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VICTORIA.

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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON RAILWAYS.

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NINTH GENERAL REPORT.

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PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE RAILWAYS STANDING  
COMMITTEE ACT 1890 (54 VICT., No. 1177), SECTION 18.

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## MEMBERS OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE.

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### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The Honorable JOSEPH HENRY ABBOTT  
The Honorable DONALD MELVILLE  
The Honorable EDWARD MOREY.

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### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

EWEN HUGH CAMERON, Esquire  
ALBERT WILLIAM CRAVEN, Esquire  
The Honorable HENRY FOSTER  
ALBERT HARRIS, Esquire  
THOMAS SMITH, Esquire  
JOHN SAMUEL WHITE, Esquire.

CHAIRMAN—EWEN HUGH CAMERON, Esquire, M.L.A.

VICE-CHAIRMAN—THE HONORABLE EDWARD MOREY, M.L.C.

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# NINTH GENERAL REPORT.

To His Excellency the HONORABLE SIR JOHN MADDEN, *Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Lieutenant-Governor of the State of Victoria and its Dependencies, &c., &c., &c.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY :

In accordance with the requirements of section 18 of the *Railways Standing Committee Act 1890*, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways has the honour to submit the following Report of its proceedings since the 26th June, 1900, the date of the Eighth General Report :—

## I.—WORK OF THE FOURTH COMMITTEE FROM JUNE, 1900, TO OCTOBER, 1900.

1. Since the Eighth General Report was presented a new Committee has been appointed, the previous body, which was the fourth appointed under the Railways Standing Committee Acts, having terminated on the dissolution of the seventeenth Parliament.

When the last General Report was presented three questions were under consideration, viz. :— Questions under consideration.

- Railway communication with Mildura and Yelta.
- Water supply for the mallee area.
- Central railway station at Flinders-street.

During the following Session six additional questions were remitted to the Committee for inquiry and report, viz. :— Additional questions remitted.

- Moe to Walhalla railway.
- Special railway rates.
- Woomelang to Mildura and Yelta railway.
- Railway connexion in the North-Eastern and contiguous districts.
- Railway communication with Tolmie.
- Railway communication with Woolamai, San Remo, and Cape Patterson.

The three latter questions were referred only a short time prior to the dissolution of Parliament, and therefore lapsed without inquiry. In dealing with the others the Committee compiled and presented six Reports, viz. :— Reports presented.

- Report on the question of Railway Communication with Mildura and Yelta.
- Report on the Moe to Walhalla Railway.
- Report on the question of Special Railway Rates.
- Report on the Woomelang to Mildura and Yelta Railway.
- Report on the Superstructure of the Central Railway Station at Flinders-street ; and
- Progress Report on the question of Mallee Water Supply.

### RECOMMENDATIONS.

2. Two new railways were recommended—Woomelang to Mildura and Yelta, New railways. and Moe to Walhalla, and their construction has since been authorized by Parliament. The following statement shows the length and estimated cost of each :—

Name of Line.	Length.	Amount provided under Construction Acts.
Moe to Walhalla*... ..	27 miles, 40 chains	£ 115,869
Woomelang to Mildura and Yelta † ...	124 miles	248,000

\* Narrow gauge.

† Broad gauge.

Special Railway Rates.

SPECIAL RAILWAY RATES.—This question was dealt with in a Report presented to Parliament on the 18th September, 1900. Under the “local” rates system as provided for in section 77 of the *Railway Lands Acquisition Act 1893*, No. 1288, every new line of railway until it pays is treated as though it were detached and separate from the existing railways; the users of the new line not getting the benefit of the taper in the through rates for long distances until the point is reached where the new railway junctions with the main line. It is also provided that these rates are to be charged until the traffic receipts have paid for the cost of working such line from the date of opening, together with full interest at the rate of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum on the cost of construction and rolling-stock.

While the Committee approved of the charging of “local” rates on the railways constructed subject to the conditions of the *Railway Lands Acquisition Act 1893*, it recommended that in no case should more than one “local” rate be levied; that the minimums fixed by the Railway Department should not be charged on through traffic; that due credit should be given to all new railways for the revenue derived from the traffic brought to the main system by the construction of such railways, and that where it was shown that with this allowance any new railway paid, the “local” rates should at once cease to apply.

Railway Local Rates Act, No. 1695.

On the 17th October, 1900, an Act was passed giving effect to the recommendations of the Committee. Prior to the enactment of these recommendations “local” rates were charged on ten lines of railway, with a total length of  $249\frac{3}{4}$  miles. Under the provisions of the new Act seven of these lines were immediately freed from the imposition of “local” rates. On the following lines “local” rates are at present in force:—

Natinuk-Goroke line.  
 Birchip-Woomelang line.  
 Wangaratta-Whitfield line.  
 Lancefield-Kilmore line.  
 Upper Fern Tree Gully-Gembrook line.

Central Railway Station.

Report No. 7, 1900.

CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION.—The final Report dealing with the superstructure of the proposed Central Railway Station was presented to Parliament on the 2nd October, 1900, the ground plan and re-arrangement of the yard having been approved and recommended by the Committee in a previous Report.

As the Committee was of opinion that the design and general arrangement of the superstructure submitted by the Railway Department could be greatly improved, it deferred its decision and recommended that competitive designs should be invited. With the consent of the Government, and on conditions agreed to by the Committee, designs were called for, the prizes offered being £500 for the first, £200 for the second, and £100 for the third. Seventeen designs were sent in, and eventually one was selected which met with the approval of the Committee and of the officers of the Department. The construction of the station on this design was recommended, and the work is now being proceeded with. The total cost of completing the station yard and the superstructure, as estimated by the Engineer for Existing Lines, will amount to—

Buildings in brick and stone, roof and subways	...	£149,578
Ground plan and station yard as per estimate when the Committee approved of the same in June, 1899	... £100,420	
Add for increased cost of labour and materials	... ..	15,063
		<hr/>
		115,483
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Total cost of the complete station and yard		£265,061

REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE FOURTH COMMITTEE SINCE ITS APPOINTMENT.

3. The fourth Committee was in existence from the 23rd November, 1897, to the 18th October, 1900, a period of nearly three years, during which time 426 meetings were held, and witnesses to the number of 606 examined, while 9,118 miles were travelled by rail, and 2,466 miles by road. Meetings held;  
witnesses  
examined.

In dealing with the various matters remitted to it, the Committee compiled and presented 27 Reports. Reports  
presented.

The Reports on proposed new railways are eleven in number, and are as follow:—

Fern Tree Gully to Gembrook.  
Birchip to Cronomby Tanks.  
Quambatook to Ultima.  
Jeparit towards Albacutya.  
Melbourne to Collingwood.  
Colac to Beech Forest.  
Lilydale to Warburton.  
Neerim South to Neerim.  
Newtown to Pitfield.  
Moe to Walhalla.  
Woomelang to Mildura and Yelta.

The Reports on general questions which were remitted to the Committee by the Legislative Assembly are thirteen in number, and are as follow:—

Railway Communication with the Upper Yarra and Warburton Districts.  
Progress Report on the question of Further Extension of Railways in the Mallee Districts.  
Direct Railway Communication with the Northern Suburbs and Melbourne.  
Final Report on the question of the Further Extension of Railways in the Mallee Districts (Mildura and Yelta).  
Progress Report on the Central Railway Station at Flinders-street.  
Report on the Coliban Upper Reservoir.  
Report on the Colac to Beech Forest Narrow-gauge Railway. (Increasing the Limit of Expenditure.)  
Report on the proposed Conversion and Protection Works at the Gippsland Lakes' Entrance.  
Report on the question of Railway Communication with Walhalla.  
Report on the question of Railway Communication with Mildura and Yelta.  
Report on the question of Special Railway Rates.  
Report on the proposed Central Railway Station at Flinders-street.  
Progress Report on the question of Mallee Water Supply.

Three General Reports, under section 18 of Act No. 1177, were presented, viz.:—

Sixth General Report.  
Seventh General Report.  
Eighth General Report.

## II.—WORK OF THE PRESENT (FIFTH) COMMITTEE.

4. The fifth Committee, at present in existence, was appointed on the 18th December, 1900, and held its first meeting on the following day. Appointment of  
Committee.

This Committee consists of the same members as the previous Committee, with the exception of the Honorable H. Foster and Mr. Smith, who have taken the places of Mr. Styles and Mr. Trenwith as two of the Assembly members, and the Honorable D. Melville, who has taken the place of the Honorable F. S. Grimwade, as one of the Council members.

Since its appointment the Committee has held 78 meetings, examined 216 witnesses, and travelled 1,698 miles by rail, and 526 miles by road. Meetings held;  
witnesses  
examined.



Questions  
remitted for  
inquiry.

5. Before Parliament was prorogued three general questions were remitted for inquiry and report, viz. :—

The question of connecting the North-Eastern, Goulburn Valley, and Northern main trunk lines by means of a railway.

The question of connecting Tolmie by means of a railway with one of the existing lines.

The question of connecting Woolamai, San Remo, and Cape Patterson by means of a railway with the existing railway system.

#### PROGRESS OF INQUIRIES.

6. During the recess the Committee has been engaged in dealing with the questions remitted for consideration.

Tolmie railway.

**TOLMIE RAILWAY.**—The question of connecting Tolmie by means of a railway with one of the existing lines was referred to the Committee on the 19th December, 1900. The district has since been inspected and the inquiry into the question has been completed, and a Report thereon will be presented to the Legislative Assembly as soon as Parliament meets.

Decision.

The Committee has decided to recommend the construction of a 2ft. 6in. gauge line of railway from Whitfield to Mahaikah along the route recommended by the Engineer-in-Chief. The line will be about 19 miles 10 chains in length, and the Engineer-in-Chief estimates its cost of construction at £3,426 per mile, or a total of £65,520. The estimate is for a line completely fenced, and laid with serviceable 66-lb. steel rails, and is exclusive of the cost of land and rolling-stock. The ruling grade is 1 in 25, and the sharpest curve is 2 chains radius.

Cross-country railway.

**CROSS-COUNTRY RAILWAY.**—The inspections of the many alternative routes proposed for the cross-country railway connexion necessitated a great deal of travelling. The inspections have, however, all been made, and the Committee is at present awaiting certain information from the Railway Department. When this is received the Committee will be in a position to give its decision and to report on the question.

Woolamai, San Remo, and Cape Patterson railway.

**WOOLAMAI, SAN REMO, AND CAPE PATTERSON RAILWAY.**—The alternative routes for this line have also been inspected, but as the Railway Department was not able to furnish sufficiently accurate information as regards the cost of construction, some of the estimates having been based on inspections only, the Committee has postponed the consideration of the question until trial surveys are made, and more reliable estimates obtained. These the Committee expects to receive shortly, when the question will be settled, and a Report presented to the Legislative Assembly.

Mallee water supply.

**MALLEE WATER SUPPLY.**—In the Progress Report of the Committee, presented to the Legislative Assembly in October last, a full description was given of the proposals made by the Department for providing a stock and domestic supply for the Mallee area. The schemes proposed were the Lake Lonsdale storage diversion and distribution works and the Tooleybuc Channel scheme. The initial expenditure on these two schemes was set down at £300,000, but on inquiry it was found that no provision was made for distribution works, and that in order to make the outlay effective a very large additional expenditure would have to be incurred on subsidiary works and channels. Even then the whole of the Mallee would not be commanded, and the carrying out of a third scheme, known as the Glenelg scheme, would be necessary to supply the south-western portion of the Mallee area. Although it was not proposed by the Department that the latter scheme should be undertaken, the Committee had little doubt that an irresistible demand would be made to have it carried out if the other two schemes were put in hand, and as the completion of the three schemes involved an outlay of £1,424,000, the Committee, before coming to a decision on the question, desired to satisfy itself whether it was possible or not to effectively supply the Mallee from one source instead of from the three indicated—the Little Wimmera at Lake Lonsdale, the Murray River at Tooleybuc, and the Glenelg River.

This, it was suggested, might be done by a diversion from the Murray River at some point above Echuca, and at the Committee's request a report and estimate of such a scheme was submitted by the Chief Engineer of Water Supply. This scheme provided for a supply to be drawn for the present from the Goulburn River, and in later years to be supplemented by a channel from the Murray above Albury.

Owing to the conflict of evidence as to cost, the consideration of the scheme was held over until estimates based on a complete survey were furnished. The Department expected to be able to supply these estimates before the end of last April, but found it impossible to do so, and the Committee has not yet received the information.

In view of the terrible season experienced this year in the Mallee, and the hardships suffered by the settlers, the Committee feels that it is necessary that some tentative scheme should be proceeded with to meet the needs of settlement, pending the consideration of larger schemes for securing a more adequate supply, and it has decided to recommend the construction of the proposed storage works at Lake Lonsdale.

A Report with reference to the question will be presented to Parliament shortly.

As pointed out in the Committee's previous Report, much of the suffering through want of water in the Mallee could have been avoided by a little individual effort on the part of the settlers. Notwithstanding that good holding ground can be obtained in many parts of the wheat-growing districts in the Southern Mallee, practically nothing has been done in the way of putting down tanks or storages to conserve water from local catchments. By comparison with other districts the absence of these precautions is very noticeable, and the Committee considers that the settlers are greatly to blame for their neglect in this respect. Even at this stage it would be wisdom on their part to make some such provision, for no matter what scheme may eventually be adopted the supply can be advantageously supplemented by local conservation.

The tanks that have been constructed in the area at present supplied by channels could also with advantage be increased in size, the available supply of water from these channels being frequently much greater than the storage capacity provided.

E. H. CAMERON,  
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,  
State Parliament House, Melbourne, 17th June, 1901.