,506 acres are occupied; and 63,394 acres cultivated; of which 46,962 acres are used for wheat-growing, yielding 506,869 bushels, being an average of nearly 11 bushels to the acre. The agricultural statistics are given for last year, the returns for this year being incomplete. The live stock returns are as follow:—Sheep, 157,068; horses, 3,577; cattle, 6,392; pigs, 1,118.

2. The tract of country for which the statistics are given contains about 500,000 acres, and as only about one-half of it is yet occupied, and only one-eighth cultivated, it will be seen that there is a large area yet to be developed. As the mallee country beyond the proposed terminus is being rapidly settled, there is no doubt the cultivation in the district will be largely increased in a few years, especially if railway facilities are afforded to the inhabitants.

3. The wheat grown in the district, which will be served by a line to Birchip, is now carted to the railway stations at Donald and Wycheproof. A return has been obtained from the Railway Department, which shows that last season 75,445 bags

were forwarded from Donald, and 16,000 bags are now at the railway station awaiting transit, while 106,411 bags were sent from the Wycheproof railway station, and 15,000 bags are still on hand there. A large portion of this quantity of wheat would be carried over the extension if constructed, instead of being carted to the railway stations mentioned.

Traffic on the line.

4. As the proposed line to Birchip would be 32 miles in length, and cultivation extends for a distance of sixteen miles beyond the projected terminus, it is considered that, on the average, the 506,869 bushels of wheat stated to be grown in the district, would be carried 24 miles along the extension, and thence to Melbourne. The Railway Department states that the rate from Birchip to Melbourne would be 17s. per ton, and the revenue derived from the carriage of the quantity of wheat mentioned, would be £11,968. The proportion on the through rate (Birchip to Melbourne) for the 24 miles on the extension would be £1,388. The rate from Donald to Melbourne would be 15s. per ton, and the revenue £10,560. If the local rate were charged on the extension, it would be 3s. 6d. per ton, which would give a revenue of £2,464.

Vide par. 8 of Report on Galaquil line.

The proportion of the £11,968, which would be credited by the Railway Department to the extension, would be £1,388, but if the working expenses for the carriage of the wheat from Donald to Melbourne are deducted from the total revenue earned, the balance to be credited to the new extension would amount to about £4,700, allowing 3s. 6d. per train mile for the expenses of running the loaded trains to Melbourne, and a similar sum for the returning empties.

In addition to the probable traffic in wheat, there is likely to be a considerable revenue derived from the carriage of wool and live stock on this line, there being 157,068 sheep in the district.

In view of the above facts the Committee are of opinion that the proposed line will be a valuable extension of the existing railway to Donald, especially in view of the rapid settlement of the mallee, which, as stated in the previous Report of the Committee, is being opened up beyond Birchip.

Estimated cost of line.
Vide par. 16 of First Report.

5. In December last, the Committee reported that, in their opinion, the proposed railway from Donald to Birchip could be efficiently constructed at a cost of £4,000 per mile—the Committee's estimate included the cost of the land required for the railway, but did not provide for engines and rolling-stock. The cost of the latter would not, however, be great, as the engines and rolling-stock now used on the existing line to Donald could be utilized on the extension of 32 miles to Birchip.

6. The Committee now recommend that, in the event of the line from Donald to Birchip being authorized, it should be constructed under Class B of the Committee's General Report to Parliament. They would also suggest that trains should be run tri-weekly during the slack season, and that the local rates should be charged, until such time as the extension becomes payable.

W. A. ZEAL,
Chairman of Sectional Committee (No. 2).

Parliament House,
Melbourne, 18th August, 1891.

APPENDIX.

Office of the Government Statist,
Melbourne, 31st July, 1891.

SIR,

I have the honour to forward herewith, for the use of the Parliamentary Committee on Railways, the statistics of the proposed line of railway from Donald to Wurrumbirchip.

STATISTICS OF PROPOSED RAILWAY FROM DONALD TO WIRRUMBIRCHIP.
From Census Returns of 1891.

Population	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,887
Live Stock—									
Horses	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,577
Milch Cows	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,049
Other Cattle	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5,343
Sheep	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	157,068
Pigs	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,118
Acres occupied	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	261,506

From Agricultural Statistics of 1890.

Number of Cultivated Farms	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	359
Cultivation.			Acres.				Produce.	
Wheat	...	...	46,962	...	...	...	506,869 bushels	
Oats	...	...	329	...	...	...	7,351 "	
Other Cereals	...	...	147	...	...	...	2,722 "	
Root Crops	...	...	1	...	...	...	1 ton	
Hay	...	...	4,255	...	...	...	6,428 tons	
Other Tillage	...	...	11,700					
Total	...	...	63,394					

Estimated Value of—								
Rateable Property—Total Value	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£553,577
" " Annual Value	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£30,754
Improvements on Farms	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£121,701
Farming Machinery and Plant	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£36,369

Office of the Government Statist,
Melbourne, 30th July, 1891.

H. H. HAYTER,
Government Statist.

2. The statistics of St. Arnaud Shire have been forwarded this year in such an incomplete state that I have given the agricultural statistics for last year as being more correct.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

H. H. HAYTER,
Government Statist.