

1900.
VICTORIA.

REPORT

FROM

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON RAILWAYS

ON THE

PROPOSED RAILWAY

FROM

WOOMELANG TO MILDURA AND YELTA;

TOGETHER WITH

APPENDICES.

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 18th September, 1900.

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EXTRACTED FROM THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 12TH SEPTEMBER, 1909.

4. WOOMELANG TO MILDURA AND YELTA RAILWAY.—Mr. Outtrim, in accordance with the requirements of the Railways Standing Committee Acts, moved, pursuant to notice, That the construction of a line of railway from Woomelang to Mildura and Yelta be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways for consideration and report.
Debate ensued.
Mr. H. R. Williams moved, That the debate be now adjourned.
And, after debate—
Question—That the debate be now adjourned—put and resolved in the affirmative.
Ordered—That the debate be adjourned until to-morrow.

THURSDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 1900.

4. WOOMELANG TO MILDURA AND YELTA RAILWAY.—The Order of the Day for the resumption of the debate on the question—That the construction of a line of railway from Woomelang to Mildura and Yelta be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways for consideration and report—having been read—
Debate resumed.
Question—put.
The House divided.

Ayes, 35.

Mr. Bowser,	Mr. Methven,
Mr. Bromley,	Mr. Murray,
Mr. Cook,	Mr. Outtrim,
Mr. Forrest,	Mr. Peacock,
Mr. Gillies,	Mr. Rawson,
Mr. Graham,	Mr. Salmon,
Mr. Gray,	Mr. Sangster,
Mr. A. Harris,	Mr. T. Smith,
Mr. Irvine,	Mr. Styles,
Mr. Keys,	Mr. Taverner,
Mr. Lawson,	Mr. Watt,
Mr. Levien,	Mr. White,
Mr. Madden,	Mr. Wilkins,
Mr. Maloney,	Mr. E. D. Williams.
Mr. J. W. Mason,	
Mr. Mauger,	
Mr. McColl,	<i>Tellers.</i>
Sir John McIntyre,	Mr. Beazley,
Mr. McLean,	Mr. Moule.

Noes, 20.

Mr. Austin,	Mr. Morrissey,
Mr. Burton,	Mr. Sadler,
Mr. Dyer,	Mr. Spiers,
Mr. Grose,	Mr. Sterry,
Mr. Gurr,	Mr. Thomson,
Mr. Hamilton,	Mr. Turner,
Mr. Holden,	Mr. H. R. Williams.
Mr. Kerr,	
Mr. Kirton,	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mr. McGregor,	Mr. Bailes,
Mr. McLeod,	Mr. Toutcher.

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS.

(Fourth Committee.)

E. H. CAMERON, Esq., M.L.A., Chairman ;

The Hon. J. H. Abbott, M.L.C.,	
A. W. Craven, Esq., M.L.A.,	
The Hon. F. S. Grimwade, M.L.C.,	
A. Harris, Esq., M.L.A.,	

The Hon. E. Morey, M.L.C. (Vice-Chairman),	
J. Styles, Esq., M.L.A.,	
W. A. Trenwith, Esq., M.L.A.,	
J. S. White, Esq., M.L.A.	

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WOOMELANG TO MILDURA AND YELTA RAILWAY.

REPORT.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS, to which the Legislative Assembly referred the proposed line of railway from Woomelang to Mildura and Yelta, has the honour to report as follows :—

1. The question of railway communication with Mildura and Yelta was fully reported on under section 11 of the *Railways Standing Committee Act 1893* (No. 1350) in a Report presented to the Legislative Assembly on the 31st July last, when it was recommended—

Previous Report
in July last,
No. 3, 1900.

- (1) That a broad-gauge railway be constructed through Mildura to Yelta.
- (2) That the through line start at Woomelang, the present terminus of the railway which has recently been constructed from Birchip to Woomelang.
- (3) That, on leaving the permanent survey which ends at Minapre, the present trial survey be deviated to the west, keeping approximately to the route marked in blue dotted lines on the attached plan until it joins the line which has been permanently surveyed from Lake Hattah to Mildura.
- (4) That the cost of construction should not exceed a sum of £2,000 per mile, and that with the view of keeping within this amount, the line be ballasted with sand and lightly equipped, and constructed without fencing, as recommended by the Engineer-in-Chief; and that instead of new 60-lb. steel rails as proposed, second-hand 66-lb. steel rails be used; the present value of these rails being charged against the new railway.
- (5) That the offer of the Mildura residents to confine their business to the line for at least three years be accepted, and also their offer to pay an extra shilling rate on the annual rateable value of their property in the event of the railway not paying working expenses and interest at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum on the cost of construction.
- (6) That the proceeds of any sales of land at Yelta, or along the route for 15 miles on each side of the proposed railway, and all rents received over and above the present revenue derived by the Crown Lands Department from the land traversed be credited to the Construction Account until the railway pays working expenses and interest on the cost of construction.
- (7) That settlement along the line be regulated so as to proceed gradually from Woomelang northwards, and be compressed together within 15 miles on either side of the railway. The resumption for agricultural purposes of land now held by block lessees should be regulated so as to give effect to this method of settlement.
- (8) That through mileage rates be charged on the railway from all stations beyond Woomelang.

RECOMMENDATION.

2. Subject to the foregoing conditions, the Committee recommends the construction of the line from Woomelang to Mildura and Yelta, remitted to it by the Legislative Assembly.

E. H. CAMERON,
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,
Parliament House, Melbourne, 17th September, 1900.

APPENDICES.

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- B.—Report by the Deputy Commissioner on the proposed railway.
- C.—Approximate Estimate (in detail) of Cost of line, from the Engineer-in-Chief.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

MEMO. FROM THE DEPUTY VICTORIAN RAILWAYS COMMISSIONER ON THE PROPOSED RAILWAY FROM WOOMELANG TO MILDURA AND YELTA.

1900/7597.

Victorian Railways,
Commissioner's Office, Spencer-street,
Melbourne, 12th September, 1900.

MEMO.

The Deputy Commissioner has the honour to report that an officer has travelled over the country intervening between the above points, and has also made inquiries with respect to the probable traffic at Mildura and Wentworth.

A statement in usual form showing the probable results if a line be constructed is herewith submitted as desired by the Honorable the Minister. This statement is based on the results of the officer's inquiry.

The sources of probable traffic are broadly three, viz.:—

- (a) Wentworth and the country along the Darling River. Traffic to be dealt with at Yelta ;
- (b) The Mildura Settlement ; and
- (c) The country between Mildura and Woomelang.

(a) In considering the traffic to be obtained to and from Yelta it is evident that the river competition is the governing factor.

Loading coming down from the Darling goes now by river either to the South Australian Railways at Morgan or Murray Bridge, 105 and 61 miles from Adelaide respectively, or to Goolwa ; thence per rail $10\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Port Victor ; or to the Victorian lines at Echuca, 145 miles from Melbourne, a small proportion only of the traffic being transferred to the railway at Swan Hill, 215 miles from Melbourne.

From Wentworth (which is opposite Yelta), at the junction of the Darling and Murray Rivers, the distances by river are—

To Morgan	...	...	...	...	388 miles down stream.
To Murray Bridge	...	...	...	...	556 miles down stream.
To Echuca	...	...	...	...	700 miles up stream.
To Swan Hill	...	...	...	...	360 miles up stream.

As the river steamers carry at very low rates, their charges, plus the rates for shorter mileage, over the South Australian Railways from or to Murray Bridge or Morgan and Adelaide, and any charges for transhipment and insurance, practically fix the rates procurable for transit over the Victorian lines, whether to Echuca, Swan Hill, or Yelta.

Under these circumstances it would, of course, be hopeless to expect that local rates could be charged for this traffic. This is recognised by the Railways Standing Committee in its Report of 2nd November, 1898, on the Ultima route, where it is recommended that mileage rates be charged on the railways from all stations beyond Ultima. A similar recommendation is also made in the Committee's Report of 26th July last respecting the rates from stations beyond Woomelang.

The Deputy Commissioner, however, is of opinion that except for wheat (the ordinary mileage rates for which, Yelta to Melbourne, would be 14s. 9d. per ton) it would be useless to expect that even at ordinary through mileage rates this Department could command the traffic. For 365 miles, Yelta to Melbourne, the ordinary rates per ton in the respective classes would be as under :—

						<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	...	20	5
Wheat	...	...	...	...	...	14	9
Special Wheat	...	...	...	...	...	20	0
A	...	...	...	...	...	35	5
B	...	...	...	...	...	48	2
C	...	...	...	...	...	71	3
1	...	...	...	...	...	103	7
2	...	...	...	...	...	137	1
3	...	...	...	...	...	193	1

To Adelaide and Yelta by way of Murray Bridge the existing rates are approximately as follows, but it must be borne in mind that if there was danger of the traffic being diverted from the river the boats would doubtless reduce their charges :—

Approximate Rates per Ton between Adelaide and Yelta, viâ Murray Bridge.

							<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Miscellaneous Class	...	...	...	...	...	...	14	10
A	...	...	...	...	...	...	18	3
B	...	...	...	...	...	...	20	9
C	...	...	...	...	...	...	23	4
1	...	...	...	...	...	...	27	3
2	...	...	...	...	...	...	32	6
3	...	...	...	...	...	...	32	6

A proportion of this business might of course be secured at a slightly higher rate owing to desire on the part of producers to take advantage of the better market available in Melbourne, but it is plain that in fixing rates in this colony the competition by way of South Australia cannot be disregarded.

It is impossible at the present time to gauge what effect upon rates and traffic will be produced by the operation of the clauses of the Commonwealth Act of the Imperial Parliament corresponding to sections 98 to 104 inclusive of the *Australasian Federation Enabling Act 1899* (No. 1603 of the Victorian Parliament), but that some alterations will take place, and that these are likely to be prejudicial to the returns from the line so far as New South Wales traffic is concerned, the Deputy Commissioner fears to be inevitable. Neither should it be forgotten that heavy expenditure has been incurred at Echuca in providing adequate facilities for dealing with the river trade. To secure the traffic at Yelta, therefore, not only will the rates have to be considered, but proper facilities will have to be placed there at considerable cost. The Deputy Commissioner observes too that Mr. J. Bowring, J.P., ex-Mayor of Wentworth, in a sworn statement furnished to the Committee, asserts—"that the bank of the River Murray on the Victorian side at the site chosen for the proposed town of Yelta is subject to inundation for a distance of a quarter of a mile, and is therefore not well suited for wharfage accommodation.

The traffic from the Murrumbidgee will of course still continue to go to Echuca, and as that is the depôt for their steamers it is probable that Permewan, Wright, and Co., who own those coming to Victoria, will prefer that their boats now employed on the Darling should continue to run to and from Echuca, and, if so, will cut the rates as low as possible to secure that end.

(b) With respect to the Mildura trade, the effect of the river competition on rates must also be kept in view in regard to those articles for which rapid transit is not a matter of special moment. Fresh fruit of the more perishable kinds may be expected to take advantage of a railway, provided the prices obtainable for it in competition with districts like the Goulburn Valley, which are so much nearer Melbourne, will permit its profitable growth. Canned and dried fruit and fruit pulp, however, for which rapidity of transit is not essential, would probably go largely by boat. With respect to the guarantee from the Mildura people, to which the Committee refers in its Reports of 2nd November, 1898, and 26th July last, there is a good deal of vagueness as to what would be covered by it, that is, as to what rates the guarantors would expect to pay, and to what extent those interested would make themselves party to it.

During the traffic officer's recent visit to the district he found an apparent disinclination to go beyond the rates now being levied. Further, the Deputy Commissioner notes that the term of the proposed guarantee is limited to three years, and as the present annual value of the rateable properties of Mildura appears to be about £25,000 the proposed rate of 1s. will give £1,250 per annum. According to the estimate the loss is expected to reach £6,530 per annum, so that there will still be a considerable shortage to be made up.

(c) The trouble with regard to rates would also apply in part to the line south of Mildura. The local or mileage rates might, however, be practicable for the first 75 miles from Woomelang. The chief difficulty, however, would be with respect to the conservation of water for stock and domestic purposes. The Deputy Commissioner concurs in the view expressed by the Commissioner, Mr. Mathieson, that given a sufficient water supply settlement would be likely to proceed gradually, and that as the land came under cultivation traffic would increase with (provided the conditions prove equally favorable) results akin to those already achieved in the southern Mallee districts.

In conclusion, the Deputy Commissioner would strongly urge that if it be decided to build the line the proposal put forward by Mr. Mathieson, in his evidence before the Railways Standing Committee on 25th May, 1898, that an allowance equal to 2s. 6d. per acre on the good land within 10 miles on either side of the route should be credited to the capital account, should be adopted. Failing this, he hopes the recommendation of the Committee in its Report of 26th July last will be given effect to, viz., "that the proceeds of any sales of land at Yelta or along the route for 15 miles on each side of the proposed railway, and all rents received over and above the present revenue derived by the Crown Lands Department from the land traversed, be credited to the Construction Account until the railway pays working expenses and interest on the cost of construction."

The construction of this line would probably necessitate the provision of additional rolling-stock in order to cope satisfactorily with demands, but no estimate has been made of the expenditure involved.

W. FITZPATRICK,
Deputy Commissioner.

The Honorable the Minister.

APPENDIX B.

REPORT ON PROPOSED RAILWAY FROM WOOMELANG TO MILDURA AND YELTA
(GAUGE 5FT. 3IN.). LENGTH, 124 MILES; RULING GRADE, 1 IN 75; SHARPEST
CURVE, 20 CHAINS RADIUS.

(a) COST OF CONSTRUCTION.

The Engineer-in-Chief estimates the cost of construction at £2,250 per mile, or
a total of £279,000 0 0

ANNUAL COST.

Interest on capital expended, at 3½ per cent. £9,765 0 0

(b) WORKING EXPENSES.

Locomotive	...	...	...	...	...	£1,900	0	0
Traffic	...	...	...	...	...	1,170	0	0
Permanent way	...	...	...	...	...	6,820	0	0
Total working expenses	9,890	0	0
Total annual cost	£19,655	0	0

ESTIMATED REVENUE FROM PROPOSED LINE.

Passengers	...	...	...	...	...	£1,750	0	0
Goods (other than minerals)	...	...	...	...	...	8,820	0	0
Live Stock	...	...	...	...	...	280	0	0
Minerals	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
All other traffic	...	...	...	...	...	1,250	0	0
Total revenue from proposed line	...	...	...	...	...	£12,100	0	0
The revenue from carriage over existing railways of new traffic due to construction of proposed line less 60 per cent. for working expenses is estimated at	...	...	...	...	...	1,025	0	0
Total revenue	13,125	0	0
Deficit on proposed line	£6,530	0	0

EXPLANATORY REMARKS.

- (a) Exclusive of land and rolling-stock.
(b) Tri-weekly service.

W. FITZPATRICK,
Deputy Victorian Railways Commissioner.

Melbourne, 12th September, 1900.

APPENDIX C.

APPROXIMATE ESTIMATE OF COST OF PROPOSED WOOMELANG TO MILDURA AND YELTA RAILWAY, VIA OUYEN AND CONGEREEL; 124 MILES IN LENGTH; RULING GRADIENT, 1 IN 75; SHARPEST CURVE, 20 CHAINS RADIUS; PART PERMANENT SURVEY, PART NO SURVEY.

BASED ON 6s. RATE OF WAGE.

Description of Work.	Quantity.	Rate.		Cost.		Total Cost.	
		£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
Land transfer expenses, sum of	...	...	...	...	...	400	0 0
Clearing and grubbing	124 miles	12	0 0	...	...	1,488	0 0
Fencing	20 "	30	0 0	...	...	600	0 0
Cattle-pits	40 No.	8	10 0	...	...	340	0 0
Residences for employés (temporary), sum of	...	...	...	...	...	350	0 0
Occupation and station gates, sum of	...	...	...	...	...	150	0 0
Excavation in cuttings, 15-ft. formation	750,000 c. yards	0	1 0	37,500	0 0		
Excavation in side cuttings and back cuttings	350,000 "	0	0 8½	12,395	16 8		
Excavation in side ditches and creek diversions	100,000 "	0	0 8½	3,541	13 4		
Excavation in drains	7,500 l. chains	0	1 6	562	10 0		
Excavation in foundations to culverts, &c.	5,000 c. yards	0	0 8	166	13 4		
Excavation in approaches, roads, &c.	10,000 "	0	1 0	500	0 0		
Excavation in station grounds, including platforms	15,000 "	0	1 0	750	0 0		
Timber bridges	1,050 l. feet	1	13 0	1,732	10 0		
Wharf at Yelta, including timber approach, sum of	...	...	...	3,000	0 0		
Timber culverts, including cost of ironwork, sum of	...	...	...	3,000	0 0		
Brick and cement concrete culverts	...	...	...	Nil	...		
Metalling and gravelling roads, station grounds, platforms	4,000 c. yards	0	3 0	...	...	7,732	10 0
Ballast, 4 inches under sleeper, boxed up to 8½ inches	172,800 "	0	1 6	...	...	600	0 0
Sleepers, 9ft. x 9in. x 4½in.	243,200 No.	0	4 0	...	...	12,960	0 0
Permanent-way materials, main line and sidings (60-lb. steel rails, at £5 10s. per ton)	128 miles	656	0 0	83,968	0 0		
Points and crossings	45 No.	35	0 0	1,575	0 0		
Laying permanent way, main line, sidings, points, and crossings	128 miles	70	0 0	8,960	0 0		
Carriage of permanent-way materials from Melbourne depôt	128 "	108	0 0	13,824	0 0		
Terminal station, sum of	1 ...	250	0 0	250	0 0		
Road-side stations	13 No.	50	0 0	650	0 0		
Turntable and engine shed, &c., sum of	...	...	...	...	...	900	0 0
Water supply, sum of	...	...	...	...	...	1,300	0 0
Trucking yards, sum of	...	...	...	...	...	5,000	0 0
Cranes at stations, sum of	...	...	...	...	...	500	0 0
Signals and interlocking, sum of	...	...	...	...	...	250	0 0
Telegraph	124 miles	16	0 0	...	...	1,000	0 0
Provision 5 per cent. Miscellaneous items and unforeseen contingencies	...	...	...	...	...	1,984	0 0
Engineering and surveying and general supervision, sum of	...	...	...	...	...	247,938	3 4
For line complete including 3 years development—Total	...	...	...	...	...	12,396	18 2
						18,700	0 0
						279,035	1 6

Or £2,250 per mile, exclusive of land and rolling-stock.

Quantities for portion not surveyed are based on nearest trial survey.

F. R.,
7.9.1900.