

1910.

VICTORIA.

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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON RAILWAYS.

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NINETEENTH 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 NINTH COMMITTEE.

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

JOHN WILLIAM BILLSON, Esquire  
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CHAIRMAN—THE HONORABLE EWEN HUGH CAMERON, M.L.A.  
VICE-CHAIRMAN—THE HONORABLE DONALD MELVILLE, M.L.C.



## NINETEENTH GENERAL REPORT.

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*To His Excellency SIR THOMAS DAVID GIBSON CARMICHAEL, Baronet,  
Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael  
and Saint George; 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 :—

1. Since the date of the last General Report the Committee has held 214 meetings, and examined 590 witnesses in connexion with various proposed railways. In making its inquiries the Committee has travelled 3,230 miles by rail, 1,125 miles by road, and 20 miles by steamer.

2. During the second Session of Parliament 1909, the Committee submitted Reports recommending the extension of the Bairnsdale broad-gauge railway to Orbost, a distance of 60 miles, at an estimated cost of £386,710 ; the construction of a 5ft. 3in. railway from Jeparit to Lorquon, 14 miles, at a cost of £39,200 ; the extension of the Noradjuha railway to Toolondo, 11 miles, costing £27,500 ; the construction of a main railway from Gheringhap to Maroona, 100 $\frac{3}{4}$  miles, estimated to cost £418,270 ; and the extension of the Woolamai railway to the Powlett coal-field, 14 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles, at a cost of £67,500. Bills were subsequently introduced by the Honorable the Minister of Railways, and passed by Parliament, authorizing the construction of these railways, and also one from Eltham to Hurst's Bridge (Diamond Creek), a length of 6 $\frac{5}{8}$  miles, at a cost of £43,000, which was recommended by the Committee in 1908. These works, involving 207 miles of construction, will cause a total outlay of £982,180, exclusive of the sum required for rolling-stock.

3. In addition to these subjects the Committee submitted Reports on the proposed railways to Bulla ; Carrajung, Bulga, Jumbuk, and Dollar ; Chillingollah to the Murray River ; Cousens' Corner and Newbridge ; Durham Ox ; and Port Campbell. None of these lines were recommended by the Committee, either because of the largeness of the estimated annual losses which would result from the building and operation of the lines or of the small prospect of the railways inducing a material increase in the settlement and production of the districts in the course of a few years. The Committee also submitted Reports concerning the railways to connect the Dookie and Yarrawonga lines, and the Mornington and the Great Southern lines, but neither of these proposals was recommended by the Committee. Two other Reports were presented to the Legislative Assembly during last session, one referring to the dismantling of the Lancefield and Kilmore railway, which has not been used for several years, and the other to the re-opening of the closed section of the Outer Circle railway from Deepdene to Fairfield.

### PROPOSALS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE.

4. On the motion of the Honorable the Minister of Railways the following proposed railways were referred to the Committee either during the first or second session of 1909 for inquiry and report :—

Railway communication with Latrobe and Toorongo Rivers.

Railway communication with the Moonee Vale Village Home Settlements and West Brunswick (electric or steam).

Railway communication with Strathbogie.

Railway communication with Moorngag (Dodd's Crossing).

Railway connexion between Portland and the Serviceton main line.

Railway communication with the Upper Murray district.

Railway connexion between Marnoo and Waubra.

Railway connexion between Rushworth and the Kilmore and Bendigo line.

Railway communication with Black Rock and Beaumaris.

Railway communication with Wyuna.

Railway communication with Toolangi and Kinglake.

Railway connexions between the Mallee lines extending from Dimboola to Charlton, including connexions between the Rainbow, Hopetoun, Mildura, and Sea Lake lines.

Railway communication with Monbulk and Beenak.

Railway communication with the Nypo district (east of Lake Albacutya).

In addition to these railways the Committee was directed by the Legislative Assembly to inquire into the question of connecting the Powlett Coal-field with the proposed Ports at Inverloch and Western Port Bay.

#### PROGRESS OF INQUIRIES.

5. It is expected that the Committee will be able to report on the proposed railways to the Latrobe and Toorongu rivers within the next few weeks. The necessity of having further surveys made in connexion with the railway proposals to serve the district, so that accurate estimates of the cost of construction could be prepared, has delayed the Committee in dealing with this matter. The surveys, however, have now been completed, and the quantities of the earthworks, &c., are being taken out by the Railways Construction Branch. Reports on the questions of railway communication with the Moonee Vale Village Home Settlements, and with Strathbogie, will be placed before the Legislative Assembly at the opening of Parliament. As the members of the Committee have recently been appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into four proposed Border lines to connect the Victorian and South Australian railways, and, as one of these—from Goroke to the Wolseley-Naracoorte line—would cross the suggested railway from Casterton to Broughton, *via* Edenhope, the Committee considered it could not dissociate these proposals, and therefore it cannot report on the question of a direct railway or railways from Portland to the Wimmera and Serviceton districts until the suggested connexions between the Victorian and South Australian systems, including the proposed line from Portland to Mount Gambier, have been dealt with. Shortly after Parliament assembles a Report on the Moorngag railway (Dodd's Crossing), in the Benalla district, will be presented to the Legislative Assembly. All the local evidence has been taken regarding the suggested railway to the Upper Murray district. In accordance, however, with a strongly expressed wish by a number of the residents, the Committee is having an alternative route from Tallangatta by way of Tallangatta Valley, Cravenville, and the Cudgewa Valley examined by engineers to ascertain if it is a practicable one and likely to cost less than the proposed railway from either Bethanga (Ebdon), or Huon, along the valley of the Murray River, or less than the one surveyed from Tallangatta by way of Koetong. Mr. Kernot, Chief Engineer for Railway Construction, has informed the Committee that if the proposed weir is erected across the Murray River at Cumberoona, that stream will be raised to such a height as to submerge the valley of the Upper Murray for some miles above Cumberoona and that the stored water will cover the survey of the line along the Victorian bank of the river, necessitating the removal of the route to the foot of the adjacent granite hills, and thus causing expensive cuttings in rock and making the railway a very costly undertaking. With regard to the suggested railway between Marnoo and the Donald-Maryborough and Maryborough-Ararat line, the Committee has inspected the rival routes from St. Arnaud to Marnoo, Maryborough to Marnoo, Avoca to

Marnoo, and Crowlands to Marnoo, as well as the accompanying proposals from Waubra to Avoca and from Waubra to Amphitheatre, and has heard all the local evidence. A letter has been sent to the Railways Commissioners asking them to have estimates of revenue and working expenses prepared for a line which the Committee thinks is likely to meet the present requirements of the district, but until these estimates come to hand the Committee will not be in a position to decide whether it can recommend the building of a railway. The Committee has inspected the suggested routes for a railway between Rushworth and the Kilmore and Bendigo line, and has taken evidence at Rushworth, Colbinabbin, Toolleen, Heathcote, Costerfield, Knowsley, and Bendigo. In this case also the Railways Commissioners have been asked to furnish the Committee with estimates of revenue and working expenses for one of the proposed lines, and when these are received the Committee will be in a position to decide how far railway extension in this district is justified. An inspection has been made by the Committee of the suggested extension of the Sandringham railway to Black Rock and Beaumaris, and evidence has been received regarding the proposal. When taking the evidence the Committee was asked to hear witnesses concerning an extension of the proposed railway so as to connect it with the Mordialloc railway, but in view of the terms of the reference by the Legislative Assembly, the Committee thought it was beyond its power to entertain the latter suggestion. The Committee, however, has been informed that as soon as Parliament meets the Honorable the Minister of Railways will ask the Legislative Assembly to refer to the Committee the question of railway connexion between Sandringham and the Mordialloc line, so that it may legally inquire into the proposed connecting railway, and report on the proposal at the same time as the question of railway communication with Black Rock and Beaumaris. It is the intention of the Committee to inspect the routes of the railway to Wyuna, and take evidence thereon during next month. The whole of the local evidence concerning the projected railway to Toolangi and Kinglake has been heard by the Committee. While at Strathewen it was suggested to the Committee that the railway from Hurst's Bridge, instead of proceeding northwards up the valley of Arthur's Creek to the Sugarloaf and thence to Central Kinglake, should be carried in a north-easterly direction up the valley of the Diamond or Back Creek to Queenstown, and thence north-west through Strathewen to the Sugarloaf, and on to Central Kinglake. It was urged, in support of this alternative route, that it would give an easier grade for the railway than the line by way of Arthur's Creek; that it would better divide the country lying between the Whittlesea railway on one side and the Yarra Glen railway on the other; and that it would serve a larger number of orchardists than the suggested extension of the Whittlesea railway to Kinglake. An engineer of the Railways Construction Branch will shortly make an inspection of the Strathewen route to ascertain if it is a practicable one, and when his report is received the Committee will give further consideration to the question of railway communication with Toolangi and Kinglake. The Committee has called for a report from the Conservator of Forests on the timber supplies in the East Kinglake, Toolangi, and Woodbourne districts in connexion with the application for a broad or narrow gauge railway from Yarra Glen to the Yea River, about 3 miles north-west of Toolangi. The Public Works Department has been asked to furnish the Committee with particulars and estimates of cost of making a port at Anderson's Inlet, Inverloch, for the shipping of coal from the Powlett field, and also for building a pier into deep water at Settlement Point, Western Port Bay; as well as a report on the practicability of forming a port in the channel between San Remo and Phillip Island. When this information comes to hand, the Committee will at once deal with the question of a port for the shipping of coal from the Powlett field.

6. In consequence of the term for which the Hon. D. Melville and the Hon. Dr. W. H. Embling were elected to the Legislative Council expiring on the 1st June, they cease to be members of the Committee on that day, and as soon as the Legislative Council appoints its representatives to the Committee, arrangements will be made to visit the Mallee districts to inquire into the proposed cross-country lines in that portion of the State; and later on the suggested railway from Monbulk to Beenak will be investigated, and also the proposed extension of the Rainbow railway to Nypo.

7. Owing to the activity in railway construction in Victoria, and to the staff of the Railways Construction Branch being fully employed building the several railways authorized by Parliament during 1909, the Committee has had to wait

longer than would otherwise be the case for information it required to enable it to deal with proposed railways. This, and the increasing demands made on the time of the Victorian Railways office staff, have prevented the Committee being furnished with the necessary estimates of revenue and working expenses of suggested lines as promptly as was wished. But the pressure of work has been almost overtaken, and the Committee expects that the required particulars will come to hand with greater promptitude in future and so avoid any delay in the preparation of its Reports to Parliament.

#### RESERVES FOR TOWNSHIP SITES.

8. In September, 1909, the Committee wrote to the Honorable the Minister of Lands drawing attention to the proposed extensions of railways through areas of Crown lands in the Mallee and East Gippsland, and suggesting that his Department, before throwing those areas open for selection, should obtain from the Railways Construction Branch plans showing the routes of these lines, and the positions of probable stations, with the view of the Crown retaining suitable areas around the station sites for township purposes. In the past such lands were allowed, in many instances, to pass into the hands of individuals who, after the railway was built, reaped considerable sums from the subdivision of the blocks and the sale of the allotments for business purposes. The Committee desired that in future, wherever it was possible, the State should obtain some of the enhancement given to the land by the railway. The Minister replied that the suggestion would be given effect to.

E. H. CAMERON,  
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,  
State Parliament House,  
Melbourne, 1st June, 1910.