

1891.
—
VICTORIA.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS.

REPORT

FROM

SECTIONAL COMMITTEE (No. 1)

ON THE

PROPOSED RAILWAY

FROM

WARRAGUL TO McDONALD'S TRACK;

TOGETHER WITH THE

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND APPENDICES.

By Authority:

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No 11.—SECTIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT.

MEMBERS OF SECTIONAL COMMITTEE (NO. 1).

The Honorable THOMAS BENT, M.L.A., Chairman.

The Honorable James Buchanan, M.L.C.,
Arthur Champion Groom, Esquire, M.L.A.,
John McIntyre, Esquire, M.L.A.,

The Honorable Donald Melville, M.L.C.,
The Honorable Albert Lee Tucker, M.L.A.,
The Honorable John Woods, M.L.A.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS.

SECTIONAL COMMITTEE (NO 1).

RAILWAY FROM WARRAGUL TO McDONALD'S TRACK.

REPORT.

THE SECTIONAL COMMITTEE (No. 1), to which the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways referred the proposed line from Warragul to McDonald's Track, have the honour to report as follows :—

1. The Committee inspected the route of the proposed line from Warragul to McDonald's Track direct, and an alternative route *viâ* Bloomfield and Bear Creek, on Wednesday, the 15th April, 1891. Meetings were held at Warragul and at McDonald's Track, at which places several witnesses were examined, including farmers and selectors residing near the proposed line, the president, the engineer, and the secretary of the Warragul shire, and Mr. Fowler, M.C.E., formerly engineer of the Dookie and Katamatite tramway, who had been employed by the Warragul Shire Council to examine and report upon the direct route and the suggested deviation *viâ* Bloomfield. Proceedings of the Committee.

2. The railway from Warragul to McDonald's Track was not in the Railway Construction Bill, but was included in the additional proposals of the Minister of Railways prior to the second reading of the Bill. The proposed line is 11·32 miles in length, and the Railway Department estimate that its construction will involve an expenditure of £198,420, or at the rate of £17,528 per mile. The steepest gradient on the surveyed line is 1 in 40, and the sharpest curve 12 chains radius. Cost of line, &c.

3. The country traversed by the line has nearly all been selected under the *Land Act* 1869, and a large amount of work has been done in clearing off the heavy timber and the dense undergrowth of hazel and musk scrub. The land, which is very rich agricultural soil, will, when cleared, produce in great quantities almost any crop that is put into it. The principal crops now cultivated are potatoes—which yield as much as 12 and 14 tons per acre on new land—onions, maize, oats, barley, and peas. All kinds of vegetables grow well. There is a large area of heavily timbered country. Much of the timber, which consists principally of messmate, blackwood, bluegum, whitegum, and mountain ash, is suitable for saw-milling purposes. Settlement, &c.

4. Statistics, based on the last census returns, have been obtained from the Government Statist for the area of country which, in the opinion of the Committee, would be served by the proposed line. The area referred to contains about 43,000 acres and is shown on the map submitted herewith. The return supplied is attached hereto (*vide* Appendix A), on reference to which it will be seen that the population within the area mentioned is 987, that there are 88 farms, and that 7,837 acres are cultivated. The principal products grown are as follows :—Oats, averaging a yield of 34 bushels per acre; other cereals, 26 bushels per acre; root crops, 8 tons per acre; hay, 2 tons per acre. The live stock returns are as follows :—Horses, 618; cattle, 5,641; sheep, 3,126; pigs, 1,467; poultry, 5,229. Statistics.

Traffic.

5. The traffic on the line would be principally sawn and split timber, root crops, milk, dairy produce, and live stock. The timber traffic will, probably, be considerable, as the settlers will be able to utilize the splendid timber on their land, which is now destroyed, the difficulties of getting it to a market being at present insurmountable. Three saw-mills, which would be served by the proposed line, have been established. It may be mentioned that one witness, a saw-miller, residing seven miles south of Warragul, near the route, estimated that he would send freight over the line which would give an annual revenue of £1,000. The cultivation in the district is at present rendered unremunerative owing to the cost of transit. The roads are impassable in winter, and the cost of cartage to the Warragul station in summer varies from 30s. to £2 per ton. In view of the rich character of the soil, and the proximity of the district to Melbourne—Warragul being only 61 miles from the city—there is no doubt that a railway would greatly increase cultivation, and the quantity of potatoes and root crops grown will be very large. The carriage of these products will be the chief source of revenue. The settlers make a practice of sowing all cleared land with English grasses, which grow luxuriantly, and the dairying industry is rapidly developing. Creameries have been established, and the carriage of milk and dairy produce should add considerably to the revenue of the line.

Vide Minutes of Evidence,
p. 21, qs. 793-818.

Cost of line.

6. While the prospects of the district are such as to warrant the construction of a railway at a moderate cost, if worked economically, the evidence obtained will not justify the expenditure of the sum of £198,419 on 11¼ miles of railway. If, however, a line can be made at a cost not exceeding £7,000 per mile—and the evidence of Mr. Fowler and other witnesses shows that such an expenditure would be ample to construct a railway suitable for the district—the Committee are of opinion that the proposed line would form a valuable feeder to the main Gippsland line, would increase the settlement in the district, and enable those selectors who have taken up land therein, and cleared it at great expense and labour, to retain their holdings.

Estimate by Mr. Fowler.

7. As previously stated, the Warragul Shire Council employed Mr. Fowler to inspect the direct line referred to the Committee, and also the suggested deviation *via* Bloomfield and Bear Creek. The estimates furnished by Mr. Fowler and his report—which is a very full one—are attached hereto (*vide* Appendix B). On account of its comparative cheapness, he favours the line *via* Bloomfield, which is the first station beyond Warragul, and two miles distant from that town.

The officer who surveyed the line for the Railway Department also strongly favours the Bloomfield route. The surveyor's report states, "The earthworks on the direct line from Warragul are of a very heavy nature, and therefore I ran another line, leaving the main Gippsland line about one mile on the Sale side of Bloomfield station; this line I have called the Bear Creek line, and it is shown in blue on the plan—it is very much better than the other line from Warragul—both the gradients and earthworks are reduced considerably. The land passed through by both these lines is of the same excellent quality, and I believe they would accommodate about an equal number of settlers." The Bear Creek route joins the direct railway at 6 miles 40 chains 38 links on the latter line, and 6 miles 65 chains 05 links on the first-mentioned line. Mr. Fowler also points out that if the line were terminated at 10 miles 50 chains from Warragul, instead of at the point suggested by the Department, some very heavy work would be avoided, and the cost of the line greatly reduced. The estimate made by Mr. Fowler for the two lines is as follows:—

	Warragul to McDonald's Track (direct line), 10 miles 50 chains	...	£96,589
	"	,"	via Bloomfield and Bear Creek
		...	77,266

8. The Railway Department estimate that "land and compensation" on the direct line will amount to £4,075, and on the Bear Creek line to £4,172. The Committee are of opinion that all land required for the line should be handed over to the Department free of cost. The evidence shows that the land served by the proposed line will be enhanced in value at least 25 per cent. by the railway, and it is valued at from £6 to £10 per acre.

9. The evidence taken by the Sectional Committee is submitted herewith, and they recommend that the line from Warragul to McDonald's Track be authorized, and that it be constructed *via* Bloomfield and Bear Creek, terminating about 10 miles 74 chains from Bloomfield. The cost not to exceed £7,000 per mile, and all land to be given free of cost, and without any compensation for severance or otherwise. They would also suggest that old 60-lb. rails be used, and that increased rates be charged on the extension.

THOS. BENT,
Chairman.

Parliament House, Melbourne,
11th November, 1891.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND APPENDICES.

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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS.

WARRAGUL TO McDONALD'S TRACK.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

(TAKEN BEFORE SECTIONAL COMMITTEE NO. 1.)

(At South Warragul.)

WEDNESDAY, 15TH APRIL, 1891.

Members present :

The Hon. T. BENT, in the Chair;

The Hon. D. Melville,
The Hon. J. Buchanan.

Mr. Groom,
Mr. McIntyre,
The Hon. A. L. Tucker,
The Hon. J. Woods.

John Long, sworn and examined.

1. *By the Chairman*—What are you?—A farmer, residing at South Warragul.

2. In reference to the proposal of the line from Warragul to McDonald's Track, will you please give your information as shortly as you can to guide us in preparing a report for Parliament. You know the locality, and most of us do not?—We are just something like other people; we are in need of the means of getting our products to market, and in consequence of not having the means we cannot produce the best products that could be obtained. We are confined to the rearing and fattening of stock. The ground is admirably adapted to growing root crops and things of that character. You have evidence to-day yourselves of the class of country we have to contend with in the way of roads.

3. You see, whatever you supply to us will be written down and printed, and people in the flat districts will read it; please put it in a form that people in other parts of the colony can understand it?—At present it is a matter of impossibility to take anything in a vehicle to Warragul; a bag of potatoes or two would be all that could be taken.

4. *By Mr. Woods*.—All on pack-horses?—Yes; six or seven years ago we could not get anything in, but now things are a little better, though it takes too much to make a road; we cannot expect to have anything but a railway. We would be quite content with a light railway line to take our produce down to the main line, without a break of gauge, to be forwarded to market.

5. *By Mr. Groom*.—You would be satisfied with a cheap line and a low rate of speed?—That would be quite sufficient for our wants.

6. *By Mr. McIntyre*.—Can you give the Committee some idea of the amount of land that would be benefited by a railway line?—I have not those facts. We have no committee here to collect facts of the kind. I have no idea of the area. I have no doubt you can get that from others better able to give it than I am. I am quite satisfied if a line was built here it would stop the speculation, because the poor selectors cannot cope here, with the poor access to market, without a line; if that were built it would stop speculation.

7. *By the Chairman*.—What are you?—A farmer.

8. Where do you reside?—McDonald's Track.

9. How far from here?—One and a half miles.

10. How far from the nearest existing railway station?—About twelve or thirteen miles.

11. How many acres do you possess?—Between 400 and 500.

12. Selected?—Yes.

13. Under what Act?—I think under the Act of 1869.

14. Have you neighbours with about the same areas, or with more or less—could you give the average?—My neighbours have about the same.

15. What can you produce on those blocks?—Potatoes, onions, Indian corn or maize, oats, barley, peas, and all the English grasses; all kinds of vegetables grow well.

16. All round, root crops generally?—Very well indeed. I am digging potatoes now which will average, to the best of my judgment, 12 to 14 tons to the acre.

17. What would be a good average crop—I suppose the new land will produce the best crop—what is a fair average?—The way we reckon it is, we can always shift the crop from the old ground to the new.

18. What would you consider the average?—Ten tons.

19. Have you much timber in the district?—Yes.
20. Fit for sawing?—Yes, bluegum.
21. Is that not supposed to be suitable for sleepers?—Yes.
22. How far from your place would the station be?—About three-quarters of a mile.
23. Because I see the line is supposed to be eleven miles and three-quarters—how many people would the line give service to if made?—I could not answer that.
24. Is Warragul your nearest station?—Yes, the nearest market.
25. What would be the average cost per ton for sawn timber, or any produce you have mentioned—a fair winter and a fair summer?—At present?
26. Yes. I do not mean to-day; the fair average price all the year round?—We cannot attempt it.
27. If you can, give a fair average price to take a ton of goods to Warragul?—£2 10s. to £3 in summer time; you cannot travel it in winter.
28. In describing “miles” it is not only “miles” but “mud”?—Yes.
29. What would be a fair average distance to travel in a day on the road we have come to-day, take summer, and then take winter?—Do you mean a buggy and pair?
30. I am speaking of the goods you are speaking of?—We consider it is a good day’s work to take a load into Warragul one day, and come back the next.
31. What could you take?—About 5 cwt. on two horses.
32. In average fine weather?—Yes.
33. What would be the cost of taking that 5 cwt.?—You might take a little more than 5 cwt. with two horses—say half-a-ton.
34. What would you pay for a man and two horses, at per day?—I am not very well up in that.
35. How do you arrive at the cost?—I have paid cartage on goods from Warragul here at that rate.
36. Within what period?—About eighteen months ago.
37. Would it be cheaper now, or dearer?—No difference in the summer time, when the roads were good.
38. By an ordinary carrier?—By an ordinary carrier—a man who makes it the principal means of support.
39. What is the rate now?—£2 10s.
40. If you take half-a-ton of goods in two days, it would not run that?—He may have had business there of his own.
41. What would a man and two horses be per day?—They would be £1.
42. You get a man and horse and dray on the road for 12s., would you put on 8s. for a horse extra?—It might be considered a few shillings too much.
43. That only comes to £2 a ton?—Perhaps 15s. would be the average price for a team and a man.
44. In the summer time you would get it for 30s. a ton?—
45. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—What are your ideas of a cheap line—you say that would satisfy you?—My conclusions are drawn from what I have read about what they call “trams” in the north-western district. I have not seen them, but I believe they would suit us here very well.
46. What, light lines?—Light railway lines.
47. *By Mr. Groom.*—At a lower speed?—Yes.
48. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Would that class of line suit in this class of country; the plains of the Wimmera are different?—An engineer might be able to answer that.
49. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—What is the average value of the land about you?—About £8 an acre.
50. With all those defects you speak of?—Yes.
51. Would that be near about it, all along these difficult parts, about the average?—Yes.
52. Would the Government have to pay about £8 an acre if they required land?—Yes.
53. Would a railway improve your land in value?—Yes, if the produce was improved in price.
54. Taking off the £2 10s. you speak of, what would it add to the value of the land—calculate it—if it is worth £3 to take down produce, how much would it add if it only cost 1s. to take it down?—I could not tell.
55. Would it double it?—I think not.
56. Every ton of goods from your place now costs £2 10s.?—Yes.
57. And then it would cost probably 1s. Tell us by that calculation what it adds to the value of the estate?—That is a problem I cannot solve now.
58. Is it too heavy for you?—Yes; because I do not know what speculation would take place. I take the value of land to be what it would bring in the market.
59. Perhaps it would be no advantage?—I should certainly expect it to bring more.
60. Do you think it would double the value of the land?—No.
61. What do you think it would do, if it does all those things you speak of?—It is only guesswork.
62. It will not double the value of the land?—No.
63. Give your own idea?—I have not an idea of the value it may bring in the future if the railway comes along.
64. In every one of the districts we have gone they have been able to answer the question in their own way. You say it would save you £2 10s. a ton; how many tons would there be to the acre?—Ten.
65. You could not send those to market?—Not now.
66. But you could if you had the railway?—Yes.
67. You save that?—Yes.
68. *By Mr. Groom.*—You could clear your land?—Yes.
69. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Would it improve it £2 an acre?—Yes.
70. It would increase the value of your land by £1,000?—Yes.
71. Would you have any objection to give the Government £500 to make the railway?—I would object to it.
72. Although you make £500 out of the State, and have the benefit of the railway?—You have to make a certainty of £500, while the £1,000 is a problem.

73. Would you charge £1,000 more for it if the railway were made ; you say it is worth £8 now—would you part with your land for £10 if the railway were constructed?—I do not want to sell.
74. You think it would be worth it?—I think it would be worth it.
75. You would not give half of that increase for the railway?—[*No answer.*]
76. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—Do you believe in a betterment tax?—Yes, if all circumstances are taken into consideration.
77. What do you produce from your land, from all sources now—would that be a too inquisitive question to ask?—A bare living.
78. How long have you been on the ground?—About two years. I have owned the land for many years, but only lived on it two years.
79. Since then you have only been able to get an existence on it?—I do not get an existence on it. I have spent nearly £1,000 on it.
80. You get no returns?—No, not yet.
81. And yet you expect to get a railway, and for a paltry expenditure of £500 you would not have a railway?—I do not put it that way.
82. You grudge the expenditure of the small sum of £500, to make a good living out of the land which cost you £1,000?—Would it not be better to say I would abide by the betterment principle.
83. Suppose the betterment principle is advocated by the Committee, would you abide by that?—Yes, I would take it that way ; providing I get £1,000, I would hand back £500.
84. *By Mr. Groom.*—The Government railways now carry potatoes for 1d. a mile, would you be willing to pay an extra halfpenny?—Yes.
85. *By the Chairman.*—What did you mean by speculation in land?—The land is owned by people living in Melbourne or other parts of the colony, and it is unimproved, and the vermin are becoming a nuisance. If the people lived on the land it would benefit me.
86. Are there many cases of that kind here?—Half-a-dozen surrounding me.
87. What area would that embrace?—Half-a-dozen.
88. One thousand acres?—Yes.
89. How did they get the land?—Under the 1869 Act.
90. They are shepherding?—They have done some clearing to get the documents from the Crown, and the grass has grown to maintain the animals.
91. What would you do in a case of that kind. The State gave the land at 2s. an acre for ten years ; it borrowed money from England and made a railway to Warragul, and now there is a proposal to increase the value of the property by making a railway, and yet the people have done nothing but spend—how much?—I could not tell you.
92. How much had you to do—what improvements had you to do?—To clear 10 acres out of every hundred.
93. That is between 40 and 50 acres—what would it cost?—I do not think they cleared as clean as we do now.
94. The average?—Say, they spend £3 an acre.
95. That is £120 a block, and yet they simply grow vermin to ruin you?—Yes.
96. What would you do in that case—the railway would add to the value?—Prosecute under the Vermin Act.
97. When you say £8 an acre, that includes improvements—would that be the average value of the land in the locality where you live?—In the natural state.
98. Would it be £8?—That is what I would be asked if I wanted to buy.
99. What would the 2,000 acres be worth?—I expect they would want that.
100. Do you mean to say that the people you speak of would make £16,000?—It would not be worth so much now.
101. What would the State have to give?—I dare say £5 or £6 an acre would purchase some.
102. Say £5—is there any doubt about that?—No.
103. There are 2,000 acres, £10,000 worth of land, and they are not living on it, and have expended a small sum in improvements, and they want a railway to be provided—what should the State ask for that?—They should make a large difference. Wherever we have had churches and schools, and so on, they have taxed.
104. *By Mr. Groom.*—Do you not think they ought to put on a good straight absentee tax?—Yes, I think that would improve it.
105. How much of the district do you know?—I do not know a great deal of it ; it is difficult to get about.
106. Is it the common practice of this place to have many holdings like that, or is that the only particular spot?—I am only acquainted with mine and the immediate surroundings, about five or six miles. There are six blocks uninhabited, going back to a state of nature.
107. That is what you meant when you were giving your opinion that it would prevent speculation?—Yes, that is what I meant.
108. Do you know anything at all about the price of materials for the construction of the line?—No.
109. *By Mr. Woods.*—You say you make a bare living?—Yes.
110. In point of fact you are spending money?—Yes.
111. With what view?—I have a family of seven boys who want homes, and I am trying to make homes for them.
112. Such as you are making?—I have to spend money ; it will grow more in time.
113. Suppose you realize your fondest hope, and you can grow any root crop that grows, you have cleared and done everything, but have no railway, what are you going to do with it ; will you pay £2 a ton to take it to Warragul?—No ; grow hogs and sheep.
114. To whom does the increased value belong in equity, if an increased value has been made?—To the whole colony.
115. That will hardly do?—We are more intimately interested.
116. Who gets the immediate advantage?—The parties whose property the lines come near.
117. That has been constructed by other people?—The whole colony.

118. If your land is improved to the extent of £1,000 by the railway recommended by this Committee, supposing it to happen, the Government who made the railway are in equity entitled to the whole £1,000 if they want it, and the Government is the whole colony?—I am one of the inhabitants.

119. You will have your share but no more. In the first place the Government is entitled to the increment they have made—the whole colony is entitled to the increment they have made?—Yes.

120. And you stand on a level with other people to take your proportion?—Yes.

121. What would it be?—We would have to value the improvements.

122. You would have no objection taking an equitable view. If the Government should say, "We will assess it, and taking your improvements into consideration, and that you have brought the land to a producing condition. After having calculated the thing out we will take half or two-thirds of the whole from you," would it be equitable?—It is possible I have not reckoned it that way; but the pioneer, after struggling on, is entitled to a little more.

123. I am asking these questions to show the equity of the question, and secondly to ask if you, as an individual thus placed, would have any objection to submit your claim to the Government on purely equitable grounds, as I put?—Yes.

124. *By Mr. Groom.*—Provided that everybody else who had railway communication previously was in the swim?—Yes. I am satisfied about the equity of the question.

125. Not only those who have the railway now?—If a man's land is cut into pieces, I think he should get consideration.

126. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Do you think this consideration is to perpetuate the old system. I would like you to consider that in answering the question?—I am very glad you have been appointed.

The witness withdrew.

Felix Purcell, sworn and examined.

127. *By the Chairman.*—What are you?—A selector.

128. Where?—At Allambee.

129. How long have you resided there?—Five years. I am about a mile and a half from the terminus at Mr. Faulkner's.

130. How far from Warragul?—About sixteen miles.

131. Is that the nearest station?—I think so.

132. Nearer than anything on the Great Southern?—There is no road.

133. If there were?—I do not think it possible.

134. What area have you?—Two hundred acres.

135. You heard the evidence of Mr. Long—do you agree or not agree, or can you supplement what he said?—I do not think I could supplement it. I think I agree with anything he said about the producing capability of the country.

136. Is there any part where you disagree?—No. I think his evidence is about the same as I would give.

137. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Could you tell us from your knowledge of the country—have you a good knowledge of the country from Warragul to your place?—Yes.

138. Could you tell us from your knowledge if it is within the bounds of possibility that a railway costing something like £18,000 a mile would pay?—Seeing it would give an impetus to farming it might; I could not say positively it would.

139. If it was in full swing in farming to-morrow you would get a return to pay that?—The country is very fertile, and would grow everything.

140. If you had a railway to-morrow would it lead to that result?—Yes, I think so.

141. How is it within half-a-mile of Warragul station there are thousands of acres apparently in a state of nature?—I do not think it is as good.

142. Taking the difficulties of access, would it not be fairly proportionate—is it held by speculators—squatters?—They are a farming class of people and progressive, and they want to make a living.

143. Are the people near Warragul a progressive people?—Not from the appearance.

144. Is this a different class of people?—By appearance they seem more progressive.

145. *By Mr. Woods.*—Can you tell us how far, supposing the line we are talking of were constructed, on each side it would affect, beneficially, the settlers?—I should say about five or six miles on each side.

146. Then a radius of five or six miles on each side would be placed in a position to grow whatever they liked on the land, and send at a fair price to market?—Yes.

147. *By the Chairman.*—Is not the crop you have on it the most valuable you will ever have?—The timber?

148. Yes?—If we could get it away.

149. You do not seem to be putting the best side to London. Is that the best crop you will ever have, and would it not bring a tremendous traffic to the railway?—I think it would.

The witness withdrew.

Martin Johnson, sworn and examined.

150. *By the Chairman.*—What are you?—A farmer.

151. Where do you reside?—About half-a-mile from the terminus of the Warragul to McDonald's Track line.

152. What area have you?—About 300 acres.

153. Selected?—I bought it two years ago.

154. What did it cost?—Between £5 and £6 an acre.

155. The average kind of land about?—The average kind of land about there.

156. Had there been much money spent in improvements?—About £200.

157. Some part of that ought to go to the credit of the person who did it. What does it generally cost to clear?—Somewhere about £3 to £4 an acre to clear and sow it, and fence it.

158. You have heard the evidence of the two previous gentlemen—is there anything you would like to tell the Committee?—As far as the cost of the land is concerned, I do not think that Mr. Long is as well acquainted with the price as I am. I sold a place in Poowong East a few years ago, and bought another. I have been looking round the district to see the cost of the land, and I consider the price I paid would be about the average.

159. How far from Mr. Long?—About two miles.

160. Would you think his price too high by a couple of pounds?—Yes.

161. And as to the difference between having a line and none in this locality?—I think it would increase the land to double the value at least; in fact I think a little more, but I will not overdo it. I think it is taken for granted that the soil is good all round, and it will grow anything. I have brought a little bag of potatoes to show. I have been living in the district twelve years, and tried to make my living as a farmer.

162. What do you produce, and how much?—I have had 10 to 14 tons, an average of 12 tons.

163. How many acres?—I have only one acre now; I have had more, but I cannot get them to market.

164. New ground?—Yes.

165. Have you tried the old ground?—An average of 12 tons after cropping it for three years. I have not cropped longer, I have had new ground.

166. Is the yield as good after three years?—No.

167. What is the difference?—It would be about 4 tons an acre.

168. Do you know anything about the price of railway making?—I was once working on railways. I worked at very difficult railways in New Zealand, between Wellington and Wairarapa Point. The place was a gully 40 miles long.

169. The country as stiff as this?—Stiffer.

170. Do you know where the proposed line goes?—As far as I can see from the road.

171. One goes from Bloomfield?—No more than your Committee have seen.

172. Can you tell us what it would cost to get sleepers for this line?—It would be difficult for me to tell. The contract in New Zealand was to make the line find sleepers, but not rails. It was in a gully. There were six tunnels and a lot of banks on the eleven miles, how many I could not tell; the contract was let for £66,000 for the eleven miles of the worst part of it.

173. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—Worse than this country?—This country is like to that of New Zealand.

174. *By the Chairman.*—Was it a narrow gauge?—Different from what we are talking of.

175. Narrow gauge?—Yes.

176. Easier to make?—Yes, but more difficult with the earthwork.

177. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—You say you have 300 acres valued at £5?—Yes.

178. And that it would double in value if the line were made?—Yes.

179. Would you have any objection to let the State have half of the increased value, £750?—Not at all, if every one where the line is made gives a similar amount.

180. Suppose you were going to get a railway—if the country has been wrong in the past that is nothing. If you were to get a railway would you give half that amount for the railway?—If everybody did it I would do the same, but I do not see that I should be the only one.

181. *By Mr. Woods.*—Which would you prefer—to give half and have the line, or not have the line and give nothing?—It would be the most beneficial thing for me to give half the money.

182. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—The railway you saw in New Zealand was about the same length as this—would that kind of railway answer your purpose here?—It would answer our purpose unless we do not want to break the gauge. We could not afford to pay for unloading the goods at Warragul. If we could send to Melbourne without we would not object.

183. Would you suggest a railway to cost £198,420 as against £66,000. If your farm was involved in that would you recommend the Government to make it?—No.

184. If you are to be taxed for the railway if made, you would not recommend it?—No.

185. What is your opinion?—That the line from Warragul to McDonald's Track should not cost half that.

186. That would be still £100,000—should it cost that?—According to the wide gauge it might be a little dearer. I do not think it should cost more than about £70,000.

187. How do you make that out—give the Committee some idea?—On account of the country from Warragul, which to my eyes looks pretty level. The other part is away from the road. I have never travelled it. I do not think, from what I see, that it should cost more than about £5,000 to construct the line—that is half-way out.

188. From what you know of the country you would not recommend the Committee to go into this cost?—No; from what I see of the country.

The witness withdrew.

John Faulkner, sworn and examined.

189. *By the Chairman.*—What are you?—A selector.

190. Residing where?—About three miles along the track.

191. How near to the proposed railway?—Close to my selection—within a chain.

192. Does it pass through your land?—Yes.

193. But how far?—About a mile.

194. What area have you?—Three hundred and five acres.

195. You have heard what the other gentlemen have said about value—what do you say is the value of the land?—I believe my land is more valuable than any about there. I have it all cleared, and the greater part is grubbed.

196. A great deal of that is capital expended?—Yes.

197. I would rather take it in the virgin state. You know the land spoken of near yours?—Yes.

198. Is it a fact about the land Mr. Long spoke of?—Yes.

199. Have you any land not yet improved?—Yes; and about 150 acres grubbed and fit for the plough.
200. What would you consider, from the position, would be the value without improvements?—I could not say without the improvements. I know what the value would be with—about £15 an acre.
201. What did the improvements cost you?—Some cost me more than £20 an acre.
202. Then it was worth less than nothing at first?—I was getting it ready for the plough.
203. What do you consider a block of land of that area, treated in the same way as the 2,000 acres spoken of, and not improved, to be worth to-day in its natural state?—I suppose about £4 or £5 an acre, to the best of my judgment.
204. That is what I want—£4 or £5 an acre. What do you say the improvements cost?—What I have grubbed and cleared has cost £15 an acre.
205. What is the value of the whole land?—About £10.
206. It cost you £10 all round?—Some cost £20.
207. The improvements cost how much all round?—Ten pounds.
208. And the capital value now, with the improvements, is £15 all round?—Half of it is fit for the plough.
209. What is the value of the whole land, including what is made fit for the plough?—Ten pounds.
210. What is the rest?—A mint of money.
211. Supposing a track was made, what would you ask for a mile?—Sixteen acres. I would give it for nothing.
212. Does it go through the middle?—A corner, like an “L.”
213. How could you make it a mile?—The way they go there. I do not know that it is a mile. It may be three-quarters.
214. *By Mr. Groom.*—The line from Warragul does not go through your land?—Yes. The 11 miles 26 chains goes about a chain into my paddock, taking Darbyshire’s survey.
215. You are on the other side of the track?—Yes.
216. The line does not cross the McDonald’s Track?—That is his survey.
217. If it were so, would you give it for nothing?—Yes.
218. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—The extension to Leongatha would go through your land?—Yes.
219. *By the Chairman.*—I suppose you do not care which line is made?—No; but if the Monomeith line did not go beyond Lempriere’s it would be no use, we would be five miles from it, and a terrible broken country; we could not get to it. If the Monomeith line is extended along the track it would answer as well as the Warragul line, as far as people on the McDonald’s Track are concerned.
220. Have you two strings to your bow this time?—I do not know.
221. The Monomeith to Warragul line would go through it?—Yes, if it got to Thorpdale.
222. Do you know anything about the cost of railway making, or the materials?—No, I do not. I would be satisfied with any kind of line rather than pack the crop to Warragul. I have to give all the crops I grow to pigs. I have often turned pigs into acres of potatoes.
223. You heard Mr. Long’s evidence about the carriage, do you agree with that?—Yes.
224. As to the cost?—Yes.
225. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—You have 300 acres cleared, what do you do with it?—Fatten cattle.
226. You are not producing root crops?—Yes; I grow a lot of potatoes and onions.
227. What do you do with them?—Give them to the pigs.
228. This is for the purpose of feeding cattle?—I find it cheaper to grow bacon.
229. Do you find it pays as well?—I find we generally lose half the cattle between our place and Warragul, calves and cows.

The witness withdrew.

Robert Pinder Worth, sworn and examined.

230. *By the Chairman.*—You have heard the evidence of the previous witnesses—do you think you can supplement it, or do you agree with it or not?—I quite agree with all they have said, but I think they are too afraid to speak out. I think it would be better if they gave the whole truth. They gave the truth, but I think they were afraid they were going to be taken aback.
231. They know the solemnity of an oath?—They speak the truth.
232. I cannot allow you to criticise?—They said the truth.
233. That is all we ask you to do—do not criticise them. If you can bring it out in your way we will be obliged?—I have been here twelve years.
234. What are you?—A selector.
235. And the area you possess?—Two hundred and twenty-seven acres.
236. Where do you reside?—On the McDonald’s Track.
237. How far from here?—Seven miles.
238. Do you know the proposed lines—one starts at Bloomfield, comes by Mr. Guest’s place, and the other from Warragul nearly eastward?—They both go to Warragul eventually.
239. Do you know both tracks?—Oh dear no.
240. How far would your land be situated from the terminal point?—About eight or nine miles from where it is coming now.
241. I understand it is to go about two miles below here?—It is coming to Mr. Faulkner’s, the last witness.
242. How far?—Eight miles.
243. From any point of it?—Yes.
244. This line from Warragul is supposed to go to Leongatha?—
245. No; the line is from Warragul to McDonald’s Track, to a point near Faulkner’s. I suppose the station would be near his place. Supposing we take that point—you know where it is?—Yes. I can tell you that all the products of Gippsland are at present growing in this district.
246. Between the two points I speak of?—Between Warragul and Mr. Faulkner’s there is some very good agricultural land to grow wheat and other kinds of produce in the agricultural line. I think

it cannot be beaten in the colony. I do not think it is held by speculators, as stated. I think the people are very industrious, and if they can get a railway to Mr. Faulkner's it would give a great impetus in agriculture and mining. I state mining, because I think underneath the land is more than above it; and the timber on the land is more than sufficient to keep the colony going for ten years, and by that time the ground could be all cleared and under cultivation. There is a little tramway that comes from Darnum; this little tramway was declined to be carried out by the shire council on loans proposed to be raised by the Government and lent to the shire council. The residents were that blind they thought it would be put on them to pay half-a-crown extra rate, and the shire then let it slip through. This little tramway would now supply five miles each side with carrying capabilities, and does so now; and when they get the sawn timber off the land, that goes to Melbourne, and keeps the railway going partly, then agriculture will come in. But the first thing that comes on in Gippsland must be the saw-mills; and if you take railways to take away the timber that is sawn, that is the first thing you can do. You cannot expect any stuff to grow till that is taken off. If you expect selectors to come and spend £15 and £20 an acre, and give half to the Government for the line, I think you ought to give them the railways and give the land too. As to the capabilities of this country, I say that the wood by saw-mills is the first product that the railways will have to take away. The next thing is we have had a promise from the Minister of Mines for a diamond drill.

247. This is essentially a business Committee?—We can grow grand root crops and butter, and if a railway were made to Mr. Faulkner's, we should have the good land along the McDonald's Track. We should be able to buy sheep at 2s. 6d. a head, and fatten them, and send to Melbourne and get fat prices for them. I may mention to you that this is a grand fattening country if the right kind of grass is sown. But when people come here they have to spend a vast amount of money. They have to pack potatoes to the station to pay the rents. It looks pretty "blue" for them; many of them have struggled pretty much. I have done so, for one. We can grow potatoes and all kinds of things in profusion.

248. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—What is the tramway you refer to?—The timber tram.

249. Where from?—Darnum.

250. Do any of the settlers use it?—I live on the range, and I get my produce by it.

251. The person to whom it belongs allows it to be used to bring produce to the main line?—I pay him.

252. *By the Chairman.*—How close is the tramway to Faulkner's?—It could be brought pretty near up the creek.

253. Do you argue that these people do not want a railway?—No, but that light lines would do as well.

254. Do you know anything about the cost of railway making?—No. The tramway that is made, if it were up to Bear Creek it would strike the line of survey that you are questioning me about now, and it could be carried along at a very little money, not £2,000 a mile.

255. Would that suit you?—No; but I speak for the good of the district.

256. Would it suit the people alongside?—Yes, and another line made parallel to it.

257. Let me distinctly understand—do you think that this tramway you speak of is suitable and will carry, by a little extension, all the traffic?—No.

258. What do you wish to imply with reference to the survey?—I was only speaking that light lines would do well.

259. What is the character?—Iron rails and sleepers, five miles. I say a tramway from Warragul along this line, of about eight or nine miles an hour, would do admirably, but you see we have the experience of it in the district.

260. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—It works well?—Yes.

261. How many tons can it carry?—I have seen it going into the township with six or seven trucks of timber and 8 tons of peas, and the small engine works well. If the line is graded properly there is no danger.

262. How many miles further would bring it here?—I believe it could be brought here. I know nothing about the engineering difficulties.

263. *By the Chairman.*—You immediately put us on the alert, and we prick our ears to think you have something, and, in addition to that, you say they would not pay half-a-crown in the pound to get a line?—I have got something; it is not my business, it is the Government's.

264. We ask you to speak the truth, and the whole truth; if you have anything to say, say it?—The Warragul and Leongatha line is the line I originally bound myself to; I have never budged. If that is carried out in its entirety it would suit me.

265. Do you know the whole of the track from Leongatha to Warragul; have you been along the track of land where that line would pass?—Yes, I have, as far as Beechville and Faulkner's.

266. How can any member of the Committee read that in Melbourne and know what you mean; have you been along the line of track from point to point?—No.

267. How far have you been?—From Warragul to Faulkner's, and to Beechville.

268. Do you know if it is practicable past that?—No.

269. Give us some reasons. I take your answer to be that, without knowing the track, to go as the crow flies?—The engineering difficulties are at the far end, I am told.

270. You have not been over this track, and you do not know whether the engineering difficulties are great or small?—The engineering difficulties are pretty heavy along McDonald's Track.

271. *By Mr. Woods.*—So you know nothing about this?—I know nothing about the engineering difficulties.

272. *By the Chairman.*—They are difficult?—Yes, but you have railways in all the practicable localities, and why should we not have them.

273. Have you anything else to communicate to the Committee?—I consider that if a light line could be constructed it would be better than anything else that could be done.

274. You would have no objection if you could get nothing better. Do you think the Committee would be wise in recommending from the points from Warragul or Bloomfield up to Faulkner's?—I would be glad.

275. Could you suggest a better route from either point to that point—could you suggest that the money should be spent in any better way for the benefit of the country, apart from the local people?—No, I could not. Mr. Darbyshire surveyed all the lines from Darnum to Warragul, and he found that Bloomfield was the best point to start from.

276. As far as you know, if we select the line from Bloomfield to Faulkner's, there can be nothing better; do you know of other good land?—No. Allow me to mention if that line was continued on into the good timber it would be better.

The witness withdrew.

George H. Parsons, sworn and examined.

277. *By the Chairman.*—What are you?—Manager of a brick company, in Northcote.

278. What have you to say?—Those associated with me have spent money in opening up a coal seam on Mr. Graham's selection, about a mile and a half from here.

279. In what direction?—About south; and a drill will be brought here before long. There is ample money waiting for investment to open up the coal if suitable railway communication can be got.

280. Have you got the coal?—The coal has been here this morning.

281. Give us the depths?—We have opened up to 2ft. 4in.

282. At what depth?—It is in a gully.

283. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Tunnelling from the surface?—Yes.

284. *By Mr. Groom.*—How far followed in?—About 40 feet.

285. Have you got into a well developed seam?—Yes, struck on a coal mine.

286. *By the Chairman.*—How far from the proposed line?—About a mile.

287. Would you have to make a siding—is it stiff country?—I would rather not say anything much about that.

288. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—If the line was made we are speaking of, how would you communicate with the line?—Put in a drive.

289. *By Mr. Woods.*—Have you an adit in from the gully?—Yes.

290. Do you know what depth the gully is?—No. Mr. Stirling does.

291. You do not know?—No.

292. Did you get the coal outcropping in the gully?—Yes.

293. You followed it?—Yes.

294. Have you developed a defined seam?—We have developed a defined seam.

295. How does it lay in the bed or the crop, vertical or horizontal?—Horizontal.

296. As my hand lies—[*showing the position*]?—Yes. Dipping into the hill, from 8 inches to 2ft. 4in.

297. It has dipped 10 inches in 40 feet?—Yes.

298. And it is 2ft. 4in. thick?—Yes, now.

299. What kind of bottom have you?—Sandstone.

300. And the roof?—It is between sandstone.

301. Both roof and bottom?—Yes.

302. Is it a clear coal?—A little shale.

303. Small seams?—At first, but they are disappearing.

304. Any water in it?—A little.

305. Have you pumped it out?—We have.

306. The 40 feet levelling is all you have done?—Yes.

307. How near would this line go?—Between one and two miles.

308. How would you get the coal out of the gully into the train?—That would be a matter for future consideration.

309. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—Do you think that coal mine would pay if you had a railway?—Undoubtedly.

310. Have you analyzed or done anything?—This is the mine that the Minister saw last week, and he promised that a drill should be sent almost immediately, so satisfied was he with what he saw.

311. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—In the 40 feet how many tons of coal have you taken out—have you taken out beyond a cart-load?—Yes.

312. What size is the adit?—About 5 feet high and 4 feet wide.

313. Twenty feet super.?—Yes.

314. How many tons have you on the surface?—Several tons.

315. Five tons?—Yes, fully 5 tons.

316. What is it worth at the pit's mouth?—We have not gone so far as to consider that question yet.

317. Suppose it was worth £1 a ton at the pit's mouth, that would be some money?—Yes.

318. You have taken 5 tons out of 40 feet of drive, is that a paying seam?—It is. We began with 8 inches of depth and increased to 2ft. 4in.

319. When did it increase?—Gradually.

320. Where do you expect to put the bore?—That is for Mr. Stirling.

321. *By the Hon. J. Buchanan.*—At the same seam, or the other side of the gully?—No.

322. *By the Chairman.*—What is the capital of this company?—There is no company yet.

323. What are you?—We are opening it up in connexion with Mr. Graham, and we have plenty of people with capital to follow it on.

324. *By Mr. Woods.*—Who is the "we"?—Mr. Graham and Mr. R. T. Dobbin.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned.

(At Warragul.)

WEDNESDAY, 15TH APRIL, 1891.

Members present:

The Hon. T. BENT, in the Chair;	
The Hon. D. Melville,	Mr. Groom,
The Hon. J. Buchanan.	Mr. McIntyre,
	The Hon. A. L. Tucker,
	The Hon. J. Woods.

William Watt, sworn and examined.

325. *By the Chairman.*—What are you?—President of the shire council. I would like to make a short statement, and then I will answer any questions the Committee may please to put. As a resident of the district, and president of the Warragul Shire Council, I have for years been an advocate of a line of railway from Warragul to McDonald's Track, being thoroughly acquainted with the district, and knowing that the land proposed to be served by the line is rich agricultural land—land that will produce in great quantities almost any crop you choose to put into it. The first produce to be taken off the land is the timber. The settler is compelled to improve, and therefore he is destroying hundreds of acres of valuable forest land yearly, which is a loss not only to the immediate land-owner, but to the State, for with railway communication no doubt the settlers would be able to send the timber to market and make a profit, and the State would also get the benefit of it upon the railways. If the timber was got rid of legitimately from the land the amount of freight would be very large. At the same time, if the timber was cleared, the selector could prepare the land for agricultural purposes. There are very few of the original settlers who took up the land in the first instance that are there now; the majority of them have been starved out of it. I will simply refer to the 2,000 acres which it was stated were locked up and held by capitalists; that is quite right; it is virtually locked up, but it does not follow that with a railway it would be locked up. I think it would be necessarily cut up and sold in small holdings, and there would be a large increase in population. With a railway the whole of the present holdings would be subdivided, and the population would be largely increased, and there would also be a considerable amount of manual labour brought into the district.

326. We want you to give statistics or evidence as to how far the Committee would be justified in recommending to Parliament the making of a line, with an idea of what would pay the State; how many people are on the line, and also what is within your knowledge to enable us to get a line constructed for a considerably less sum of money than is before us. You are president of the shire?—Yes.

327. You heard Mr. Worth who made some reference to the tramway which the shire council declined to carry out—what did he mean?—The shire council endeavoured to take advantage of the Tramways Act granting £2,000 a mile. They had the line surveyed and plans prepared, and put in an application for the money, and were baulked by the Railway Department; and the matter being delayed for something like two years, the department being opposed to the line and using their endeavours to prevent it being made, it was shown to the residents they were liable for a 2s. 6d. tax; they took a stand against it, and the council had to abandon it.

328. *By Mr. Tucker.*—Would you be kind enough to state specifically in what way the council was baulked?—In the first instance we prepared plans to construct a tramway for £1,500 a mile; we were told certain things would have to be done, which brought it up to £2,000, and then £2,500, and that took us beyond the limit and increased the liability.

329. Was there any correspondence?—Correspondence has passed.

330. Have you writing from the Railway Department to the effect that you were not providing enough money?—Letters informing us that we should have to get certain money.

331. Did you state to the Railway Department that you could construct a tramway for less than £2,000?—Yes, and by deputation.

332. And you say the Railway Department loaded it with such objections that you were unable to take advantage of the Act?—Yes.

333. *By the Chairman.*—Was that on the proposed track under consideration—do you know it or the alternative route?—I know both, the tramway line and the road you travelled. The tramway line runs parallel with that road until Bull's Swamp—

334. They serve the same people?—Yes.

335. Would you be kind enough to tell me the name of the engineer who prepared the plan?—Mr. Moirs and Mr. Brown.

336. Certificated engineers?—Both. The plan, at the request of the Railway Department, was sent to them; we have not been able to get it since.

337. Would that kind of line be sufficient for your wants, in view of the fact that money is not so plentiful as it was. Do you believe that the line would be of sufficient strength, and would meet the pressure?—Only for the break of gauge; it was 3ft. 6in.; I am opposed to the break of gauge.

338. Do you know the difference between the price with a break of gauge and an ordinary track?—No.

339. You say the plans are still in existence?—They were sent to the Railway Department.

340. Did not they give their approval?—No.

341. I understand the plans were checked by the Railway Department, and then they added how much?—I think £2,500, or a trifle more.

342. From correspondence and negotiations, were you justified in thinking £3,000 would make it?—No doubt it would make the tramway proposed, that is on the 3ft. 6in. gauge.

343. The proposed line that we have under consideration is 11 miles 26 chains—did that include the whole of that distance?—No.

344. How far?—It included a greater mileage, though it did not reach the same terminal point.

345. What was the length?—I think fifteen miles. There were two branches off the main line, and the branches made fifteen miles.

346. How long ago was that?—Immediately after the Tramways Act passed the House.

347. That being the case, do you think, with a line of the ordinary gauge communicating with the main line, the people would be satisfied with the speed of ten miles an hour?—Yes.

348. And the cheapest kind of stations?—All that the people ask for is a railway line to get the produce to the central market.

349. You do not want a break of gauge?—No; I prefer taking a lower price for the produce.

350. Was all the objection by them the break of gauge?—No.

351. That seems a very good explanation of what seemed mysterious this afternoon?—I am too well acquainted with the department to be surprised.

352. *By Mr. Groom.*—You heard Mr. Worth speak about the tramway from Darnum?—Yes, Croyley's.

353. Do you think that would suit the requirements?—I am certain it would not.

354. Would you tell the Committee how it is made, and what is the traffic?—They laid it down for their own saw-mill purposes to save bullock cartage. It is round sleepers without ballast, and not cleared, so much so that the first time they ran an engine down it they blazed the trees, and I am satisfied if the Committee saw it they would never think of anybody putting down such a tram.

355. You heard Mr. Worth say if it was ballasted it would be strong enough?—I do not agree with him.

356. Are there not a great many miles of tramways made by saw-millers in the district?—Yes.

357. Would anything of that kind do in case of emergency?—No; the ordinary saw-mill tramway is laid down on the ground, then generally filled up with rubbish, and filled with sawdust to give a foothold for the horses, and they follow the natural surface; a horse cannot take any load.

358. What are the rails?—Sawn timber, except in crossing a road, or anything of that kind where they must put down iron.

359. *By the Chairman.*—Would you be good enough to tell us the amount of rates provided by the shire?—I could not, but the shire officer is here.

360. With regard to the proposal to run on to Monomeith, are there any other lines, say from Drouin to Poowong East. Can you suggest any central line that would suit better than the proposed cockspsurs?—No, not in the interest of settlers where you were to-day. All business, the Government business especially, is done here, is centred here in Warragul.

361. Is there no proposition of connecting the two lines, the Great Southern and the main Gippsland?—The actual surveys put through by the Government connected with Leongatha, also Korumburra and Monomeith. It is only a matter of expenditure; they could connect in three directions.

362. I gather from your answer you think it would take a lot of money?—The Government propose a great amount of money.

363. In view of future extension, which do you consider the best track, or have you thought it out?—I should think the one to Leongatha.

364. The track we were on to-day?—Yes.

365. Is there any difference of opinion?—The Monomeith people would say Monomeith, and the Leongatha people to Leongatha, but as a national question I think Leongatha.

366. I take it you have a lot of patriotic men, could they not come out into the open and give us something about the lines?—As a rule every man wants a railway to his door.

367. *By Mr. Groom.*—Is there any line that would suit the requirements of the people at the end of the Monomeith line, and the people on the McDonald's Track?—None. The terminus of this line reaches McDonald's Track in the most populous part of the whole district. The people are centred in Warragul, therefore I think the present proposal is the best for them.

368. Between the parishes of Warragul and Poowong East is there not a high dividing range, which prevents the people getting from here, and the people from Poowong East getting to Warragul?—I have been informed so. I have not been over the country.

369. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—Have your council given the question of tramways better consideration, that this line from Warragul to McDonald's Track did not go so far?—That was the terminus.

370. Can you say how much land would have been placed under contribution for that tramway?—I could not say from memory.

371. Would there be any witness here who could give that. I want to know how many ratepayers there would have been affected by it?—About 300. A rate would have been struck over the South riding.

372. What would have been the assessment of the South riding at that time?—That I could not say. There is an officer who can say.

373. What is the assessment of the South riding now?—I do not know exactly.

374. What difficulty did the South riding ratepayers throw in the way?—The half-a-crown rate.

375. They did not consider that the advantages of the tramway would have been equivalent to the disadvantage of paying half-a-crown rate?—I do not know that they looked at it in that way. They argued other parts of the country are being served with railways free of cost, why should we be taxed. That was the stand they took up.

376. Do you think they would be still influenced by that idea?—Yes.

377. That if they had to pay a rate on their property, in consequence of this railway, they would still kick against it?—Yes.

378. The farmers of the South riding of Warragul would rather lose the railway than pay a rate?—They do not hope to lose it. They take the stand I have given. It is unfair to tax them while other parts get it for nothing.

379. Were you present this morning?—I was.

380. Did you hear the witnesses swear, one after the other, it would raise the value of property in one instance double, and another 50 per cent.?—Yes.

381. Do you think, in the face of your assessment being raised from 50 to 100 per cent., that the men would object, or that there would be any force in their objection?—I do not certainly believe that the land would increase in value, as they state, to that amount. Your argument is this—that the State increases

the value of property; the whole benefit should not go to the individual holder. I admit that the property is increased in value by the railway, and some consideration should be made to the State. You must bear in mind the settler took up the country with his eyes open. This has been the work of his brain, and he has a right to any improvements on the land.

382. They come here and swear to this: Our land is worth say £8 an acre; if you put a railway it is worth double, and in any case it will raise it 50 per cent. Believing that they are the best judges of that, what is your opinion. Would there be any justification for their refusing to pay a rate?—I think so, seeing it is not the general rule throughout the land. I do not see why a portion of the community should be saddled with a rate, and the bulk let off.

383. *By Mr. Woods.*—Do you think the present system is to live for ever?—No. I think that something, such as the law now spoken of, should be introduced, but in a mild way.

384. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—Parliament has put one power in your hand, and you show you will not use it. I will ask you are you aware that the proposed railway will cost £196,000 for eleven miles. Would you, as president of this shire, in the face of what may be done by Parliament, who may be driven to tax to pay the interest of the money, give the advice to the Committee to construct the line?—Not at that figure. It would be unnecessary.

385. What would be the maximum amount you would recommend this Committee to spend?—About £9,000 a mile.

386. That is £100,000. I suppose you have made some calculation of how you are to get the interest and the working expenses, at some time or other—tell the Committee how you get at it, something specific, that the country will understand?—I think 50,000 acres would be immediately benefited by the railway.

387. *By Mr. Groom.*—To what extent?—They will be benefited, and cultivation take place. The great bulk, if not the whole of the 50,000 acres, will be put under cultivation, and the tonnage of root crops would be very large.

388. *By Mr. Woods.*—Put it into money?—Thinking it over to day, I come to the conclusion that something like 40,000 or 50,000 tons of root crops would pass over the line.

389. To what extent do you think the 50,000 acres would be benefited in money?—My own views are that the land would not be increased beyond 25 per cent.

390. Twenty-five per cent. on what?—The present value.

391. What is the present value?—Taking the land on the Bear Creek survey—

392. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Take the whole 50,000 acres that you say will be benefited, give the average price of the whole?—That is difficult, seeing a great portion is highly improved immediately near the township, and a large portion in its natural state.

393. You do not include in the 50,000 acres that near the township?—Within three miles. The actual extent served by the line; take the average, £6 an acre, as it is.

394. *By Mr. Woods.*—It would be worth £7 10s. if the railway was made?—Yes.

395. Worth £7 10s., that is 30s. an acre?—Yes.

396. That is £75,000; to whom does that belong?—In my opinion to the property owners.

397. And the railway?—I do not think the railways have a right to claim.

398. Who does it belong to?—The property owners.

399. The railway and the £75,000?—No, that is the State's property.

400. You have shown no way how it will pay the interest on the money?—I have stated the tonnage.

401. *By the Chairman.*—I understood you were proceeding to show the traffic returns?—I was going to show about £25,000 from root crops, from freight, and a large passenger traffic.

402. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—At what price do you arrive at that—have you calculated 1d. a ton per mile, or something like that?—That, I believe, is the ruling freight throughout, but I have calculated a higher rate. I think there would be no objection to a higher rate.

403. *By Mr. Groom.*—Have you taken credit for running over the main line to Melbourne?—No, the line itself.

404. Off your land?—I have taken it into consideration in round figures.

405. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—I dare say you used some argument when you went for the Warragul tramway—how do you account for the four miles nearest the line we went over, where the gum-trees and hazel are still growing since the station was opened—if that objection was made then it was a poor one?—It is accounted for in this way, that the great bulk of the land you saw was held by three property owners, speculative men.

406. Yet you made that pretext, at that date, for Warragul?—I am not aware it was made.

407. There is not the slightest doubt it was one made by one of the deputations that there would be such a subdivision of the land, and we find that with the station it still remains a wilderness—do you not think your pretext now is as bad?—No; because the land beyond the three miles is held by farming individuals whose only object could be to improve.

408. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—You have sworn that there are 2,000 acres held for speculative purposes, and that would be subdivided?—That is my opinion.

409. Why is your opinion not applying five miles along from the station?—Because they were speculators and did not wish to cut it up.

410. What of the other men?—I have no knowledge but hearsay that they wish to cut up the land. I am justified in speaking of farmers.

411. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—You were present this morning and heard the witnesses state that the holdings were embraced by gentlemen who did not reside on the land; then suppose we were to make this railway, where is the guarantee that a repetition of the Warragul business would not occur?—I could not give any guarantee for the 2,000 acres—that is all that is held. It is simply for the reasons I have given. You have only to go three miles north of the railway to see the difference, where the land is held by the farmers.

412. *By Mr. Woods.*—You are president of the shire?—Yes.

413. Did the question ever come up before the council as to taxing locally the land held by speculators?—Yes.

414. What was done?—Nothing.
415. Do you mean to say the council has no power to tax out of the rates?—I think not.
416. What power have you?—They can only rate on the capital value of the land; they want a law for it.
417. Would you like to have the law amended, so that the council could make a differential rate?—Yes, in a district like this.
418. And collect the money locally until such time as the speculators found it to their advantage to cut it up?—Yes.
419. *By Mr. Groom.*—In the first instance, is it not a fact that the main road south from Warragul has only been made for four months?—As far as the metal is concerned.
420. And therefore it was impossible to cart produce over it if grown?—That is a fact.
421. In regard to properties in the hands of speculators near Warragul, is it not also a fact with regard to Mr. Charlesly's estate, that it is now in the hands of *bona fide* settlers?—Yes.
422. Is it not also a fact that there has been a saw-mill on it, and the owner could not clear the land and saw timber?—It is a fact a saw-mill was put up as the best method.
423. Are they not now clearing?—The tenants.
424. Is there not a probability that the land in the south side will be in the same condition as the north?—Yes.
425. *By Mr. Tucker.*—There is the alternative proposal from Bloomfield?—Yes.
426. In the tramway question, did you go into particulars on that route?—No.
427. Do you know whether that route would be cheap from a railway point of view?—Yes, from professional evidence that will be produced.
428. Do you know the difference?—To where you were, £2,000.
429. This line of railway chiefly concerns the parish of Warragul?—Yes, chiefly.
430. And either of the two lines would pass through the parish?—Yes.
431. Is the land of pretty average quality all over the parish?—Good agricultural land.
432. The line from Bloomfield would serve the district as fairly as the other?—Yes.
433. And £20,000 cheaper?—Yes.
434. Are you taking credit in the Warragul line for five miles each side?—Yes.
435. Are you aware that there is a projected line from Drouin?—Yes.
436. If the line from Warragul to McDonald's Track were adopted it would be impossible to give the Drouin line, because it would be within five miles?—I do not think it is within five miles.
437. The map shows that it would be not more than three and a half miles?—I question the correctness of the map.
438. The Drouin line would have to go at once?—Not necessarily.
439. You would not expect to have lines running parallel within five miles?—It could be put further away.
440. Taking the line from Bloomfield, and the saving of £20,000, there would be the same distance between Bloomfield and Drouin as there is between Bloomfield and Warragul?—Yes.
441. You said the settlers were compelled to improve the land by destroying the timber?—Yes.
442. How?—To get grass.
443. You said compelled by law?—I said to get the cropping.
444. Has the attempt ever been made?—Yes.
445. How long is it since selection took place here?—The first selection was fifteen years on the McDonald's Track.
446. Are many of the original selectors in possession?—Very few; they have been starved out.
447. You say that the aggregation of land in some parts of the parish might be burst up if the railway were constructed?—Yes.
448. And the construction of the railway would reach those holders?—Yes.
449. Take the present holders of land in the parish, are they a thriving and industrious class of people—do they make a good living?—Those fortunate enough to have a frontage on the road you passed; though the others on the back blocks cannot.
450. Do the owners of the land as a rule occupy it?—Yes, with the exception of the 2,000 acres.
451. Is there any let to tenants?—Yes.
452. Do you know the average rent per acre?—No, I do not, although I know it is let; in a few instances I know the rent.
453. Can you give the population five miles each side, starting three miles from Warragul station?—Three or four thousand.
454. Within eight miles on each side, starting three miles away?—No.
455. You do not count Warragul?—No.
456. Where do you start?—From the South riding, south of the line.
457. What is the total population of the shire of Buln Buln?—I cannot say.
458. Of Warragul?—I cannot answer that question. I have not posted myself up.
459. With regard to the road opened on this side of the line, did not the Government subsidize the council to a large amount?—Not more than three to one.
460. Was it not all public money that made the road—three-fourths of it—which enabled persons to sell out with large profits, and bring in people who paid heavily?—I do not think they sold out at a profit. They were compelled to sell.
461. They were losers?—In many cases.
462. If the line was constructed here, then the valuations on the land would go up?—Yes.
463. Would it go up 15 per cent.?—No.
464. Do not you know any other places where the shire valuations have gone up?—Yes, I believe so.
465. Then the three to one intensified, because you have more rates?—Yes, it would be a fact; we would claim a larger subsidy.
466. Then the country is in the position that the railway might be a failure. The country would have to make up the interest and working expenses, and you have a larger rate, and your shire is not willing to pay anything to make the railway?—I do not think the ratepayers would be willing.

467. Notwithstanding that their property would be enhanced, they would not risk the half-crown ?
—They take the stand I have given.
468. When you proposed the tramway line, did you take into consideration the people outside five miles ?—Not then ; there were not so many roads.
469. Would you now ?—Yes.
470. Would you ask them to travel five miles to that ?—Yes, they would be forced to.
471. If you take five miles one way you must take it in another ?—Yes, I suppose so.
472. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—You said £1,500 a mile for the tramway ?—That was our first proposal.
473. Was this question submitted to the ratepayers ?—Yes ; there were no objections.
474. Were they satisfied with a tramway of that character ?—Yes.
475. Why do you ask us now to construct a railway at your estimate of £9,000 a mile if they were satisfied with a tramway at £1,500, increased to £2,500 in consequence of the Railways Commissioners—why do you wish us to expend £9,000 ?—In the first instance it was the main gauge.
476. They were satisfied with it ?—Yes.
477. Why are they not satisfied now ?—I suppose they take up their position from the fact that they are entitled to a railway.
478. Is it not from the fact that there is a different system in the future from the past ?—We may assume there will be a difference. We have no knowledge.
479. Do you not think, as a man of business, it is a great jump to go from £1,500 to £9,000, that is your estimate ?—The difference is between a tramway and a railway.
480. Would the difference of gauge make the difference ?—Not necessarily, but there is more cost in the construction of a railway than a tramway. I understand your question is, whether the people would be satisfied with a tramway rather than nothing.
481. No ; if they were satisfied with £1,500 then, why £9,000 now ?—At that time they had no prospect of getting a railway. The tramway proposal was brought forward, and they thought to take advantage of it as a means of giving the population transit to the markets.
482. So long as the population were taxing themselves they were satisfied with £1,500, but when the State taxes they want £9,000 ?—They want a railway ; they think they are entitled to it.
483. In regard to the £2,500 that the Railway Department demanded, did they ask you to provide for an increased gauge ?—No.
484. They were satisfied with a narrow gauge ?—Yes.
485. What were the kind of improvements the department suggested to be made ?—Heavier rails and ballast.
486. What was the weight of rail to be used for the £1,500 ?—I think 30 lbs.
487. Then the Government increased the weight of the rails, and wanted heavier ballast ?—Yes, and bridges.
488. When the Government had determined everything and said they would assist you at £2,500, were you satisfied ?—The ratepayers were not, because the rate was too high.
489. The rate they had to pay ?—They thought at £1,500 they would be rated at one shilling ; when it was £2,500 it was half-a-crown, and they objected.
490. You told us that there were 2,000 acres of land, at £6 an acre, increased in value to £75,000 ; do you think there would be an objection to hand over half that increase to the Government ?—I think they would object. I know they would not go as far as say, if it was put to them, that or no railway, they would not have a railway.
491. Suppose we recommend to Parliament that the line should be constructed, and on that condition, would they have that ?—I could not say that definitely. I think so.
492. You say you have calculated the amount a railway would return : what is the highest rate then, 1d. a mile, that is the present rate ?—About that.
493. What rate do you reckon for railways ; would you say up to 2d. a mile ?—I think fully 3d. a mile. I thought it out to-day.
494. Do you think if a railway were recommended by the Committee, and said the rate should be 3d. a ton to the Warragul line, would they accept that in preference to no line ?—Yes. I have argued that out, and they are prepared to pay a higher rate for that distance.
495. You think they would be prepared to pay three times the present rate if that were a condition ?
—Yes.
496. That would enable the non-residents and non-cultivators to escape ?—If the land remained in its present state, but I do not think it would.
497. *By the Hon. J. Buchanan.*—I think you heard a witness say he would give his land free to the State ?—Yes.
498. Do you think that is a fair thing to ask a man who would benefit no more than his neighbours ?
—No ; but I put the question to a number of settlers whose land it would go through, and they are willing to give it at a very low valuation.
499. Suppose this Committee recommended to the Government to make a line to Warragul, and the district should get the taxation, and take the land, and put a tax on those benefited, do you think that would meet the case ?—I do not know. When you talk tax to a ratepayer you get his back up. I think it is a fair proposal that the people benefited should bear some proportion of the cost.
500. You told us the whole of these 60,000 acres would be benefited 25 per cent. ; do you think it not fair that a tax at a certain ratio should be made—that a local tax should be raised for the payment of the land ?—If only to pay for the land required it is equitable.
501. It would take the Government out of a difficulty at the present time. You know you have the valuation in your own hands, and you could put your own valuer at once to value. Do you think that could be done ?—Yes, that would be fair.
502. Do you think it could be done better by the shire officers than by the Government ?—Yes ; they would be in a better position to know the values.
503. And make the absentees pay a fair share ?—Yes, and a little more.
504. Do you see any difficulty in that proposal ?—No, nothing more than that when you propose a general tax to a ratepayer he is up in arms.

505. The position is, you will not get the railway unless we get the land?—I do not think there is a difficulty.

506. I do not want to see it taken from a man; his property may be destroyed or greatly injured, and the other people would pay nothing?—I think they should pay something.

507. You would advise that the land should be valued by the shire, and handed over to the Government?—Yes.

508. *By the Chairman.*—Are you sure it was the Railway Department that put difficulties in the way. Is the Tramways Act administered by the department?—I say, from those reasons, that when the deputations were there we were told that the Railways wanted a greater expenditure than we proposed; we were always baulked.

509. Some of the Committee took up the idea that your council did not want to do it—I understand you to say the Railway Department put an impediment in the way?—Yes.

510. Was it the ratepayers in that particular ward?—Those near Warragul, and those away from the tramway, raised the objection in the first case.

511. It was those who were close to the existing railway who objected?—In the first instance; that was the reason why they objected to pay half-a-crown.

512. How far, do you know, from the existing line do the people live who raised the objection within a reasonable distance of the existing station, and with fair roads?—Yes; the first agitators were people living within a reasonable distance of the railway.

513. They would not be benefited?—No; the riding, as a whole, objected to the half-crown rate.

514. I understood you to say the leading elements were those who would be benefited by the tramway?—Yes.

515. With regard to the question put by Mr. Buchanan, under the present Local Government Act, if you wanted a new road, who finds the funds?—The council; they find new deviations.

516. They have to pay for it out of the shire funds, I understand?—Yes.

517. If you wanted the eleven miles, could that not be done in the same way. Is that one of the undertakings for which you can borrow?—I am not sure; I do not think you can borrow for the purpose of making a new road; you can for construction of works on a new road.

518. You can out of rates. Supposing the law were altered, and you were allowed to buy the track and borrow for it, would it not be as fair to make this track as a road, considering 3,000 would be benefited. Could you make any road that would benefit so much?—No.

519. That being the case, would not it be fair to empower the shire council to do that?—I think it would be fair for those benefited to be included in the tax.

The witness withdrew.

Thomas Walker Fowler, civil engineer and authorized surveyor, sworn and examined.

520. *By the Chairman.*—You are thoroughly acquainted with the construction of railways?—I have had considerable experience.

521. *By Mr. Woods.*—I think you were the engineer for the Dookie and Katamatite Railway?—Yes.

522. Can you tell the difference between tramways and railways?—I know little difference.

523. Is there any?—I am not aware of any.

524. *By the Chairman.*—What term would you use in view of what we have been speaking of?—I should call the Katamatite a light railway.

525. There is the Tramways Act—what would you call what we have been talking about—a light railway or tramway?—I do not exactly understand the question.

526. Nor I either. You heard what Mr. Watt said; they made application under the Tramways Act. You say you do not know what it is; there are tramways and railways irrespective of what we see in the city. Mr. Woods said, will you tell us what you call a tramway?—He asked about the Katamatite Railway.

527. You heard Mr. Watt speak, and you heard to-day about a cheap rate—what do you call it?—The difference between a tramway and railway is so very slight, the margin is so very close, that I could not attempt to define where one commences and the other ceases.

528. *By Mr. Woods.*—Have you been over this line that we are talking of?—I have.

529. What do think of the country?—I think, take it all through, it is remarkably good.

530. For a railway?—In connexion with that I may say I have prepared a report on the line.

531. Can you condense it down to a couple of sentences?—No.

532. Can you tell us what your estimate makes the line to cost?—I think you have printed copies.

533. You can tell us what is your estimate for eleven miles?—I estimate that a direct line from Warragul to the point which was pointed out, where the two lines would junction, would cost £57,448 9s. 3d., and that from there on to the point to the 10 miles 50 chains peg, which is, in my opinion, as far as the line should be constructed, it would cost £39,141 12s. 11d.; were the alternative survey known as the Bloomfield route adopted instead, the cost would be to junction, £38,125 14s. 1d., to which the last part would have to be added to give the total cost of the through line.

534. Can you give it?—Yes; I estimate that the cost of what I would call the direct line.

535. We went along the line to-day?—Yes. The terminus is to the right. I estimate the direct line would cost £96,590 2s. 2d., and that the Bear Creek line, terminating at the same point, would cost £77,267 7s.

536. Both lines finished?—Both lines finished.

537. And rolling-stock?—No.

538. The Government gauge?—Yes, the Government gauge.

539. Will you kindly describe the kind of work that you propose for this money?—I may mention that I obtained copies of the sections taken by the Government surveyors over this route, which I have graded, and taken out the quantities, and the grade of them is 1 in 40. Those sections are here; those are copied from the Government, as far as the surface is concerned—[*handing in a paper*].

540. Will you describe the character of the line, the one which is proposed at £97,000, and the other at £77,000; the direct line, £77,000, terminating at the same point from Bloomfield. Now I ask you to describe the earthworks, and everything connected with it, ballast, sleepers, rails, cuttings, viaducts, culverts, and all that sort of thing?—I propose to make the formation about 14 feet wide in cuttings, and 15 feet in banks; of course the slopes would vary slightly, according to the nature of the soil. In making my calculations, I have taken the slopes out of the banks at $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1.

541. That would be the natural slope; you do not interfere with it?—The ordinary slope at which the earth would stand. In bank and cuttings I have taken out at a slope of $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 1, although the work would stand at 1 to 1.

542. Some $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1?—Possibly. I have taken them all at $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 1. The reason was I had no data of the Government transverse slope of the ground. I added an additional slope through the line going through siding ground.

543. You would get as much out of the cuttings as you want for the banks?—Yes. The ballast that I propose to put on is 10 feet at top, 12 feet at bottom, and 10 inches deep. From my examination of the country, I believe that gravel suitable for ballast can be obtained in the locality. I believe in some of the cuttings gravel would be obtained. There is a ballast pit opened up by the shire council; I inspected it. At a pinch it would do for ballast, but I think better can be got in the district. The sleepers I propose to be of the ordinary Government type, for which I have allowed an ample price in my estimate.

544. Will you tell us what you allow for ballast?—Four shillings per yard, 4s. 6d. for sleepers.

545. Why will you pay 4s. 6d.?—I want to be on the safe side. If my expectation of getting ballast in the locality is correct, I am certain it can be got under 4s. a yard. I might mention, for earthwork in cuttings, I have averaged right through at 1s. 6d., and side-cuttings 1s. a yard. I might mention that the sleepers I propose to space the same as in the ordinary Government lines. I have allowed 2,000 to the mile; and rails, 60-lb. steel rails new. Permanent-way material, taking the English price, can be landed on the ground at £772 a mile, including the fastenings and fish-plates.

546. That describes the line with the exception of the bridges and viaducts; will you tell us about that?—With reference to those I simply put down bulk sums.

547. They are given separately?—No.

548. Do you know how many feet of viaduct and culverts would be required for the whole eleven miles?—I have put down a rough guess, which I know is probably twice as much as required. What I want to point out is that the line runs so close to the watershed, dividing the fringes of the Lang Lang and Moe rivers, that ample drainage is required. I have provided altogether £2,000 for bridge work and culverts on the direct line, and £3,000 on the Bear Creek line.

549. You think that ample?—I do.

550. What about the clearing—you know the timber is very long?—Yes.

551. Have you provided for that?—Yes, a width of 3 chains right along.

552. Do you fence at all?—I propose to fence on both sides all along the line with post and six wires, topped with barbed wire. At the stations I propose to use a top rail and five wires.

553. How much per mile have you allowed?—For the post and wire, £60 a mile; for the post and rail, £100 a mile.

554. *By the Chairman.*—Mile of railway or single line?—Single line.

555. *By Mr. Woods.*—Platforms?—I have allowed for three stations on the line; for the platform, £75; I allow the passenger station building, £150; for the goods platform and shed, £250; for a crane at each station, £100; and trucking-yard, £100.

556. Have you made provision for water for the locomotives?—I have put down £900 at the terminus, but I question very much whether any water supply would be required, owing to the shortness of the line.

557. You mean to say you can easily get engines to run 22 miles?—I can get tank engines.

558. A turn-table?—£1,500 for turn-table and engine-sheds.

559. I would like to ask, do you know reliable contractors who would carry it out for the money?—I think I could find one with very little difficulty.

560. Will you find out and send a letter to the Chairman of the Committee?—If required.

561. If it can be carried out for the money you mention?—I have but little doubt it could.

562. *By the Chairman.*—In what respect do you differ between railway sections—you have seen the departmental one?—I have not seen the graded sections. I have been supplied with sections simply showing the natural surface.

563. What do you allow for the land?—On the direct line to the junction 180 acres of land, at £30 an acre.

564. Why do you say 180 acres. How many miles is it?—It is six and a half miles.

565. I thought there were only 15 acres to the mile?—I have allowed 3 chains.

566. That is not a light railway?—I do not suggest this as a light railway.

567. Why 3 chains?—I want to have sufficient to clear all the tall timber off.

568. Would not three-quarters do?—No.

569. What is the total length of the line?—Ten miles 50 chains.

570. Instead of 11 miles 26 chains?—Yes.

571. Then you want how many acres for the whole 10 miles 50 chains?—I have 180 and 82.

572. That is 262 acres?—Yes; that includes the additional allowance for station-yards.

573. At £30?—The 180 acres, at £30, that comes to £5,400; and 82 acres, at £20, comes to £1,640.

574. What do you take for clearing. Now, for convenience, I will ask, is the line *via* Bloomfield the cheapest?—Yes.

575. I will take that line?—Those figures were on the direct line.

576. Do you say there is £20,000 difference?—Yes, practically.

577. I will take the Bloomfield line—what land do you require?—One hundred and eighty-seven acres, which I estimate will cost £25 an acre, that comes to £4,675; and 82 acres, at £20, comes to £1,640. Before proceeding from this I would like to point out in the report I put down the amounts at which I believe the land could be obtained for, but I do not wish to take any responsibility for it, because it is the business of the land-owners and not mine.

578. This would include severance?—I should expect it to include severance.
579. Let us have an understanding; is it absolutely necessary, in view of what you have heard, that we should have to take three chains for the line Mr. Watt spoke of; do you think we can afford to give that for the land?—I have no doubt the Railway Department estimated for that amount.
580. Is it necessary to have three chains in width to make a railway in this country?—Not throughout, provided you have the power to get the tall timber outside the line felled.
581. Never mind about the timber; as a professional man, if you were making that line, what would be necessary for gradients, and ballast, and cuttings, without speaking of the timber?—The width would vary.
582. I mean to carry your works?—I will give you about the maximum width.
583. Taking the track, supposing there were no timber, if you were going to make a railway with cuttings and ballast, what width would you require?—In certain cases I would require three chains, and in some places one chain.
584. What causes three chains?—Where they have got cuttings of about 55 feet in depth.
585. Have you seen the Neerim line?—No.
586. What, for the station sites?—I allow 10 acres.
587. Why?—It is advisable to have a little to spare; it is not actually required at the present time; it is well to have a small surplus.
588. Suppose you were starting on your own account, and you heard the people say it is life and death, is it possible you would want 10 acres for a station. With the money we have at our disposal, is it necessary for us to have it. I am not talking for speculation, or the future, but for a reasonable time for a station?—I believe that in a great number of cases 5 acres would be sufficient.
589. Do you know what the Government allow for the track, the station, and for the line itself?—The general amount is, I believe, 20 acres.
590. You are taking more?—No; I am allowing 10 acres for stations.
591. For the mile?—I allow 10 acres at each station.
592. I ask if you know what the Government take for track and station per mile?—It would depend on the kind of station.
593. You have no much trouble on this line, because you only have three?—In country similar to this, I think they take 3 chains.
594. You think it absolutely necessary to have 3 chains, and 5 acres at the stations?—In some places you would require 3 chains.
595. According to law, we have to report to Parliament what we can make the line for. We have the estimate of the department, which you have seen?—No. I have had the sections.
596. We have to get from men like you sufficient evidence to justify us in reporting to Parliament. Suppose we reported to Parliament this session, and tenders were called, and they exceeded our estimate by 10 per cent., then the Government could not accept the report; we want something like close evidence. Do you still give me the minimum of what you think it would take for the ten miles, so that we can get at the price; give me area as the quantity—have you given us the smallest?—I have put it down as the amount that I think the Railway Department would take.
597. I want you to say what you would take to make the line on the track?—I think I would reduce that by one-third.
598. No more?—No.
599. What about the clearing, taking the Bloomfield route?—I have made one item of clearing the whole, and grubbing. Clearing, I take 187 acres on the Bloomfield route at £3 an acre, equal to £561; and 52 acres of grubbing in addition, clearing at £10, amounting to £520.
600. And fencing, say barbed wire?—You will have to add those two together. From the junction there are 82 acres at £5 clearing, and 25 acres of grubbing at £10, making a total of £971 for clearing, and £895 for grubbing.
601. For fencing, you say a barbed wire and six wires?—Yes.
602. You think that would be quite suitable for a railway here or anywhere?—For any country line.
603. Sixty pounds a mile?—Yes.
604. What is the price at the stations?—Top rail and five wires, £100 a mile.
605. Do you provide level crossings and gate-houses?—Cattle-pits.
606. What is the total?—£1,455 for the fencing.
607. Nearly £2,000 for clearing and grubbing?—Yes.
608. Do you think the patriotic people along the line would clear that for us for nothing?—They might.
609. You say you have cattle-pits, and you would have no gate-houses?—No.
610. Do you think they would be quite as good and safe as the others?—I do; the public will have to look after themselves.
611. What is the total for cattle-pits?—£240.
612. The earthwork in cuttings, how much a yard?—One shilling and sixpence.
613. How many yards?—One hundred and twenty-three thousand and 232,657.
614. Do you think it possible with that number of yards to obtain a gradient of 1 in 40?—Yes. I will give you my quantities for the track route, 322,966 added to 232,657. I would point out my quantities stood at 10 miles 20 chains.
615. Would the difference be made up by the additional length; why do you stop there—is it pretty stiff?—If continued it would have a cutting of over 100 feet.
616. Supposing it were proposed to go on to Monomeith?—You would have to tunnel.
617. Is there any tunnelling on the direct line under the present plans they have prepared; have you made a plan of the direct line?—Yes.
618. Have you any tunnelling?—No.
619. Not on the direct line?—No.
620. They have 200 yards?—Very likely it would be through the point where they stop. I may say it would be easy to get a practicable route from the point I propose to terminate to the McDonald's Track.

621. But if there was to be a continuation, it would be very expensive?—Yes, and the station site would, in my opinion, be much more cheaply constructed than the one at the terminus proposed by the Government.

622. You have told us about the banks and culverts; the metalling you have given at 4s.; the ballast at 4s.; how do you account for 4s. 6d., the price for sleepers, because we are told that they have plenty of bluegum?—I am not aware whether the Government engineer would accept that.

623. If you were engineer of the shire, in view of what you heard to-day, what would you do, and what kind of railway would you give us; would you use the local timber for fencing and sleepers?—For fencing; for sleepers I would require to consider the question.

624. What do you give for 4s. 6d.?—Redgum.

625. Would you bring it from Bairnsdale or Echuca; some say there is a forest of redgum near?—Of bluegum.

626. If they were content to take bluegum?—Probably about 3s.

627. There is £200 a mile saved?—Yes.

628. You have spoken of stations and sheds and turn-table; what would be a fair thing for the engineering for that line?—I think it and surveying should be covered by 7 per cent. on the cost of the works.

629. What will we say in round numbers?—I have allowed for engineering and contingencies, £4,349 1s. 5d.

630. Let us get to the engineering?—Six or 7 per cent., but you have to take off the land, and also the engineering itself.

631. Give us in round numbers what you think it ought to be?—About £4,200 or £4,300.

632. For eleven miles of railway?—Yes.

633. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Had you anything to do with the £1,500—the tramways?—No, I am not connected with the shire. I was simply asked by the railway league to report.

634. Did you follow the track surveyed by the Government railway officers?—Yes.

635. How is it you do not know anything about the tunnel?—I simply stop at what I consider the proper place. If I wanted to go ahead I should employ a tunnel.

636. You say you form your survey on the estimate submitted to the Committee; what did you do?—I followed the line.

637. You must have seen the tunnel mentioned in the estimates submitted?—I think, if you look at the sections, you will see.

638. Are they different?—No.

639. Can you see the one "B" and "C," that is *viâ* Bloomfield?—Up to 10 miles 50 chains without a tunnel.

640. Your estimate only goes to that point?—Yes.

641. You do not go to the school-room?—No.

642. *By the Chairman.*—You can give a good route without a tunnel?—I can give a good route from the station site I propose to McDonald's Track.

643. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—You know the spot where the tunnel is?—Where the Government would give the tunnel.

644. What is the difference in mileage?—Three-quarters of a mile.

645. *By the Chairman.*—You think there would be £1,200 on the three-quarters of a mile?—Yes.

646. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Do the league you worked for accept either line as satisfactory?—I believe they would be pleased with either.

647. *By Mr. Groom.*—I understood you to say that you followed the Government route?—Yes.

648. Do you think if you went over the ground you could get an easier grade?—I think very possibly, if I had instructions to make out a route from this line to McDonald's Track left entirely to myself, I might find a line cheaper in construction, and possibly with an easier grade.

649. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Were you not asked to do that?—No; to check the Government survey.

650. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—Has any one checked those calculations with you; what time did you spend?—About eight days myself on them.

651. The first item, 180 acres clearing, £120, how do you arrive at that?—I said £720.

652. *By Mr. Woods.*—What effect on the price of the construction would it have if, in this country where the timber is so very plentiful, the sleepers were made of bluegum, if you increased the number of sleepers on the line by one-third, and reduced the weight of rail by 10 lbs. a yard?—The effect of increasing by one-third would bring the cost of sleepers nearly up to the amount which I have provided for the redgum sleepers, not quite, and the effect of reducing the weight of railway material would reduce the cost per mile about £120. A line provided with 50-lb. rails, with the increased number of sleepers, would be able to carry as heavy engines as the 60-lb. rails.

653. It would carry any of the Government stock?—Yes.

654. There would be no necessity to have any special weight of engines, but if the necessity arose to have an engine from the Government, they could run with safety at fifteen miles an hour?—There are some of the Government engines, I mean some of the heavy ones, which have weight per wheel up to about 8 tons. I would be a little bit sceptical about running them on some of the Government lines.

655. A line, you say, with an increased number of sleepers and decreased ballast, would be equal to a line on the present construction of 60-lb. rails?—So long as the thickness under the sleepers was the same.

656. How much do you put under?—Six inches, and box up to 4 inches.

657. If your sleepers are so close together, it is in the boxing up where the decrease would occur; there is a decrease in the ballast?—Yes.

658. Do you consider in a line so constructed, in a place where a sleeper would in all probability be obtained for 2s., or at the outside 2s. 6d., it would be advisable to do it, and have the weight of rails 50 lbs., and you say it would be equal to 60 lbs. with the ordinarily constructed lines?—Yes. I have always held the opinion that it would be better if we had the sleepers closer, instead of putting down the heavy rails.

659. A third more would bring it up to about 2,400 to the mile?—Yes; I have allowed 2,000.

660. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—Where have you had your experience?—I was engaged formerly for a short time in the Victorian Railways, and I was engaged in New South Wales, and have been engineer of the Dookie tramway.

661. Did you superintend any lines?—No; in the survey branch.

662. In New South Wales?—In the survey branch.

663. Any in Victoria beyond the tramway?—Not railways; principally water-works.

664. You cannot point to any line as an instance of your work in Victoria?—The Dookie and Katamatite tramway.

665. What did that cost?—About £2,300, including rolling-stock.

666. What length was it?—Thirteen miles.

667. Were the ratepayers there favorable?—Some of them were favorable.

668. How does it work?—Very well. I think after the first year it will be found to pay the working expenses.

669. The interest?—No, only the working expenses.

670. Could you form any idea from your experience whether, if this Committee recommended your proposal, there would be anything like the traffic on the line to cover expenses within the next five years?—I do not think that the line would pay at the start, but I believe in the course of a few years, it might be five years, it would pay.

671. Do you think it would pay the working expenses. I see you put three stations within the mileage; do you think it would pay working expenses within five years?—Yes, I think it ought to.

672. You have taken observations of the country—would it pay any more?—It is a very difficult thing to say.

673. I know it is. Do you know any of the Victorian railways, particularly any of the recent ones?—Yes.

674. Redesdale?—No.

675. Any one recently put up?—No.

676. *By the Chairman.*—What lines do you know?—The North-Eastern as far as Benalla and Yarrawonga, and the Dookie line, and a number of cocksups.

677. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—Do you know any district that has a railway with so little cultivation on the side of it?—I have; districts which had as poor land.

678. Did you notice any particular part of that survey?—I might mention on the Bear Creek line a quantity of land eminently suited for agriculture—that is on this line.

679. How many miles from Warragul?—Almost from where it leaves the line up to the junction.

680. Do you mean the place where the beautiful ferns are?—No; lower down the valley.

681. How far off that point, can you tell us; how far from Warragul?—I have here a plan supplied by the Chairman of the Railways Commissioners showing the two lines—[*producing a plan*].

682. How far would the Bear Creek be from Warragul?—About three-quarters of a mile from Warragul.

683. That would be within the non-contributing portion—we are not taking that; we are not taking anything within three miles. Did you notice anything to give special traffic to this railway?—There is timber suitable for saw-milling purposes.

684. If everything goes well you think there would be a good traffic in timber?—Yes.

685. Would you have anything like roads near the stations?—The roads would have to be made.

686. What kind of cost would it be to make the roads?—Metal roads could be made for about £700 or £800 a mile.

687. The shire would have to make roads—at present they are impassable?—A great number of them are.

688. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Are you aware of the total cost of the line as estimated by the Government—the direct line?—I believe it is £198,000.

689. Your estimate is £96,589?—Yes.

690. Then you tell this Committee this line is only three-quarters of a mile shorter than the Government line?—Yes.

691. Are you prepared to say you are prepared to stake your reputation on making a line suitable for all purposes, for heavy locomotives and machinery, at a saving of over a hundred thousand pounds?—Yes, I am perfectly. I believe I could construct a line suitable to carry any ordinary locomotive. I do not refer to any particular—

692. The present Government engines?—There are a number of Government engines which I believe the Government engineers will not put on some of their new lines; this line would not carry some of those.

693. What kind would it carry; the people here want a railway to connect with the main system?—The estimate I provide would carry engines similar to those run by the Government on any of their new lines.

694. Do you save the State a considerable sum over that?—Yes.

695. Taking off the £12,000, you could do the work up to that point saving some hundred thousand pounds?—Yes; I do not provide for a tunnel.

696. *By Mr. Groom.*—Do you know the line from Woodend to Daylesford, or Carlsruhe to Daylesford?—No.

697. *By the Chairman.*—Are you aware that there are a large number of rails on the lines that have been raised—some 60-lb. rails. I think Mr. Darbyshire told us there were some 200 miles; would they be suitable for this line?—I believe there are a number of 60-lb. rails which would be suitable.

698. Sufficient for this line?—Yes, a number off the Adelaide line, and a number off this main Gippsland line.

699. If we have them in stock, it would be so much less money to pay?—Yes.

700. Have you allowed anything for road approaches to the stations?—Not outside the railway fences.

701. I suppose you know the Government make roads for those people?—Sometimes they contribute.

702. You simply keep inside the fences?—Yes.

703. Do you know what the cutting cost on the bridge where we passed to-day?—No. The shire engineer could tell you that.

704. Would you be favorable to letting these railways in sections instead of the present system. I suppose you know how they are let?—Yes.

705. Do you think it would be wise to let them in sections, fencing to one, and ballast to another?—It is a point I have not considered. I question if there would be much advantage in following such a system.

706. Why?—Each man's work would be knocked about by the other who came after him, and the department would have to repair.

707. Is it the practice to sublet?—It is.

708. Is it proper, according to the specifications?—No.

709. If the system obtained, would it be wise to sublet?—I think they ought to be allowed.

710. The custom is so prevalent you think it would be wise to legalize it?—I do.

711. You say, supposing you started off to find this track for yourself, or from the information that the people could give you, you could get an easier grade at a less price?—Yes.

712. Do you know the price?—No.

713. I understood you to say you could get an easier grade, in easier country; if we are to adopt your views you must say how much it could be done for; can you give the sum of money less?—It would not be desirable for me to state any sum unless I had sections.

714. As an engineer, could you not estimate at all?—I would not like to commit myself at all.

The witness withdrew.

James Daskin, sworn and examined.

715. *By the Chairman.*—What are you?—Shire engineer for the Warragul shire.

716. What are you going to tell us?—Simply that I accompanied Mr. Fowler in his inspection.

717. Are you an engineer?—Yes. On the surveyed route by the Government we found a very easy track and the natural gradient there on from Warragul to McDonald's Track, and it quite surprised me to see so little engineering difficulties. I confined my attention to the short route. We only had one creek of any dimensions to cross, the Bull Swamp; there was no creek of any size. As far as I could judge the work could be carried out at a low price.

718. This is the direct line?—Yes.

719. What about the other?—Still more favorable for construction; it follows the course of the Bear Creek to the junction of the main line, and passes through first-class agricultural land.

720. Are you a certificated engineer?—Yes, and have held the office of shire engineer to the Hampden Shire Council for fifteen years.

721. Have you had much experience in railway construction?—Not much. I was consulting engineer from Camperdown to Terang.

722. Do you agree with Mr. Fowler and his estimates?—Yes. I have prepared a list of the prices we are paying for some of our principal contracts; we are spending alone in loan works over £10,000.

722A. Shown on that document?—Not fully; the cuttings are over 10 feet in depth, and a lead 10 chains long; one contract you drove over to-day, it is 10d., and Hamilton's-road for 11d.

723. *By Mr. Woods.*—Where the bridge is?—Yes. The Bull Swamp 10d., Dardell's-road 1s. 1d., and the contract you went over to-day, 1s.

724. *By the Chairman.*—What is your lead and depth?—Over 10 feet of lead, and fully 10 chains of an exceedingly stiff hill; the price includes trimming the slopes.

725. Having gone over the line with Mr. Fowler, would that be a fair price to pay per cubic yard?—I would favour an estimate at a lower price.

726. Lower than that?—Lower than his; his is 1s. 6d., and I am confident it could be done at 1s. 3d.

727. Why put on 1s. 3d.?—It is this way, in carrying out extensive works there are corresponding higher rates.

728. Had you two men doing this work?—Yes, we took the sections out.

729. What would they do it for?—A shilling.

730. Why pay 1s. 3d. for this work?—That makes me feel confident the work would be carried out successfully.

731. It amounts to a large sum of money?—I believe 1s. 3d.

732. If taken in sections, how much?—One shilling throughout all the cuttings. Every one shows, as near as possible, the same formation.

733. I understand you to indicate the track you went on would be almost the same as we saw?—Yes.

734. And the lead about the same?—Yes.

735. *By Mr. Groom.*—Near the course of the railway route, is there not a large deposit of gravel?—Yes.

736. Near the railway, and in the shire?—Yes.

737. Would that not make a difference in the revenue, and making the roads?—Yes.

738. What is the cost of gravel?—Nine shillings at the railway station.

739. What would it cost you?—Six shillings with drays.

740. And with railway?—About nine miles to the pit; about 9d.

741. What per yard?—Ninepence, and about a 1s. for getting it. We could have it delivered here for about 2s.

742. The shire council would actually save about 6s., and the Railway Department gain the freight?—Yes.

743. *By the Chairman.*—How much did that bridge cost to put up that we passed over?—We were simply raising it.

744. What would it cost?—Good square timber for 1s. a foot.

745. What would the bridge cost with sides and everything—what size are the openings on the culverts on this line?—I am not quite sure.

746. *Mr. Fowler.*—As I mentioned, I did not take them out separately.

747. *By the Chairman (to the witness).*—Give any size you like?—Twenty feet, about £20.

748. Do you know anything about the bluegum?—Yes.

749. Is it suitable for sleepers?—Yes.

750. At what cost per sleeper?—About 3s.

751. Do you know that that would make a difference of £10,000 less than Mr. Fowler?—Yes.

752. Mr. Fowler referred to you, and from your experience do you say it could be done for the price you give?—Yes. One of the trees we measured was 60 feet round, and there would be a large number of sleepers come out of one of those trees.

753. Is there anything else you can tell us?—Another point that would have a tendency to raise the revenue, there is the settlement known as the Danish settlement. The terminus would come within five and a half miles of that. The people now take their produce to Drouin, sixteen miles, and it would be a feeder to that line of railway.

754. Is there anything else?—That is about all, I think.

The witness withdrew.

James Stirling, sworn and examined.

755. *By the Chairman.*—What are you?—Assistant geological surveyor.

756. What do you know about this line?—I am here by desire of the Warragul Shire Council, by permission of the Hon. the Minister of Mines, to present you with some evidence respecting certain coal resources in the locality which would be served by the proposed railway line. I have examined several seams of coal in the neighbourhood of the proposed terminus. One of those varies from 1ft. 6in. to 2ft. 4in. in thickness; there are indications of its thickening in the direction of the dip, which is 8 degrees or an inclination of 1 in 8. This locality is on the north-west of what, in my opinion, is likely to prove a very important coal-bearing area. I have examined a large tract of country to the south, and there are indications of the thickening of coal seams in an easterly direction from the locality referred to, that is in the valley of the Tarwin. I might add that so much was the Hon. the Minister of Mines impressed with the prospect of the locality, from a coal mining point of view, that he has ordered one of the diamond drills to be sent to the locality to test the extension of the seams in proximity to the proposed railway line. I do not know whether you desire I should proceed further.

757. How far is the coal mine from the proposed line?—About half-a-mile.

758. Half-a-mile on a steep line, how would you get to it if the line was made?—It is possible that the mouth of the tunnel would not be that from which the output of coal would be taken, but a shaft would have to be sunk so as to permit of an easier grade to the terminus; it is not possible that a tramway could be made from the adit, but a shaft could be sunk to permit of an easier grade towards the railway.

759. Have you made an estimate of the area of country likely to be coal bearing?—I would like to state that I do not consider, in the first place, a 2 feet seam of coal would pay in that locality, but I do consider that a 3 feet seam would pay, and that there are indications of thickening to that dimension. I would like to point out a 2 feet seam would give 4,298 tons per acre, or 2,942,720 tons per square mile. You will perceive at once the importance of the coal industry in that area, provided it were developed.

760. As a rule they want to see the crop that grows before they make a railway?—They have it *in situ*.

761. Would you make a railway in prospective?—No.

762. If we make a report to Parliament, how much can you say we will get for coal?—That cannot be estimated.

763. Suppose we wait till we hear more?—That is for you to say.

764. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—How much out of a square mile?—2,952,729 tons.

765. Out of a 2 feet seam—what would it cost to take it out under present circumstances?—I have not estimated it.

766. Would there be anything left in the way of profit?—Not at present, owing to the present cost of freight.

767. What is the use of giving 5s. for a crown piece?—Not much.

768. What guide have you for this?—I have examined the creeks and the water-courses, and I have scientific reasons for thinking it.

769. What are the reasons?—The character of the country, the appearances of the dip of the seams.

770. Have you any indications for a boring?—Not to the east, but to the south.

771. The Jumbunna?—Yes, and Korumburra; we have borings proving the extension in the direction I am stating. From the examination I have made of the whole surroundings, I have come to the general conclusion that there is a general thickening in the direction of the Tarwin Valley. I am prepared to give full particulars, and I have done so in the report now being prepared.

772. How many miles from the present discovery do you think the thickening would take place—ten or fifteen miles?—In the direction of Mirboo. I should say the tendency would be about seven miles from the point in question.

773. Would that railway be any good to the coal if the seam did not thicken to 3 feet for seven miles?—Yes.

774. Why?—Because it would be the nearest point to run tramways towards either Korumburra or Tarwin Valley.

775. Would it pay to run a tramway seven miles?—Yes.

776. *By Mr. Groom.*—What are the thickest seams you know of in that district, either discovered by the diamond drill, or that you have seen?—Do you mean to the south?

777. Yes, to the south, and in the north and west of Gippsland?—At Jumbunna, 3ft. 6in. to 3ft. 9in. What has been practically tested there is 3 feet. By personal operations I am sure of several seams, the total thickness of which is 12 feet. That coal tested by the diamond drill giving 4,000,000 tons of coal at Korumburra.

778. How far from the spot we speak of?—Twelve miles.
 779. Do you think they can have any connexion with what we are speaking of?—I think possibly.
 780. When they were first discovered, were they as thick as the present?—Two of the seams at Korumburra have thickened in the direction of the drill boring put down.
 781. What were they in the outcrop?—First, westerly, 80 feet from the surface; it thickened easterly, 26 chains away, several inches. Another, also, I see clearly a thickening of coal in the easterly direction. This is not only at Korumburra, but over a great portion of Gippsland.
 782. You do not know anything about the thickness at Scarlett's?—No, I have not visited it.
 783. You do not know about the Narracan Valley?—Is not that Scarlett's.
 784. What is the thickness of the Moe?—1ft. 6in. to 2 feet.
 785. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—Tell the Committee what kind of country it is you visited at this spot?—Broken, rangy country.
 786. Good for agriculture?—Yes, with a copious rainfall.
 787. How far does the country extend?—The whole of the country, where the coal appears, there is extremely good country.
 788. Is it red soil?—No; red soil is volcanic. It is grey soil. The whole area occupied by an extremely fertile soil and coal-bearing would be 40 miles in length by 20 miles in width. The whole area is extremely fertile; it might be described as undulating and rangy.
 789. What to the east?—Shales and sandstone.
 790. What depth of soil?—One foot to 4 feet.
 791. The top soil?—One foot to 2 feet.
 792. Good timber?—Belts of excellent timber; bluegum, varieties of redgum—they should be called blackbutt, which is a variety of whitegum—and other timber used in connexion with railway construction.

The witness withdrew.

Joseph Smith, sworn and examined.

793. *By the Chairman.*—What are you?—A farmer and saw-miller.
 794. Where do you reside?—At South Warragul.
 795. How far from the proposed line?—Which one?
 796. Whichever you like?—One about three-quarters of a mile, the other a mile.
 797. Which do you like?—I am not particular which, as long as I get one.
 798. How far are you from the existing station?—Seven miles to Warragul.
 799. That goes nearest?—Yes.
 800. What do you wish to tell us?—I will answer any question you like to ask.
 801. *By Mr. Groom.*—Can you tell us what your opinion is of the timber?—I can answer for my own block, and it is the same timber through the district.
 802. How many thousand acres of good milling timber?—I would not go into that. I can say about 300 of my own, and also Mr. David Smith's, the adjoining block.
 803. You know of two blocks of good land?—Yes.
 804. Have you proved that yourself?—Yes.
 805. Do you cart to Warragul?—Yes; seven miles.
 806. Would it go by railway if you had it?—Yes, quickly.
 807. Give the Committee an idea of what you would pay the railway in revenue?—About 100,000 tons, about £1,000 a year; that is from South Warragul.
 808. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—Does it go to the Warragul station?—I have to draw it with bullocks seven miles.
 809. *By Mr. Groom.*—Would it be fair to say every mill that went into timber would mean £1,000 a year to the railway?—Yes, if they worked as I do.
 810. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Have you any market for this?—Before the land boom, and I am in hopes it will come back.
 811. How would you do with twelve competitors doing the same thing as you are doing; do you think you would find it would make any difference?—I could not say for twelve.
 812. We were speaking about 30 and 40?—We expect the timber trade to improve as the country improves.
 813. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—Is it not a fact that most of the mills have stopped?—I have not.
 814. Is it not a fact some have stopped?—Not in this neighbourhood.
 815. Has not Mr. Sargeant stopped?—He has no timber to cut; he has to shift out further.
 816. Have you any timber suitable for sleepers?—Messmate, and whitegum, and mountain ash.
 817. What would messmate sleepers be put down at, never mind your own—have you bluegum in the district?—You have to go higher into the ranges.
 818. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Did you hear what Mr. Fowler said about the sleepers; what do you think would be the value?—I have never cut any, or dealt in that line.

The witness withdrew.

Alfred W. Harvey, sworn and examined.

819. *By the Chairman.*—What are you?—A farmer.
 820. Where do you reside?—Four and a half miles south of Warragul.
 821. Is that the nearest station?—Yes.
 822. How far by the road?—About four and a half miles.
 823. Is it a good or bad road?—Part good, and part bad.
 824. What do you produce?—Almost entirely dairying, because of the bad roads.
 825. What do you want to tell us?—I think a railway is an absolute necessity; if we do not get it we may as well shut up shop.

826. Can you give us any figures as to how we are to get the interest?—I think if the farmers could get their produce to market at a reasonable rate they would go in for clearing and cultivation; until they do they cannot do it.

827. You will reduce the traffic on the main line itself if you cannot get a few feeders?—I do not know.

828. *By the Hon. D. Melville.*—How long have you been there?—Seven years.

829. Do you mean to say this station is not near enough?—In summer, not in winter.

830. Could you get nearer?—The proposed line goes through my property.

831. What is the value?—About £15 an acre.

832. Would the railway make the place any more valuable?—I do not think so; it would only be so much less carriage.

833. Are you not near enough to the station?—Not in the winter time.

834. It would not increase the value of your place?—Not much.

835. *By Mr. Groom.*—Is it not a fact, in this district, you must cultivate to get proper grass?—The whole district.

836. Is it not a fact, in the district, when you first clear you do not plough. You clear the scrub and sow your grass in the ashes?—Yes.

837. And in a few years the grass dies out?—Yes.

838. And if a selector wants to remain on the ground he must plough and put under grass, and then he will have a permanent pasture?—Yes.

839. You must have a railway to carry your produce to the station to enable you to carry on?—Yes.

840. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Are you not near enough, four and a half miles?—In the summer time—I have some bad roads to come down.

841. You are four and a half miles from the station with a good road?—It is a good road.

842. *By Mr. Groom.*—Is the road good enough?—I have seen my two good horses stuck with eight bags of oats.

843. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—Is that the same road we went to-day?—You struck off.

844. What about people who live on the side roads?—The roads must be made.

845. *By the Chairman.*—Do you know where these samples have been grown that are on the table?—I was told out near McDonald's Track.

The witness withdrew.

Daniel Kennedy, sworn and examined.

846. *By the Chairman.*—What are you?—A shire councillor.

847. What do you want to say?—I think, after the remarks by Mr. Watt and Mr. Harvey, there remains nothing for me to say more than that I have resided here about nine years, and am aware of the great hardships and difficulties the farmers have to contend with to bring their produce to market in every instance, but the last few years they had to use pack-horses. It is only within the last two years the roads you saw were made. The council borrowed £22,000 this year, £11,000 of that accounts for the roads being so good as they are to-day. Then the side roads are not so good. As Mr. Harvey says, two good horses could hardly pull eight bags of oats; I can bear that out. I have seen two horses of my own trying to pull out an empty dray.

848. Where do you reside?—In the township; I keep an hotel. I have brickyards outside the town. I speak as a shire councillor.

849. What is the revenue of the shire?—I am not aware of the full revenue. There is an officer who will give it.

850. Do you know the track we were speaking of—both tracks?—I have a fair knowledge of them as far as the road.

851. Which do you favour?—I really do not know. I think it is a matter of little difference to farmers which they have.

852. From a national point of view and commercial point of view, I presume you have heard all that was said?—I have.

853. After all that, supposing the responsibility were thrown on you to report to Parliament, which would you take?—The cheapest.

854. Which?—The Bloomfield.

855. Would you spend £100,000 for that line if you had to find the interest?—I think there is no necessity.

856. What should we call the interest?—About $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4 per cent.

857. Say £4,000 or £5,000 a year; do you think you could raise £5,000 a year from that line?—Yes, with the produce and the great amount of timber on the line. There is a small tramway. I know they draw a considerable amount of timber on that line.

858. Do you know that line?—Only where it comes into the township.

859. Some people told us a line of that sort would be sufficient?—Nothing of the kind.

860. *By Mr. Groom.*—There is no ballast?—No.

861. *By the Chairman.*—If it were ballasted, would it be sufficient?—No.

862. You do not think that evidence is any good?—I think it is as much as the proprietor can do to draw the timber.

863. What is the value of that evidence?—It may possibly do.

864. You know the district well; he says it would meet the requirements?—I do not think so.

865. *By Mr. Groom.*—You know the tramway?—Yes.

866. What are the sleepers?—Only what are used in the ordinary saw-mill trams to put down the rails.

867. Is it a fact that the engines are repeatedly stuck up for them to make repairs?—I heard so.

868. What about that little arrangement in the shire council; what is his grievance—a witness said he was deluded by the shire councillors?—At that time it was thought the tramway line would be constructed, but when there were so many interests to be considered, the ratepayers near the line did not want a half-crown tax put on.

869. They did not want it?—No; and the ones who did want it had to get none.

870. You want a railway, and that being the case that the neighbours living within two or three miles would not agree with you, it becomes a question for the State, and the Collingwood and the Brighton labourers must pay for it?—They have lines—I think it is the duty of the State to provide for us.

871. Who is the State?—The public is. All those persons who have settled for a number of years on the land, I think, are entitled to a railway to bring in their produce.—[*A number of samples of vegetables were shown on the table, said to have been grown about Lardner's Track, within about a mile of the proposed railway.*]

The witness withdrew.

John Picken, sworn and examined.

872. *By the Chairman.*—What are you?—Shire secretary.

873. How long have you occupied that position?—About two years.

874. Be good enough to tell us the revenue derived from rates; first of all, is the whole of the track in the shire?—It would benefit a portion of the shire; it is all in the South riding of the shire.

875. What is the revenue of that riding?—About £1,100.

876. How many people are there?—The ratepayers, 404; the population, about 2,000.

877. What is the rate of the whole shire?—£2,500.

878. What is the population of the whole shire?—Five thousand, as near as possible.

879. How many townships?—Warragul, Drouin, Brandy Creek, and Darnum.

880. What is the Government subsidy?—We got £6,000 last year.

881. What is the maximum revenue?—The last is £5,756.

882. For this year?—Yes. The principal reason is the shire struck the rate earlier in the municipal year than usual.

883. You say about £6,000—what will you get this year?—I think between £8,000 and £9,000.

884. Have you any special grants?—Last year we had £200.

885. What are your expectations this year?—We have made no applications.

886. What do you draw from publicans' licences?—£70 a year from Government in lieu of licences.

887. Other licences?—They are not worth reckoning.

888. Who is the valuer?—Mr. Ross.

889. Do you know upon what principle he values?—On the capital value, I think.

890. Not less than 5 per cent. on the capital value?—No.

891. What is the capital value of the land where those things were grown?—We rate it perhaps less than it would sell at. About £10 or £12 an acre would be the average.

892. Is that not high; take people near the school?—That would be too high.

893. Between £3 and £10?—An average of £10 I should say. The land near Warragul is rated higher.

894. *By Mr. Groom.*—Cut out all the land three miles from Warragul?—It might be lower.

895. *By the Chairman.*—That is what I meant?—An average of about £7 if the first three miles was cut out.

896. Your valuation is based on that?—Yes.

897. *By Mr. McIntyre.*—How many acres are there in the South riding?—I cannot tell you.

898. Only 400 ratepayers?—Four hundred and four ratepayers in the South riding.

899. The proposed railway is to benefit that 400?—There is a supposed population of 2,000. As far as I understand it is between one and two miles from the boundary.

900. How many within the first three miles?—About 100.

901. The other distance would be about 300?—I think there would be another 100 benefited in the next shire.

902. In your shire only about 300?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

STATISTICS OF PROPOSED RAILWAY FROM WARRAGUL TO McDONALD'S TRACK.

<i>From Census Returns of 1891.</i>							
Population	...	...	...	...	...	...	987
Live Stock—							
Horses	...	...	...	...	...	...	618
Milch Cows	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,685
Other Cattle	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,956
Sheep	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,126
Pigs	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,467
Acres occupied	...	...	...	...	...	...	32,451
Poultry	...	...	...	...	...	...	5,229
<i>From Agricultural Statistics of 1891.</i>							
Number of Cultivated Farms	...	...	...	...	...	...	88
Cultivation.				Acres.			Produce.
Wheat	...	...	...	—	...	...	— bushels
Oats	...	...	...	231	...	7,890	„
Other Cereals	...	...	...	95	...	2,530	„
Root Crops	...	...	...	182	...	1,090	tons
Hay	...	...	...	226	...	449	„
Other Tillage	...	...	...	7,103	...	646	„
Total	...	...	...	7,837			
Estimated Value of—							
Rateable Property—Total Value	...	...	...	...	...	£282,306	
„ „ Annual Value	...	...	...	...	...	£14,125	
Improvements on Farms	...	...	...	...	...	£2,834	
Farming Machinery and Plant	...	...	...	...	...	£23,376	

H. H. HAYTER,
Government Statist.

Office of the Government Statist,
Melbourne, 21st August, 1891.

APPENDIX B.

Memorandum relative to the Warragul to McDonald's Track Railway.

Amongst the proposed railway lines referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways, in 1890, was one from Warragul to McDonald's Track, and I was retained by the local railway league to inspect and report on the line. The length proposed was 11 miles 25 chains 67 links, and the cost was estimated by the Railway Department at £198,420. I obtained a copy, verified by the Assistant Engineer-in-Chief of the sections (with levels given at every ten chains) taken by the railway surveyors, who had made a trial survey of the route. I then carefully inspected the route marked out by them, and noted the general features of the country.

The line proposed is part of a through one from Warragul to Leongatha, and, as mentioned by me in a report on the Leongatha end of the same line, the terminal points (Warragul and Leongatha) are situated in different drainage areas (those of the rivers Moe and Tarwin respectively), the dividing line being McDonald's Track, which is the terminal point of the section now under consideration. The country through which the line passes is of a fertile character, the greater portion of it having been originally covered with musk or hazel scrub.

As already mentioned, Warragul is situated in the drainage area of the River Moe. It is, however, close to the head of the basin, the dividing range between it and the basin of the Lang Lang (a river which discharges into Western Port) passing within a comparatively short distance from the town, and runs up to McDonald's Track. About three miles north of Warragul there is another dividing ridge between the basins of the Moe and the Tarago, a river discharging into the Koo-wee-rup Swamp, and thence into Western Port. The line as surveyed from Warragul to McDonald's Track leaves the main Gippsland line at 61 miles 0 chains 50 links (near the Warragul station), and runs for about four miles through rather broken country across the head of the Moe watershed until the dividing ridge between it and the Lang Lang is reached. Thence the ridge is followed, sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other, to

McDonald's Track. From this it will be seen that but little bridge-work can be required on the line, the largest drainage area crossed being that of the Hazel Creek, immediately south of Warragul. I have not ascertained exactly the drainage area of this creek, but I know that it is about twelve square miles. A moderate amount of water-way, about 350 square feet, would be sufficient for all requirements at this point.

An alternative line has been surveyed, leaving the Gippsland line at 63 miles 59 chains 83 links from Melbourne, or 2 miles 59 chains 33 links further east than the direct line. This line follows down the valley of the Moe River to its junction with that of Bear Creek, and thence up the latter for about 5 miles, joining the other line at 6 miles 40 chains 38 links on the direct line, and 6 miles 65 chains 05 links on the Bear Creek line. The Bear Creek line runs through much easier country than the direct line, and hence somewhat larger water-ways must be provided. However, the whole drainage of the Hazel Creek is avoided as it passes away to the north of the main Gippsland line between Warragul and the commencing point of the Bear Creek line. Estimates of cost of both lines have been prepared, from which it will be seen that the Bear Creek line would be much more cheaply constructed. The land through which it runs would be more easily cultivated than that near the direct line, as the hills are not so steep. At the same time it must be remembered that the through distance to Warragul and Melbourne would be three miles greater by this route than by the direct one, whilst the bulk of the present settlement appears to be nearer the latter route than the Bear Creek one.

At the McDonald's Track end of the line a very deep cutting would be required if the line be carried to the point mentioned in the schedule. By stopping the line at 10 miles 50 chains this obstacle would be avoided, and a road could be easily constructed from this point to the track.

As already mentioned, estimates of cost of the lines have been prepared and are attached hereto as Appendices. That marked C is for the direct line from Warragul to the junction with the Bear Creek one. That marked D is for the Bear Creek line to the same point, and that marked E is for the line from the Junction to McDonald's Track. From these it appears that the total cost of the direct line would be £96,590 2s. 2d., and of the Bear Creek line £77,267 7s.

Provision has been made for fencing the line at stations with post, top rail, and wire fencing, and at other parts with post and six-wire fencing with a barb wire on top. The line has been carefully graded from end to end so as to balance the earthworks and have no excessive leads. The ruling grade adopted was 1 in 40, being the same as used in the departmental estimate. No data from survey being available as to transverse slopes of the natural surface, an allowance has been made for the additional earthwork required by taking out the cuttings with side slopes of $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 instead of 1 to 1. The cuttings have been taken out for a bed width of 14 feet, and the banks for 15 feet.

A bulk sum has been put down for bridges and culverts required, and bearing in mind what has been said about the location of the line, it is probable that the amounts stated is considerably in excess of actual requirements.

Provision has been made for using piled cattle-pit crossings throughout instead of gates and gate-houses. These are quite sufficient for the purpose, and the rate scheduled for them is ample.

The shire council has opened a sand-pit at a point near the seven-mile peg, and using the material obtained for purposes. The sand is of fair quality, but contains rather much clay for ballast. Further up the line (about the nine-mile peg), the surface indications lead me to suppose that gravel suitable for ballast exists at moderate depths. Should this prove correct, ballast could easily be obtained for the price mentioned in the schedule, but if it is necessary to bring it from a distance, the rate for this item may have to be increased. The quantity scheduled is sufficient to ballast the line to a depth of 10 inches, with a top width of 10 feet, and bottom width of 12 feet. This is 2 inches more than generally provided on the Government lines, but the extra amount is required in Gippsland.

Rails 60 lbs. per yard are provided for in the estimates. It would not be desirable to use anything less than this, more especially as the ruling grade is 1 in 40. Details showing how the estimated cost of rails is arrived at are given in Appendix F, and the prices are based on the latest quotations of the English engineering journals.

The station accommodation proposed is of a simple character, but includes everything essential.

Considering the length of the line, it is probable that no special water supply works would be required. The amount mentioned in the estimate would be sufficient for a simple scheme if required.

An amount has been placed on the estimates for purchase of land, which would probably cover all expenditure in this direction. The amount of compensation to be paid, however, is a question to a professional land valuer, rather than an engineer, to assess. Probably the members of the league could give valuable evidence on this point by ascertaining what various owners would accept.

If the line be authorized, I think that it would be unwise at the present time to fix exactly the terminus, as it is possible that it might be deviated with advantage. The Railway Department may be able to show that the terminus suggested is the best possible, but from the data at present at my disposal, I could not express a definite opinion on the point. I think it would be prudent to give powers of deviation with respect to the terminus, as well as the other portions of the line, so that if a better site be discovered it could be utilized. It would not be desirable to construct this line on a narrower gauge than that of the main line with which it connects, as the inconvenience arising from having special stock, which could not be run on the main line, would balance any slight saving in cost, and the transhipment of goods would be a continual source of inconvenience and expense. A considerable saving could be effected in the cost of construction were bogie stock alone permitted to run on the line, and no inconvenience could result from this if the practice of the Railway Department were to work the Eastern system with stock of this description. The rigid wheel base would be 5 feet instead of 20 feet, so that much sharper curves could be used, thus permitting of the line being laid out so as to follow the contour of the country much closer than with the ordinary stock.

If a line be constructed from Warragul to McDonald's Track, will it pay? The answer to this question depends first on how through freights are divided. The greater part of the goods traffic would be to or from Melbourne, and if the freights on such goods be credited to the main and branch lines on the pure mileage basis, the branch line will never pay, whilst the apparent profits of the main line will be unduly inflated. The reason of this is that the branch would be charged with the whole of the terminal expenses, such as salaries of station-masters, porters, &c., whilst not being credited with a proportion of the freight for the work which they have to do in receiving or delivering the goods. Probably a very considerable portion of the clamour about the lines recently constructed in the colony being unremunerative is due to the returns of revenue being prepared on the basis of the through freights being credited between main and branch lines on the mileage basis, only without any terminal allowances. This system always has the effect of increasing the apparent earnings of the longest (generally the older) section of the lines and diminishing those of the shorter one. Assuming that the freights are divided in the proper manner—namely, by allowing a reasonable amount for terminal expenses at the receiving station, and another amount for similar expenses at the delivering station, and dividing the balance of the freight on the mileage basis—I do not think that the line would pay at the commencement. As the country gets more opened up, however, the revenue would undoubtedly increase, and I have little doubt but that the line would in the course of a little time become remunerative, always provided that it is not overweighted by excessive expenditure on construction, and that it is worked in an economical manner.

THOMAS WALKER FOWLER, M.C.E.

317 Collins-street, Melbourne, 8th April, 1891.

APPENDIX C.

ESTIMATED COST of Railway Line from Warragul to 6 miles 52 chains on the Direct Line to McDonald's Track, including two Stations. Allowance made for 40 chains sidings.

Quantities.	Description.	Price.	Amount.
			£ s. d.
180 acres	Clearing	£4	720 0 0
50 „	Grubbing	£12	600 0 0
12½ miles	Barb and 6-wire fence	£60	735 0 0
1½ „	Post and rail fence	£100	150 0 0
322,966 cubic yards	Excavation in cuttings	1s. 6d.	24,222 9 0
41,931 „ „	„ side-cuttings	1s.	2,096 11 0
2,500 „ „	„ ditches	1s.	125 0 0
6,000 „ „	„ station yards	1s. 6d.	450 0 0
	Bridges and culverts ... ..	...	1,000 0 0
1 No.	Road bridge ... ..	...	150 0 0
8 „	Cattle-pit crossings at roads	£20	160 0 0
12 „	Occupation crossings	£20	240 0 0
12,584 cubic yards	Ballast, main line and sidings	4s.	2,516 10 0
4,500 „ „	Metal on roads and occupation ... ..	...	...
	Crossings and stations	4s.	900 0 0
14,300 No.	Sleepers and crossing timbers	4s. 6d.	3,217 10 0
12,584 lineal yards	Laying permanent way	1s.	629 4 0
8 sets	No. laying points and crossings	£6	48 0 0
2 No.	Passenger platforms	£75	150 0 0
2 „	Passenger station buildings	£150	300 0 0
2 „	Goods platforms and sheds	£250	500 0 0
2 „	Cranes, fixed complete	£100	200 0 0
2 „	Trucking yards	£100	200 0 0
	Signals ... ..	...	150 0 0
6¾ miles	Telegraph	£30	202 10 0
	Total cost of works ... ..	...	40,263 0 0
7½ „	Permanent-way material	£722	5,102 6 0
8 „	Sets points	£30	240 0 0
180 acres	Land (including severance)	£30	3,400 0 0
			51,065 6 0
	Engineering and contingencies, 12½ per cent. ... ..	...	6,383 3 3
			£57,449 9 3

APPENDIX D.

ESTIMATED COST of Line from Warragul, *via* Bloomfield, to 6 miles 52 chains peg on Direct Line to McDonald's Track, including two Stations. Allowance made for 40 chains sidings. Length, 6 miles 76 chains 67 links. Land required, 187 acres.

Quantities.	Description.	Price.	Amount.		
			£	s.	d.
187 acres	Clearing	£3	561	0	0
52 ,,	Grubbing	£10	520	0	0
12 miles	Barb and 6-wire fence	£60	780	0	0
1½ ,,	Post and rail fence	£100	150	0	0
123,000 cubic yards	Excavation in cuttings	1s. 6d.	9,225	0	0
2,100 ,,	„ side cuttings	1s.	105	0	0
2,500 ,,	„ ditches	1s.	125	0	0
5,000 ,,	„ station yards	1s. 6d.	375	0	0
	Bridges and culverts ... ..	...	2,000	0	0
7 No.	Cattle-pit crossings at roads	£20	140	0	0
14 ,,	Occupation crossings	£20	280	0	0
13,126 cubic yards	Ballast, main line and sidings	4s.	2,625	4	0
4,500 ,,	Metal on road and occupation crossings and stations	4s.	900	0	0
14,925 No.	Sleepers and crossing timbers	4s. 6d.	3,358	2	6
13,126 lineal yards	Laying permanent way	1s.	656	6	0
8 No.	Laying points and crossings	£6	48	0	0
2 ,,	Passenger platforms	£75	150	0	0
2 ,,	„ station buildings	£150	300	0	0
2 ,,	Goods platforms, sheds, &c.	£250	500	0	0
2 ,,	Cranes, fixed complete	£100	200	0	0
2 ,,	Trucking yards	£100	200	0	0
	Signals ... ..	...	150	0	0
7 miles	Telegraph	£30	210	0	0
	Total cost of works ... ..	...	23,559	12	6
7½ miles	Permanent-way material	£722	5,415	0	0
8 No.	Sets points	£30	240	0	0
187 acres	Land	£25	4,675	0	0
			33,888	12	6
	Engineering and contingencies, 12½ per cent. ... ..	...	4,236	1	7
			£38,125	14	1

APPENDIX E.

ESTIMATED COST of Railway Line from 6 miles 52 chains to 10 miles 50 chains on the Direct Line from Warragul to McDonald's Track, including one Station. Allowance made for 40 chains. Land required, 82 acres.

Quantities.	Description.	Price.	Amount.	
			£	s. d.
82 acres	Clearing	£5	410	0 0
25 "	Grubbing	£15	375	0 0
7½ miles	Barb and 6-wire fence	£60	450	0 0
¾ "	Post and rail fence	£100	75	0 0
232,657 cubic yards	Excavation in cuttings	1s. 6d.	17,449	5 6
51,106 "	" side cuttings	1s.	2,535	6 0
2,000 "	" ditches	1s.	100	0 0
4,000 "	" station yards	1s. 6d.	300	0 0
5 No.	Bridges and culverts ... ..	...	1,000	0 0
8 "	Cattle pits and crossings at roads	£20	100	0 0
8 "	Occupation crossings	£20	160	0 0
6,116 cubic yards	Ballast, main line and sidings	4s.	1,223	4 0
2,500 "	Metal on roads and occupation crossings and stations	4s.	500	0 0
8,000 No.	Sleepers and crossings timbers	4s. 6d.	1,800	0 0
6,116 lineal yards	Laying permanent way	1s.	305	16 0
6 No.	Laying points and crossings	£6	36	0 0
1 "	Passenger platforms	£75	75	0 0
1 "	Passenger-station building	£150	150	0 0
1 "	Goods platforms, sheds, &c.	£250	250	0 0
1 "	Cranes, fixed complete ... ..	...	100	0 0
1 "	Trucking yards ... ..	...	100	0 0
4 miles	Signals ... ..	...	50	0 0
4 miles	Telegraph	£30	120	0 0
4 miles	Turntable, engine-sheds, &c. ... ..	...	1,500	0 0
4 miles	Water supply ... ..	...	900	0 0
	Total cost of works ... ..	...	30,084	11 6
4 miles	Permanent-way material	£722	2,984	0 0
6 "	Sets points	£30	180	0 0
82 acres	Land	£20	1,640	0 0
	Engineering and contingencies, 12½ per cent.	...	34,792	11 6
	Total ... ..	...	4,349	1 5
			£39,141	12 11

APPENDIX F.

COST OF PERMANENT WAY.

				per mile.		
				£	s.	d.
94·3 tons rails	...	...	...	6	10	0
5¼ " fish-plates	...	...	...	8	0	0
1¼ " fish-bolts	...	...	...	32	0	0
2¼ " pins and dog-spikes	...	...	...	12	0	0
Total				...	...	...
				£	721	19 0

APPENDIX G.

Shire of Warragul,
Shire Office, Warragul, 25th May, 1891.

To the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways, Parliament House, Melbourne.

SIR,

I have the honour, by direction of the council of this shire, to submit for your consideration the following statement of facts, as this council considers that it is possible your Committee may not see its way to recommend the construction of both the Warragul to McDonald's Track, and the Monomeith to McDonald's Track proposed railway lines, and it therefore becomes the imperative duty of this council to see that the just claims of its district are fully and fairly brought under your notice.

The council would point out that the town of Warragul is the head quarters of the shire in which the district proposed to be served by railway communication is situated.

The Warragul to McDonald's Track line would also serve portions of neighbouring shires lying south and east of this shire, the residents of which parts, even at present, do all their business in Warragul.

Warragul is also the centre of the banking, commercial, and farming business of a most extensive district, and is also centralized by Government which has established in this town the Court of General Sessions, the County Court, and Weekly Courts of Petty Sessions.

A large hospital is almost completed and a flourishing agricultural society holds its shows in the town.

The Lands Office and Sub-Treasury have also been located in Warragul, thus making the town the Government centre of a tract of country extending over more than one electorate.

On account of Warragul being thus centralized, the council regards it as of prime importance to the public that every facility should be given for communication with what is virtually the capital of the district.

The council would further point out that Warragul is already a terminal station, with every convenience, of engine-sheds, turntable, water supply, spare rolling-stock, &c., &c., and consequently if Warragul is made the point of departure for the proposed line to serve the Danish settlement and parishes of Poowong East and Warragul and portion of Allambee, the working expenses would be reduced to the lowest limit. The plant and men required to work proposed line, when not required thereon, could be utilized on the main and Neerim lines.

The traffic which at present reaches Warragul from the above-mentioned districts by road, being diverted to the railway line, would afford an immediate revenue, whilst the council being relieved of the heavy cost of making main roads to those localities, could serve them better by making practicable short roads to their nearest stations, and the increased traffic thus induced would further increase the railway revenue, whereas if the line from Monomeith alone is constructed the settlers in the districts named will have no communication with the local centres of population or with the local markets.

I append hereto a statement prepared by the shire engineer, Mr. James Daskein, C.E., showing that a reduction could be made on the estimate of cost submitted by Mr. Fowler, C.E., of £13,332 4s. 8d. on the direct line from Warragul to McDonald's Track. (The reduction which could be made on the Bloomfield route would be proportional.) Considering that the line from Warragul would reach a point within three miles of the terminus of the first 20 miles of the Monomeith line, the council cannot too strongly emphasize the advantages, as above enumerated, of the shorter and cheaper line.

The council would also draw attention to the vested interests that have sprung up along the Gippsland line, especially around Warragul, and the injury that would be done to those interests by the withdrawal from Warragul and the neighbouring towns of trade which naturally flows to them, as would happen if the railway from Monomeith to McDonald's Track is constructed.

In conclusion, the council desires to express its opinion that on national grounds it is most desirable that railway communication, by light lines or otherwise, be given to the people who have been induced to settle on the land by the present liberal land laws, which is the only way to enable them to remain permanently on the land, and so to firmly establish the prosperity of the colony.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN PICKEN,
Shire Secretary.

MEMORANDUM *RE* McDONALD'S TRACK RAILWAY.

 THOS. WALKER FOWLER, Esq., M.C.E.

	<i>Estimate.</i>					
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Direct route.						
From Warragul to Junction	57,448	9	3			
From Junction to Terminus (Appendix C) ...	39,141	12	11			
	<hr/>			96,590	2	2
From Warragul <i>vid</i> Bloomfield.						
To Junction	38,125	14	1			
From Junction to Terminus (Appendix C) ...	39,141	12	11			
	<hr/>			77,267	7	0
Difference of cost				£19,322	15	2

On the ground of economy the Railway Committee expressed themselves favorably towards the Bear Creek route. To reduce the cost of the direct route, I would bring under your notice the following items, which could be reduced, viz.:—

	£	s.	d.
22,300 sleepers of bluegum instead of redgum, 1s.	1,115	0	0
2 station buildings, at £150	300	0	0
Telegraph line	322	10	0
180 acres, estimated at £30, probably £20	1,800	0	0
82 acres, estimated at £20, probably £10	820	0	0
Water Supply	900	0	0
Ballast, using local gravel, 25,700 cubic yards, at 6d. ...	642	10	0
Engineering and contingencies	£10,732	4	8
Parker's Estimate, at £300 per mile	3,300	0	0
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	7,432	4	8
Approximate saving	£13,332	4	8

JAMES DASKEIN, C.E.