

1909.
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VICTORIA.

R E P O R T

FROM

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON RAILWAYS

ON THE PROPOSED

BAIRNSDALE TO ORBOST RAILWAY ;

TOGETHER WITH

BOOK OF REFERENCE AND PLAN.

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 17th November, 1909.

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2ND S.—RAILWAYS STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT No. 12.—[6d.]—14846.

EXTRACTED FROM THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 3RD NOVEMBER, 1909.

3. **BAIRNSDALE TO ORBOST RAILWAY.**—Mr. A. A. Billson, in accordance with the requirements of the Railways Standing Committee Acts, moved, pursuant to notice, That the construction of a 5ft. 3in. gauge railway from Bairnsdale to Orbost be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways for consideration and report.

Question—put and resolved in the affirmative.

MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS.

(*Ninth Committee.*)

The Hon. E. H. CAMERON, M.L.A., Chairman;

J. W. Billson, Esq., M.L.A.,

J. Cullen, Esq., M.L.A.,

The Hon. Dr. W. H. Embling, M.L.C.,

The Hon. D. Melville, M.L.C.

(Vice-Chairman),

E. C. Warde, Esq., M.L.A.

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* The compilation was a portion of the work of the Secretary of the Railways Standing Committee, who is paid by annual salary

REPORT.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS, to which the Legislative Assembly referred the question of the construction of a 5ft. 3in. gauge railway from Bairnsdale to Orbost, has the honour to report as follows :—

1. The subject of railway communication with the East Gippsland country so as to open up the Crown lands between Bairnsdale and the New South Wales border to promote settlement and tap the timber and mineral resources of the district, and also the provision of a deficiency rate, was referred to the Committee some months ago as a general question of inquiry and report. On the 30th June, 1909, the Committee presented to the Legislative Assembly a Report describing the country, and referring to the present difficulties of communication, prospects of settlement, rainfall, mineral resources, and timber supplies. Reference was also made in the Report to the existing population and production in East Gippsland. The estimated cost of a broad-gauge railway to serve that country was stated, and also the estimated annual revenue, interest charges, and working expenses. Other matters dealt with in the Report were the likelihood of the proposed line having to compete with water carriage, and the probable cost of constructing a harbor at Marlo, at the entrance to the Snowy River. Former Report.

2. In the expectation that no public expenditure will hereafter be incurred in making improvements to the entrance to the Snowy River at Marlo, and that railway extension to Orbost will result in increased settlement in East Gippsland, and lead to greater activity on the part of prospectors in that country, with the chance of important mining developments, the Committee repeats its former recommendation for the construction of a broad-gauge railway, 60 miles in length, from Bairnsdale through Johnsonville, Bruthen, and Nowa Nowa, terminating on the west bank of the Snowy River, close to the Orbost bridge, at an estimated cost of £386,710, with £1,650 added for rolling-stock. The recommendation is made conditionally on the estimated annual loss of £3,000 being made good by the Tambo Shire Council and by the Orbost Shire Council, the latter contributing four-fifths, at least, of that sum; and also conditionally on the municipalities named lodging £3,000, in the proportions mentioned, with the Honorable the Treasurer, to meet the first year's deficiency before the construction of the railway is entered upon. Evidence was given before the Committee at Orbost that the owners of the rich flats there, totalling 30,000 acres, would be prepared to pay a deficiency rate up to 5s. per acre per annum for twenty years, or for a lesser period if the railway should in the meantime become a paying one. The holders of the hill lands around Orbost consented to pay a deficiency rate up to 6d. per acre per annum, and the owners of the Tambo flats near Bruthen, totalling 3,000 acres, expressed their willingness to have their land rated up to 2s. per acre per annum rather than go without the benefit of railway facilities. It will, therefore, be seen that both shire councils will be well able to meet the deficiency rate suggested by the Committee, as the railway will increase the value of the Tambo flats by several pounds per acre, will benefit the lands near Buchan, and will materially enhance the value of the Orbost flats. Recommendation.

E. H. CAMERON,
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,
State Parliament House,
Melbourne, 17th November, 1909.