

1905.

—  
VICTORIA.

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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON RAILWAYS.

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FOURTEENTH 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 SEVENTH COMMITTEE.

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### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The Honorable Dr. WILLIAM HENRY EMBLING  
The Honorable DONALD MELVILLE.

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### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

ALFRED SHRAPNELL BAILES, Esquire  
The Honorable GEORGE GRAHAM  
PETER MCBRIDE, Esquire  
EDWARD COUGHLAN WARDE, Esquire.

CHAIRMAN—THE HONORABLE GEORGE GRAHAM, M.L.A.

VICE-CHAIRMAN—THE HONORABLE DONALD MELVILLE, M.L.C.



## FOURTEENTH GENERAL REPORT.

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*To His Excellency the Honorable SIR REGINALD ARTHUR JAMES TALBOT,  
Knight Commander of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath,  
Governor of the State of Victoria and its Dependencies in the  
Commonwealth of Australia, &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 :—

### I.—WORK OF THE SEVENTH COMMITTEE.

1. During the ten months which have passed since the appointment of the Committee 133 meetings have been held, 204 witnesses examined, and 2,131 miles have been travelled by rail, and 583 miles by road and river.

2. Last Session of Parliament a Report on the question of constructing a railway from Strathmerton to Tocumwal was presented by the Committee to the Legislative Assembly. An Act was subsequently passed authorizing the building of that railway, and the work was completed a few months ago.

3. Since the prorogation of Parliament the Committee, at the instance of the Honorable the Premier and Minister of Railways, inquired into the question of the amended plans of the Central Railway Station, Flinders-street, Melbourne. The Report of the Committee was handed to the Honorable the Premier on the 31st January, 1905, and it will be placed before Parliament when the forthcoming Session opens.

4. The Legislative Assembly last Session referred to the Committee for inquiry and report the questions of connecting the following districts by means of railways with the existing railway system and of "loading" the lands which would be enhanced in value by the construction of the lines :—

Mallee Country, north-east of Lake Tyrrell.

Bass Valley (San Remo, Kilcunda, and Cape Patterson).

Richardson Valley.

Netherby.

Tolmie.

Bruthen.

Dartmoor, and towards Mount Gambier.

Township of Alexandra.

Hurst's Bridge (Diamond Creek).

Neerim.

Most of these districts have been visited by the Committee, and evidence has been taken by it regarding the proposals. Reports dealing with the questions will be placed before the Legislative Assembly during the coming Session.

5. The question of constructing electric street railways in various metropolitan areas to bring traffic to the suburban railways was also referred last Session by the Legislative Assembly to the Committee for investigation and report.

6. An inspection was made by the Committee of the route of the proposed electric street railway from Port Melbourne along the foreshore of Hobson's Bay to St. Kilda. Shortly afterwards, however, the Committee received a letter from the Honorable the Minister of Railways, stating that he had appointed an electrical engineer, Mr. F. W. Bradford, for the purpose of giving information to the Committee respecting electric street railways. The Committee understands that Mr. Bradford has visited several suburban districts and inspected the routes of the proposed electric street railways, and will, in the course of a few days, place his plans before the Committee for its consideration.

## II.—INCREASED COST OF RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

7. In recent years the cost of railway construction has largely increased, and in order to ascertain the reason the Committee asked Mr. M. E. Kernot, Acting Engineer-in-Chief of the Victorian Railways, to furnish it with a comparison of the actual cost per mile of the Birchip to Woomelang railway, which was constructed in 1899, with the estimated cost of the proposed extension of the Ultima line. Both are Mallee railways, passing through almost similar country. The Birchip to Woomelang line cost but £1,432 per mile, while the estimate of the Ultima extension is £2,345 per mile, or an increase of upwards of 60 per cent. The comparison was as follows:—

Item.	Cost per Mile.		Remarks.
	Birchip to Woomelang.	Ultima Extension Estimate.	
	£	£	
Land transfer ... ..	2	5	Expenditure on Woomelang not complete. Titles now more complicated
Clearing and grubbing ... ..	6	12	More clearing to do. Higher wage rate
Fencing and gates ... ..	69	15	Woomelang line fenced cheaply. Estimate for Ultima Extension provides for fencing stations only
Residences for employés ... ..	Nil	33	New item required by Commissioners
Earthworks ... ..	148	277	Country more undulating, and higher wage rate
Culverts ... ..	11	28	More culverts required on new line, and timber now more costly
Ballast and metalling .. ..	116	148	Higher wage rate, and payment has now to be made for use of ballast trucks
Sleepers ... ..	376	430	Rise in price, and longer haulage
Rails and fastenings, including freight	429	927	Second-hand rails not at present obtainable. Duty has to be paid on new rails
Laying permanent way ... ..	53	70	Higher wage rate, and truck hire has now to be paid
Station buildings, water supply, turntable, trucking yards, cranes, telegraph, &c.	72	134	Woomelang line not fully equipped owing to drought years; part of proposed equipment may be postponed
Surveys, engineering, and general supervision	125	162	Increase is <i>pro rata</i> to increased work not including extra cost of rails
Miscellaneous, contingencies, &c.	25	104	Not required on new line unless contingencies arise
Totals ... ..	£1,432	£2,345	

8. When taking evidence in country districts, road contractors and others assured the Committee on several occasions that some of the proposed railways could be constructed for much less than the estimate of the Construction Branch of the Railways Department. Mr. Kernot, however, pointed out that similar statements were made in connexion with the building of the Beech Forest railway three or four years ago, but when the work was offered to local contractors, they either declined to undertake it at the reduced prices or failed to complete the work to the satisfaction of the departmental officers.

GEO. GRAHAM,  
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,  
State Parliament House,  
Melbourne, 13th June, 1905.