

1912.

VICTORIA.

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# SECOND PROGRESS REPORT

FROM

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON RAILWAYS

ON THE

PORTLAND AND SERVICETON MAIN LINE  
CONNEXION RAILWAY;

TOGETHER WITH

APPENDICES, MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,  
AND PLAN.

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## SECOND PROGRESS REPORT.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS, to which the Legislative Assembly referred the question of providing direct railway communication to the sea-board at Portland from districts between the South Australian Border line and the existing railway from Murtoa to Hopetoun, has the honour to report as follows:—

1. In December last the Committee presented a Progress Report on this Former Rep. rt. question to the Legislative Assembly. In that Report it advised the setting aside of the proposed connecting line from Casterton northwards through Edenhope to Kaniva, a station a few miles east of Serviceton. Such a connexion would be of little value as a main line to the sea-board, because it would be of service to only a narrow strip of wheat-growing country on either side of the Nhill-Serviceton railway, whereas the suggested Hamilton-Horsham connexion, either by way of Glenisla or *viâ* Balmoral, could drain all the settled country from Nhill eastwards through Dimboola and Horsham to Murtoa, and also the lands served by the Rainbow and Lorquon lines. The distance from Nhill to Portland, *viâ* Kaniva, Edenhope, and Casterton, would be 196½ miles; while from Nhill, by way of Horsham and Glenisla, it would be but 177¼ miles, and 191¼ by the Horsham-Balmoral route. At the same time, the Committee expressed the opinion that a section of the Casterton-Kaniva proposal, from Casterton to Edenhope, was worthy of being further inquired into as a line to meet local requirements. This is now being done, and will shortly form the subject of a separate report. Having come to the conclusion that the Hamilton-Horsham connexion was the preferable one, the Committee had to examine its merits, both as a means for serving the country *en route* and as a through railway, to ascertain whether the volume of traffic would be sufficient to justify the expenditure. Two routes had been surveyed between Hamilton and Horsham. The first branched off the Coleraine line about 4¼ miles west of Hamilton railway station, and proceeded northward over fairly easy country to Cavendish, and thence up the valley between Victoria Range and Black Range, along the east side of the Upper Glenelg River to Glenisla, crossing that stream near Brimpaen, and on northward over practically level country to Horsham. The length of this connecting line would be 75½ miles, and the cost, in October, 1911, was estimated at £248,416 for a 5ft. 3in. line, having a ruling grade of 1 in 50. Since then, however, the wage rate has been increased from 8s. to 8s. 6d. per day for labourers, and this, together with an outlay required to bring the line into Hamilton station, brought the estimated cost up to £266,148. The second route left the Coleraine line about 11 miles further west, beyond Wannon railway station, and proceeded almost due north over undulating country to Balmoral, and thence north-east to Toolondo, which is 11 miles south of Noradjuha. The Horsham-Noradjuha railway is being extended to Toolondo. Mr. Kernot, Chief Engineer for Railway Construction, in the early part of 1911 informed the Committee that the line from Wannon to Toolondo would be 48 miles in length, and would, on the then prices, cost £212,000. At a wage rate of 8s. 6d. its cost would be £222,000 for a line with a ruling grade of 1 in 40. A further proposal considered by the Committee was that, on the Hamilton-Horsham line reaching Cavendish, 16 miles north of Hamilton, it should be curved north-west to Balmoral, and thence on to Toolondo, as that route would be a shorter through connexion by a few miles than the Hamilton-Wannon-Toolondo route, though requiring a longer length of construction as compared with the proposed Wannon to Toolondo line. It would, moreover, better serve the farmers who had been placed by the Lands Purchase and Management Board on the Mooralla and Kenilworth estates, comprising 35,500 acres, adjacent to Cavendish. The length of this alternative western route, *viâ* Cavendish and Balmoral, would be 59¼ miles, and the estimated cost, starting from Hamilton station, £247,293, on a wage rate of 8s. 6d., for a line with a ruling grade of 1 in 40. Mr. Kernot said a ruling grade of 1 in 50 could be obtained on both these routes, but, of course, at an increased

cost. The grades would, however, be longer and the curves sharper on the Wannou-Balmoral route. After inspecting the country and hearing the evidence, the Committee rejected the Wannou route, and as this left the proposed Hamilton-Cavendish line common to both the Balmoral-Tooloado connexion and the Glenisla-Horsham route, the Committee last December recommended the construction of the line as far as Cavendish, 16 miles, its estimated annual loss being but £380.

#### HAMILTON-GLENISLA-HORSHAM CONNEXION.

2. The Traffic Officers (Mr. C. Barber and Mr. J. S. Mitchell) of the Railway Department, who visited the district lying between Hamilton and Horsham along the Glenisla route, reported that a railway joining those two towns would serve about 700,000 acres around Cavendish, Glenisla, and Brimpaen, including 160,000 acres of forest reserves. Of the total area, a little less than a third was fair arable land, the remainder being fit for grazing purposes only. They estimated the local tonnage likely to be offered for transport over a through line from Hamilton, *viâ* Cavendish and Glenisla, to Horsham during the first twelve months it was open for traffic as follows:—Agricultural produce, 8,000 tons; sawn and split timber, 10,000 tons; firewood, 6,000 tons; wool, 700 tons; and general goods, including honey, bark, hides, skins, &c., 500 tons. The inwards tonnage to the district was estimated by them at 2,500 tons. The population along the route of this railway was put down at 2,000 persons; and the number of horses at 1,951; cattle, 2,738; sheep, 208,212; and pigs, 213.

3. The Railways Commissioners furnished the Committee with the following estimates of annual expenses and revenue for a connecting railway from Hamilton to Horsham, by way of Glenisla, providing for one train each way per day:—

#### ANNUAL CHARGES.

Interest at 4 per cent. per annum on £277,108, being the estimated cost (£266,148) of constructing 75½ miles of 5ft. 3in. railway from Hamilton to Horsham, <i>viâ</i> Glenisla, at a wage rate of 8s. 6d. per day, with £10,960 added for rolling-stock	...	...	...	...	£11,084	6	5
Traffic expenses	...	...	...	...	1,095	7	9
Maintenance charges	...	...	...	...	5,058	10	0
Locomotive expenses, including repairs and renewals of rolling-stock	...	...	...	...	4,078	19	7
General charges	...	...	...	...	255	16	5
Total annual charges	...	...	...	...	£21,573	0	2

#### REVENUE.

(Based on local rates on all goods except timber and firewood carried over the new line.)

	On New Line.			On other Lines from New Traffic from New Line.		
Passengers	...	£1,691	4 5	...	£200	0 0
Parcels	...	340	0 0	...	...	...
Mails	...	566	5 0	...	...	...
Class goods	...	1,450	0 0	...	60	0 0
Wool	...	262	10 0	...	...	...
Live stock	...	305	0 0	...	60	0 0
Timber and firewood	...	2,250	0 0	...	1,000	0 0
Grain	...	1,300	0 0	...	1,100	0 0
Manures	...	218	15 0	...	...	...
All other traffic	...	200	0 0	...	...	...
		£8,583	14 5		£2,420	0 0
					£11,003	14 5
Estimated annual loss	...	...	...	...	£10,569	5 9

## HAMILTON-BALMORAL-TOOLONDO CONNEXION.

4. It was estimated by the Traffic Officers that the proposed railway from Hamilton through Cavendish and Balmoral to Toolondo would serve 500,000 acres, and in addition there was a large tract of country lying outside a 10-mile radius of the line that would contribute traffic to this railway in the event of it being constructed. For the most part this extensive area was fair cultivable land, well watered by rivers and numerous creeks. In the past almost the whole of this country has, they added, been devoted to sheep-farming, but with railway facilities they thought that several of the large estates around Balmoral would be subdivided and brought under cultivation. Last year the area under wheat was approximately 12,500 acres. The local tonnage likely to be offered for transport over a through line from Hamilton, *viâ* Cavendish and Balmoral, to Toolondo during the first twelve months it was open for traffic was estimated by them as follows:—Agricultural produce, 12,000 tons; sawn and split timber, 10,000 tons; firewood, 2,000 tons; wool, 1,000 tons; and general goods, including salt, honey, hides, skins, and bark, 3,000 tons. The inwards tonnage to the district was put down at 3,250 tons. The population along the route of this railway was estimated at 2,500 persons; and the number of horses at 1,760; cattle, 3,283; sheep, 259,723; and pigs, 209.

5. The Railways Commissioners furnished the Committee with the following estimates of annual expenses and revenue for a connecting line from Hamilton, *viâ* Cavendish and Balmoral, to Toolondo, providing for one train each way per day:—

## ANNUAL CHARGES.

Interest at 4 per cent. per annum on £257,327, being the estimated cost (£247,293) of constructing 59½ miles of 5ft. 3in. railway, from Hamilton to Toolondo, <i>viâ</i> Balmoral, at a wage rate of 8s. 6d. per day, with £10,031 added for rolling-stock	...	...	...	£10,293	1	7
Traffic expenses	...	...	...	1,040	3	9
Maintenance charges	...	...	...	4,046	0	0
Locomotive expenses, including repairs and renewals of rolling-stock	...	...	...	3,547	15	1
General charges	...	...	...	215	17	0
<b>Total annual charges</b>	...	...	...	<b>£19,142</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>

## REVENUE.

(Based on local rates on all goods except timber and firewood carried over the new line.)

	On New Line.	On other Lines from New Traffic from New Line.	
Passengers	... £2,133 0 0	... £250 0 0	
Parcels	... 400 0 0	...	
Mails	... 446 0 0	...	
Class goods	... 2,675 0 0	... 110 0 0	
Wool	... 620 0 0	...	
Live stock	... 305 0 0	... 60 0 0	
Timber and firewood	... 1,575 0 0	... 1,266 0 0	
Grain	... 2,300 0 0	... 1,330 0 0	
All other traffic	... 200 0 0	...	
	<b>£10,454 0 0</b>	<b>£3,016 0 0</b>	<b>£13,470 0 0</b>
<b>Estimated annual loss</b>	...	...	<b>£5,672 17 5</b>

## REDUCTION IN ESTIMATED ANNUAL LOSS.

6. When giving evidence concerning the foregoing estimates Mr. W. F. Fitzpatrick, Chairman of the Railways Commissioners, explained that they represented the value of the proposed connecting lines as producers of new revenue or as additional assets to the Department. Each had been credited with the nominal sum of £100, representing the additional passenger traffic it was likely to induce as a direct through service between Hamilton and Horsham, and also with 100 tons of new through goods traffic coming *viâ* Portland. No allowance, however, had been made to either line in respect to any flour, bran, pollard, or live stock likely to be carried over it from the Wimmera and Southern Mallee districts to Hamilton and stations on the Portland, Casterton, Coleraine, and Warrnambool lines, nor for any potatoes, onions, or other agricultural produce sent from the Warrnambool and Portland districts to stations in the Wimmera and Southern Mallee, because that traffic was now obtained by the Department, being carried over the existing lines *viâ* Ararat. Moreover, the charges for the carriage of such articles would be less by way of Ararat than *viâ* either Glenisla or Balmoral, as local rates would, unless the Act authorizing the building of the new connecting line otherwise directed, have to be charged on all goods hauled over that line, and such rates, added to the ordinary mileage rates over the existing lines, would be higher than the charges *viâ* Ararat. But, he added, even if local rates were not enforced on the new line—only the ordinary mileage rates being charged on the commodities stated—the Commissioners considered that the receipts from this traffic should not be credited to the new line, as the Department would actually lose revenue by reason of the shorter haul. As, however, the shorter haul would mean less locomotive expenses, the Committee, while agreeing with the Railways Commissioners that the value of a new line to the Department should be viewed from the stand-point of the additional revenue it would bring to the general railway system, asked Mr. Fitzpatrick whether, after the through traffic in flour, bran, pollard, hides, live stock, potatoes, onions, butter, cheese, and fresh fish carried over the new connecting line had been “tolled,” the line would, in the annual statement of non-paying railways issued by the Department, show a lesser loss than £5,600 by being credited with its mileage proportion of such through traffic, and, if so, what was the estimate of the lesser loss. He replied that an accurate statement of the reduction in the estimated loss, on account of the mileage proportion of the revenue from the through traffic being credited to the new line, could not be given until detailed returns of the traffic now carried by way of Ararat had been obtained, and this would cause considerable delay. But from investigations already made the Commissioners calculated roughly that the estimated loss on the Balmoral route would be reduced from £5,672 to about £2,920. A somewhat similar reduction would, of course, be applicable to the Glenisla route in respect of this through traffic. The Committee, being of opinion that where a line carries traffic it should be credited with the net revenue arising from that business, has therefore regarded the estimated annual loss of the Balmoral route at £2,920, and that of the Glenisla connexion at £7,820.

## SAVING IN COST OF SLEEPERS.

7. In the Progress Report on the question of this proposed connecting railway, presented to the Legislative Assembly on 19th December, 1911, it was stated that a direct line from Hamilton to Horsham, *viâ* Glenisla, would “enable large quantities of redgum sleepers and bridge timbers required by the Railway Department for the renewal of the Wimmera and Western District railways, as well as the Adelaide main line, to be obtained from the Victoria State forest at a less price than is now paid for such supplies. The Committee ascertained from the Railways Commissioners that, if this through line were constructed, the saving to the Department in the cost of sleepers and timbers would be £4,000 or £5,000 annually.” Mr. Fitzpatrick said that on further investigation it transpired that the saving set down had been over-stated through an error in computation. The correct amount was £2,833, of which £2,709 referred to sleepers. It was, however, he added, extremely doubtful if the Department would make any saving, as it was by no means certain that the present practice of purchasing sleepers anywhere in the State at the same fixed rate, according to the timber used, would be permanent. It was not unlikely in this particular instance, where a new forest was to be opened up a long distance from any rival

source of supply, that the sleeper hewers would demand a higher rate. The Balmoral route would also traverse a belt of redgum timber bordering on the Glenelg River both above and below that township, and supplies of sleepers could also be obtained from there. Notwithstanding the doubts expressed by Mr. Fitzpatrick, the Committee considers the Department will, if either line is constructed, make a substantial saving for several years, by being able to take delivery of sleepers close to the source of supply, instead of at distant stations, with the cost of cartage thereto added.

#### PORTLAND HARBOR.

8. Evidence taken by the Committee showed conclusively that the harbor at Portland had natural advantages, such as the necessary depth of water and good shelter, to make it a suitable port for over-sea trade. A curved railway pier runs out into a depth at low tide of 30 feet of navigable water if the sea is smooth. The depths at low tide at the breakwater and railway piers, Williamstown, is 29 feet, and at the railway pier, Port Melbourne, 30 feet, while Hopetoun channel, Geelong, has a navigable depth of  $24\frac{1}{2}$  feet, with a tidal rise of 1 foot 9 inches. Portland pier is 2,528 feet in length, being 20 feet wide at the shore end and 35 feet at the sea end. It cost £14,750. Provision is made at either side of the sea end of the pier for berthing a large ocean-going steamer. Each year since 1902, when the pier was constructed, from ten to twelve of these vessels, some of them having a draught of 27 feet when loaded, have visited Portland and taken away large consignments of frozen meat, wool, apples, &c., to European ports. Out of upwards of 100 ocean-going steamers which have loaded at Portland since 1902, three only have been interrupted while taking cargo on board. The harbormaster's record shows that the lines of the s.s. *Warrigal* would not hold. Since then, however, proper "springs" have been provided, and there has been no recurrence of that trouble. The *Norayshire* and the *Oswestry Grange* backed out to the anchorage owing to being on the wrong side of the pier when the wind shifted. Next morning they returned to the pier and completed their loading. The pier-head at Portland could, with little expense, be extended shorewards for a distance of about 450 feet, and this would afford berths for two additional steamers; but the depth of water at low tide would not be more than 23 feet at the inner end of the pier-head. There is nothing, however, to prevent the pier being extended seawards to meet any increased demand of over-sea shipping visiting that port. The rates for freight and insurance are the same from Portland as from Melbourne to European ports. Mr. W. F. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that if any considerable additional traffic were forthcoming for handling at Portland extensive additions would have to be made in the yard accommodation at Portland North, with the addition of a second line between that station and the pier, and suitable arrangements would also have to be made at the pier to facilitate the handling of goods from the trucks to the ships. No estimate of the cost of these works had been prepared.

9. There need be no apprehension as to the suitability of Portland harbor as a port for an extensive over-sea trade. The Committee agrees with the opinion expressed by Mr. M. Brodie, representative of the shipping firm of Messrs. John Sanderson and Co., that if the freight is at Portland there will be no difficulty in getting vessels to take it away. But for the reasons stated hereafter the Committee has grave doubts as to whether the freight will be there, even if a railway is made giving direct communication from the Wimmera and Southern Mallee districts to Portland, unless an alteration is made in the railway rates for the carriage of agricultural produce and live stock, so as to give that port the full advantage of its geographical position.

#### NON-EXPANSION OF PORTLAND TRADE.

10. It is close on 35 years since the railway from Ararat to Portland was opened for traffic. A visit to the latter town, and a study of its import and export statistics indicate that the expectations that the railway would result in the expansion of Portland and its shipping trade have not been realized. This is not due to the pooriness of the soil in the back country, which, geographically speaking, belongs to the port of Portland. Indeed, some of the best land in the State exists in the valley of the Wannon River, 50 miles north of Portland, and further on towards the Glenelg River there are extensive areas of land suitable for cultivation, while

along the railway from Hamilton to Ararat wheat-growing has during the last decade been largely entered upon. Therefore, the cause of the absence of progression at Portland has to be looked for in other directions. The local residents declare that the railway preferential rates which were in operation for a number of years and the present railway "district" rates have been the main factors in withholding from Portland the advancement in trade which it otherwise would have secured. Apart, however, from this aspect of the matter, the Committee's inquiries showed that the general rates charged uniformly throughout Victoria for the carriage of grain and live stock over the railways were largely responsible, because of the tapering principle adopted, for the absence of expansion in the shipping trade at Portland. These tapering rates, which are necessary to secure the development of the more distant inland districts of the State, such as the Mallee and the north-eastern counties, so that the settlers there may not be too heavily burdened in sending their produce to Melbourne for sale or export, have adversely affected the geographical position of Portland and its natural advantages as the port for the western part of Victoria. For instance, the railway rate for the carriage of wheat 100 miles is 8s. 6d. per ton, or practically 1d. per ton per mile. The rate for 200 miles is but 10s. 6d. per ton. In other words, the second 100 miles is carried for 2s. additional, which is at the rate of a farthing per ton per mile. The difference in the rates for the carriage of live stock is not so marked. But, nevertheless, the tapering principle also obtains in respect of them. The effect of such rates has been to concentrate trade in Melbourne, to the detriment of nearer ports. It is useless pointing out that Horsham is 226 miles from Melbourne (*via* North Geelong, which is the route over which goods are carried), and but 132¼ miles from Portland by way of the proposed Glenisla route, or 146¼ miles *via* Toolondo and Balmoral, and letting the case for the suggested direct railway to Portland stand on that marked difference in mileage alone. Railway rates more than distances govern trade, and largely affect the destination of the export traffic. The rate on wheat carried from Horsham to Melbourne is but 11s. 2d. per ton for 226 miles, while it would be 9s. to Portland, *via* Glenisla, 132¼ miles, and 9s. 4d. by way of Toolondo and Balmoral, 146¼ miles. In other words, agricultural produce is carried over 50 per cent. further distance to Melbourne compared with the Portland route for less than 25 per cent. additional charge. Or let the case be stated in another way: In February, 1912, reduced rates for the carriage by rail of agricultural produce came into operation. The following table shows the effect of these rates:—

	Old rate, per ton.	New rate, per ton.	Reduction, per ton.
Willaura to Melbourne, 177¼ miles ...	11s. ...	10s. ...	1s.
Willaura to Geelong, 135¼ miles ...	10s. ...	9s. 2d. ...	10d.
Willaura to Portland, 97 miles ...	8s. 9d. ...	8s. 6d. ...	3d.

11. Therefore, while Melbourne gained a reduction of 1s. per ton, Portland secured but 3d. This shows how the tapering rates favour the more distant port. To counteract this to some extent the Railways Commissioners in February last directed that the outer ports, such as Geelong and Portland, were to have an advantage of at least 1s. 3d. per ton over Williamstown on grain forwarded for export, and where the tapering rates did not give that advantage a rebate was to be allowed to bring the difference up to 1s. 3d. per ton in favour of the outer port. For instance, under the new rate, as shown above, the difference in the tapering rate from Willaura to Melbourne and Geelong respectively is but 10d. (*i.e.*, 10s. and 9s. 2d.). The Commissioners therefore allow a rebate of 5d. per ton on all agricultural produce sent from Willaura to Geelong for export, making the net charge 8s. 9d., or 1s. 3d. less than the 10s. rate to Melbourne. While this is intended apparently to assist the outer ports, it is of little or no value to Portland, because, while the rate to Geelong is lowered by the operation of the rebate to 8s. 9d., the rate of 8s. 6d. to Portland is not reduced in any way, it being already 1s. 6d. less than the 10s. rate to Melbourne. The result is that under this rebate system Geelong obtains an undue advantage over Portland, it being but 97 miles from the latter port to Willaura, compared with 135¼ miles from Geelong. So long as this continues it will be useless constructing a direct railway from the Wimmera wheat-growing districts to Portland in the hope that a large tonnage of grain will be transported over the line for export at Portland. A re-adjustment of the railway rates should therefore be made if Portland is to receive



any material advantage from the construction of the line, or the farmers of the Wimmera and Southern Mallee are to derive any benefit from the shorter route to the sea-board.

12. Wheat, as a rule, is purchased by shippers at the railway stations in the grain-growing districts at the current market price in Melbourne, less the cost of railage from the purchasing station to Melbourne. It was explained by the wheat-buyers that when they purchased wheat at country stations they were seldom aware at the time of purchase from which port the grain would be shipped, and, as most of it was exported from Melbourne, they had to purchase on the basis of less the railage to that port. It occasionally happened, however, that if they were loading a vessel at Geelong, and a farmer brought his wheat to the country station at that time, and could load it direct into the trucks leaving for Geelong, they gave him a slightly increased price for his grain, representing the difference in the lower cost of railage to Geelong compared with Williamstown. But when wheat was bought at a price less the railway rate to Melbourne, and it was subsequently shipped at Geelong, the buyer did not inform the farmer of that fact and allow him the difference in the cost of railage to Geelong. Therefore, while the Committee believes that a re-adjustment of the railway rates for the carriage of agricultural produce and live stock from the Wimmera and Southern Mallee stations to Portland by the direct route will cause a fair portion of the traffic to be diverted to that port, it considers that the farmers will not reap any material advantage from the construction of the railway, with its lower charges to the sea-board, unless they are prepared to co-operate for the shipment of their produce to over-sea markets.

#### VIEWS OF THE RAILWAYS COMMISSIONERS.

13. Mr. W. F. Fitzpatrick, Chairman of the Railways Commissioners, was questioned by the Committee concerning the proposed direct railway from the Wimmera and Southern Mallee districts to Portland. He stated that there was no necessity to build that line to relieve any threatened congestion of traffic on the Ballarat-Serviceton main line, as the Western Plains railway from Maroona, *via* Lismore and Cressy, to Gheringhap, now under construction, would do that. He and his colleagues were of opinion that even if the line advocated by the Portland residents were made wheat for export would still be sent to Geelong and Melbourne, as the small difference in the railway rates would not warrant the present shippers undertaking the cost of establishing themselves at Portland. In support of this opinion he pointed out that, although the wheat grown adjacent to the line between Hamilton and Maroona is trucked at stations situated nearer to Portland than to Geelong, there has been no attempt made to ship this wheat at the former port, notwithstanding that the difference in rates to those ports had been as marked as the difference in the rates to Geelong and to Portland, *via* either of the proposed routes, from the Wimmera and Southern Mallee stations. Out of a total of 75,239 tons of wheat trucked at the stations Hamilton and Maroona inclusive during the past three seasons 37,945 tons were consigned to Melbourne, and the balance to Geelong, none being sent to Portland. He added that the port to which wheat was trucked for shipment was a matter which was entirely in the hands of the few large buyers, who naturally desired to do their export business in the fewest possible number of places. Geelong being nearer to Melbourne and within easier access than Portland would, he considered, always have a preference over the latter port from the shippers' point of view unless the difference in freight was so great as to make it worth their while to establish the necessary agencies and undergo the additional expense that would probably be required at Portland.

14. When hearing evidence at Portland the Committee questioned the local merchants as to the reason why no effort had been made to export from Portland the 200,000 bags of wheat brought that season to Willaura railway station, seeing that the rate for its carriage by rail to Portland was much less than to Geelong or Melbourne, while the steamer freight to England was the same. Their explanation was that the wheat was purchased by several buyers, and none had secured a sufficient quantity to make it worth his while to ship at Portland. But they predicted that if a direct line were made from the Wimmera and Southern Mallee districts to that port some of the wheat-buyers would then have command of a sufficient tonnage within reasonable mileage of Portland to render it profitable to establish an export agency there.

15. Mr. Fitzpatrick said that the Railways Commissioners did not approve of a direct railway connexion between Hamilton and Horsham, either by way of Glenisla, or *viâ* Balmoral and Toolondo, because the estimated annual loss was too great. He did not see, he added, why Portland in the future should not become an important port if sufficient wheat were produced in the district that Portland ought naturally to drain. The Commissioners would not thwart any effort that might be made in the future in that direction. But if the expansion of trade at that port was to be accomplished at the expense of a considerable amount of revenue from existing lines, and the diversion of trade from the ports of Geelong and Melbourne, the fostering of Portland should, in that case, be a matter of Ministerial policy.

#### SELECTION OF THE ROUTE.

16. In Appendix A to this Report is a comparison of the mileage and rates for the carriage of goods and live stock by the various routes between the Wimmera and Southern Mallee stations and the ports of Portland and Geelong. From this it will be seen that the shortest route to the sea-board from stations on the Serviceton main railway, and also on the branch lines from Murtoa to Hopetoun and Dimboola to Rainbow, is by way of Glenisla. The grades on that route are also more favorable from a haulage stand-point than those on the Balmoral survey. Undoubtedly, the Glenisla route would be the better connexion had the matter to be considered from the aspect of a through line only. There is, however, much uncertainty as to the volume of through traffic in general merchandise which a direct railway would create, and also a doubt as to whether importers and others would establish agencies at Portland, and have sufficient direct shipments to cause a rapid expansion of the trade of that port. Therefore, the Committee, in considering the financial results of the proposed connecting railway, and the need for lessening the annual loss, found it necessary to have more regard to the probable development of the country lying between Hamilton and Horsham than to the possible increase in the tonnage of the through traffic. In the opinion of the Committee the land along the Balmoral-Toolondo route affords more opportunities for settlement and has better prospects of agricultural expansion than that traversed by the Glenisla survey. Consequently, after considering all the surroundings, the Committee came to the decision that the Balmoral-Toolondo route would be the preferable one. That route will make all stations on the Murtoa-Hopetoun line  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles nearer to the sea-board at Portland than to Geelong Harbor; but the rates to and from either port will be practically the same. Taking Horsham, however, as the centre of the Wimmera district, the distance from that station, *viâ* Balmoral, to Portland will be  $146\frac{1}{4}$  miles, compared with 184 to Geelong, and  $192\frac{3}{4}$  by way of the existing lines through Ararat and Hamilton to Portland. All stations west of Horsham, and those on the Dimboola-Rainbow line, will be  $37\frac{3}{4}$  miles nearer to Portland by way of Balmoral than to Geelong. The Balmoral connexion will give all stations on the Goroke and Noradjuha lines a shorter route to the sea-board than the Glenisla survey. In addition to the foregoing reasons the Balmoral-Toolondo route has the following advantages over the Glenisla survey:—

Lesser mileage to construct, being  $59\frac{1}{4}$  miles in length, compared with  $75\frac{1}{2}$  miles for the Glenisla route.

It will cost £19,781 less to construct and equip with rolling-stock.

It shows an estimated annual loss of £2,920, compared with £7,820 for the Glenisla route.

It will serve better country and a larger population.

It will be a continuation of a branch railway, converting it into a through line and reducing the working expenses.

There is more production along the Balmoral route and greater opportunities for settlement.

#### DEVIATION OF ROUTE.

17. Recently the Committee received, through the Honorable the Minister Railways, a petition signed by 30 land-owners and residents of the district lying between Cavendish and Toolondo, suggesting that the proposed railway to connect

those towns should have a more direct route by being constructed about 7 miles east of Balmoral. They stated that this route would traverse comparatively flat country, and would be some 5 miles shorter than the surveyed line by way of Balmoral, and would, moreover, save about £25,000 in the cost of construction. They added that the deviation would serve the residents of the Glenisla district, and that this new route had never been fairly brought forward, owing to the rival lines of Glenisla on one side and Balmoral on the other. The petitioners further stated that the deviation would pass through good redgum timber and fair cultivation land. Being a shorter route, it would be a better through line for traffic between the Wimmera district and Portland than the Balmoral connexion, and a lesser length of land would have to be purchased for the railway track. The suggested deviation was reported on, at the instance of the Committee, by Mr. A. Combes, Superintending Surveyor of the Construction Branch of the Railway Department, in March, 1910, and recently by Mr. F. Egan, one of the engineers of that Branch. They stated that the proposed Glendinning deviation would run 8 or 9 miles east of Balmoral township. It would be about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles shorter, and would save approximately £15,000 in construction. But if the proposal to build a large storage basin on the Glenelg River about a mile above Balmoral were carried out at some future date, the waters of that stream would be thrown back over the Glenelg valley at Rockland and to the north of Glendinning, and a sum quite equal to that saving would have to be expended in raising the railway and carrying it on piles across portion of that basin in the event of the line being constructed along the deviation. Such a work would also add to the cost of maintenance, owing to the perishable nature of that wooden structure. Although  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles less track would have to be purchased on the Glendinning route, the railway from near Fulham-bridge to Telangatuk, on the Balmoral survey, could be run for 6 miles or so along a 3-chain road, thus reducing the cost of land purchase. According to the reports of both officers, the suggested deviation would better serve the State forests adjacent to Black Range and Glenisla and the timber traffic therefrom. They, however, added that the land east of Balmoral was of very inferior quality. The deviation would serve a less area of good country than a railway passing through Balmoral, and would be a rougher line, so far as grades were concerned, besides badly severing the farms at Telangatuk East—cutting through them diagonally. The residents of Balmoral and Telangatuk, and the districts to the west of those places, strongly opposed the deviation, because it would take the line away from the main roads and from the area in which there was every likelihood of extensive agricultural development if railway facilities were provided.

18. A few days ago the Committee inspected the proposed Glendinning route, and again drove over the lands adjacent to the surveyed line, passing through Balmoral, and heard evidence at Cavendish and Balmoral both in support of and against the deviation. It came to the conclusion that the Glendinning route possessed little merit beyond shortening the length of the through line. Viewing it, nevertheless, from that aspect, it would, by decreasing the distance, lessen the carriage of grain from several of the Wimmera and Southern Mallee stations to Portland by but 2d. or 3d. per ton. From some stations, however, such as Dimboola, Rainbow, and Goroce, there would be no saving, as the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles lesser distance would make no difference in the through rates on wheat and other agricultural produce. There would be a saving of from 1s. to 2s. per truck in the carriage of live stock, but that sum when spread over 100 fat sheep or 120 lambs, usually carried in a truck, becomes of little value to the ordinary farmer with his small flocks. As already stated, the Committee, in considering the construction of a railway in this district, had to regard it more as a line to secure local development than a connecting railway, and therefore had no hesitation, after inspecting both routes and hearing the evidence, in rejecting the Glendinning route, as the prospects of settlement and production along it were considerably less than those on the Balmoral survey.

#### RECOMMENDATION.

19. The Committee, believing that there are good opportunities for further subdivision of estates and closer settlement in the Cavendish and Balmoral districts, and having previously recommended the construction of a 5ft. 3in. railway from Hamilton to Cavendish, 16 miles, recommends the extension of that line, *via* Balmoral, to Toolondo, a total distance of  $59\frac{1}{4}$  miles. The

estimated cost of this connecting line from Hamilton to Toolondo is £247,293, to which has to be added £10,034 for rolling-stock. The Committee further recommends that local rates be charged on all traffic to and from stations on the new line from Hamilton to Toolondo, and the ordinary mileage rates on all through traffic; and that the new line be credited with its mileage proportion of the revenue from the through traffic. In making this recommendation the Committee again points out the necessity of the rates for the carriage of agricultural produce and live stock being re-adjusted so that the port of Portland may obtain the full advantage of its geographical position in respect of the trade of the west part of Victoria. The Committee also suggests that the Railways Commissioners, when issuing their annual list of non-paying railways, should insert a footnote stating the approximate annual saving they made by being able to take delivery of sleepers at stations on the new line instead of such material having to be carted to an existing line, and should intimate if such saving had been allowed when determining the annual loss arising from this connecting railway.

E. H. CAMERON,  
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,  
State Parliament House,  
Melbourne, 2nd July, 1912.

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## APPENDICES.

## APPENDIX A.

COMPARISON OF MILEAGE RATES BETWEEN WIMMERA STATIONS AND PORTLAND, VIA GLENISLA AND TOOLONDO AND WIMMERA STATIONS AND GEELONG.

Stations between—			Miles.	Mis.	A.P.	S.A.P.	A.	B.	C.	1.	2.	3.	Timber.	Manure.	Live Stock.
		Via—		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Hopetoun ..	Portland {	Glenisla ..	219½	16 4	10 11	14 8	25 5	34 10	51 9	68 0	86 3	105 3	14 8	6 9	124 0
		Toolondo ..	233½	17 4	11 4	15 2	26 5	33 2	54 3	71 6	90 9	111 0	15 2	7 2	133 0
		Geelong ..	235½	17 5	11 4	15 2	26 6	33 4	54 9	72 0	91 6	112 0	15 2	7 2	133 0
	Portland {	Ararat ..	244	17 11	11 6	15 4	27 1	37 1	56 0	74 0	94 3	115 3	15 4	7 4	137 6
Warracknabeal	Portland {	Glenisla ..	181½	13 10	10 0	13 6	22 5	30 7	44 9	58 6	73 6	89 6	12 5	6 0	103 0
		Toolondo ..	195½	14 9	10 6	14 1	23 8	32 6	47 3	62 0	78 3	95 3	13 3	6 3	111 0
		Geelong ..	197½	14 11	10 6	14 1	23 10	32 9	47 9	62 6	78 9	96 0	13 5	6 4	112 0
	Portland {	Ararat ..	206	15 5	10 8	14 5	24 6	33 7	49 3	64 6	81 6	99 6	13 11	6 6	116 6
Murtoa ..	Portland {	Glenisla ..	150½	11 9	9 4	12 7	19 7	26 4	39 0	50 9	63 3	76 6	10 7	5 4	86 0
		Toolondo ..	164½	12 8	9 9	13 2	20 10	28 3	41 6	54 3	67 9	82 3	11 5	5 7	93 6
		Geelong ..	166	12 9	9 9	13 2	20 11	28 5	41 9	54 6	68 3	82 9	11 6	5 8	94 0
	Portland {	Ararat ..	174½	13 4	10 0	13 6	21 9	29 8	43 6	56 9	71 3	86 6	12 0	5 10	99 0
Horsham ..	Portland {	Glenisla ..	132½	10 7	9 0	12 0	17 11	23 10	34 6	45 0	55 9	67 6	9 6	4 11	82 0
		Toolondo ..	146½	11 6	9 4	12 7	19 2	25 10	38 0	49 6	61 6	74 6	10 4	5 3	85 0
		Geelong ..	184	14 0	10 0	13 6	22 7	30 10	45 0	59 0	74 3	90 3	12 7	6 0	104 0
	Portland {	Ararat ..	192½	14 7	10 6	14 1	23 5	32 1	46 9	61 3	77 3	94 0	13 2	6 2	109 0
Dimboola ..	Portland {	Glenisla ..	153½	12 0	9 4	12 7	19 10	26 9	39 6	51 6	64 3	77 9	10 10	5 5	87 6
		Toolondo ..	167½	12 11	9 9	13 2	21 1	28 8	42 3	55 0	68 9	83 6	11 8	5 8	95 6
		Geelong ..	205½	15 5	10 8	14 5	24 6	33 7	49 3	64 6	81 6	99 6	13 11	6 6	116 6
	Portland {	Ararat ..	214½	16 0	10 11	14 8	25 2	34 5	50 9	66 9	84 6	103 3	14 5	6 9	121 6
Jeparit ..	Portland {	Glenisla ..	176½	13 6	10 0	13 6	21 11	29 11	43 9	57 3	71 9	87 3	12 2	5 10	100 6
		Toolondo ..	190½	14 5	10 6	14 1	23 3	31 10	46 6	60 9	76 6	93 3	13 0	6 2	108 0
		Geelong ..	228½	17 0	11 2	15 0	26 1	35 8	53 3	70 3	89 3	109 0	15 0	6 11	129 0
	Portland {	Ararat ..	237½	17 7	11 4	15 2	26 9	36 6	55 0	72 6	92 3	112 9	15 2	7 2	134 0
Rainbow ..	Portland {	Glenisla ..	195½	14 9	10 6	14 1	23 8	32 6	47 3	62 0	78 3	95 3	13 3	6 3	111 0
		Toolondo ..	209½	15 8	10 8	14 5	24 9	33 11	49 9	65 6	82 9	101 0	14 1	6 6	118 6
		Geelong ..	247	18 0	11 6	15 4	27 4	37 4	56 9	74 9	95 3	116 6	15 4	7 4	139 0
	Portland {	Ararat ..	255½	18 2	11 8	15 7	27 11	38 2	57 9	76 6	97 9	119 9	15 7	7 7	144 0
Nhill ..	Portland {	Glenisla ..	177½	13 7	10 0	13 6	22 0	30 0	44 0	57 6	72 3	87 9	12 3	5 11	101 0
		Toolondo ..	191½	14 6	10 6	14 1	23 4	31 11	46 6	61 0	76 9	93 6	13 1	6 2	108 6
		Geelong ..	229	17 0	11 2	15 0	26 1	35 8	53 3	70 3	89 3	109 0	15 0	6 11	129 0
	Portland {	Ararat ..	237½	17 7	11 4	15 2	26 9	36 6	55 0	72 6	92 3	112 9	15 2	7 2	134 0
Goroke ..	Portland {	Glenisla ..	174½	13 4	10 0	13 6	21 9	29 8	43 6	56 9	71 3	86 6	12 0	5 10	99 0
		Toolondo ..	161	12 5	9 6	12 11	20 6	27 9	41 0	53 3	66 6	80 9	11 2	5 6	91 6
		Geelong ..	226½	16 10	11 2	15 0	26 0	35 6	53 0	69 9	88 6	108 3	15 0	6 11	128 0
	Portland {	Ararat ..	235	18 3	14 2	18 7	29 7	40 4	57 9	75 0	94 3	115 3	16 8	8 4	140 0
Noradjuha ..	Portland {	Glenisla ..	152½	11 11	9 4	12 7	19 9	26 7	39 6	51 3	63 9	77 3	10 9	5 4	87 0
		Toolondo ..	126	10 1	9 0	12 0	17 3	22 10	32 9	42 6	52 9	64 0	9 1	4 10	80 0
		Geelong ..	204½	15 4	10 8	14 5	24 5	33 6	49 0	64 3	81 3	99 0	13 10	6 6	116 0
	Portland {	Ararat ..	213	15 11	10 11	14 8	25 0	34 3	50 6	66 3	83 9	102 3	14 4	6 9	120 6

NOTE.—Since the above table was compiled a fresh survey has been made, showing a slight difference in the mileage of the Glenisla and Toolondo routes, which will, in some instances, vary slightly the above rates.

## APPENDIX B.

## COMPARISON OF RATES BETWEEN WIMMERA STATIONS AND PORTLAND.

	Miles.	M.		A.P.		S.A.P.		A.		B.		C.		1.		2.		3.		H. T. Timber.	Manure.		Live Stock.	
		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Hopetoun <i>via</i> Ararat ..	..	244	17 11	11 6	15 4	27 1	37 1	56 0	74 0	94 3	115 3	15 4	7 4	157 6										
	Glenisla ..	N. 78½	219½	17 9	16 11	21 8	30 11	40 6	57 9	75 0	92 9	112 6	16 8	8 10	142 6									
Toolondo ..	..	N. 72	233½	18 6	16 9	21 7	31 7	42 2	60 3	78 0	97 0	118 0	17 3	9 0	145 6									
	..	O. 141½																						
Warracknabeal <i>via</i> Ararat ..	..	206	15 5	10 8	14 5	24 6	33 7	49 3	64 6	81 6	99 6	12 11	6 6	116 6										
	Glenisla ..	N. 78½	181½	15 3	16 3	20 2	27 5	35 3	48 3	62 3	77 0	93 6	14 5	8 0	133 6									
Toolondo ..	..	N. 72	195½	16 0	16 1	20 4	28 1	36 11	51 6	66 6	82 3	100 0	15 0	8 2	133 0									
	..	O. 123½																						
Murtoa <i>via</i> Ararat ..	..	174½	13 4	10 0	13 6	21 9	29 8	43 6	56 9	71 3	86 6	12 0	5 10	99 0										
	Glenisla ..	N. 78½	150½	12 7	15 0	18 0	23 2	29 9	40 3	51 6	63 6	77 6	12 7	7 1	112 0									
Toolondo ..	..	N. 72	164½	13 9	15 6	18 10	24 9	32 6	43 9	56 0	69 3	84 6	12 0	7 5	122 0									
	..	O. 92½																						
Horsham <i>via</i> Ararat ..	..	192½	14 7	10 6	14 1	23 5	32 1	46 9	61 3	77 3	94 0	13 2	6 2	109 0										
	Glenisla ..	N. 78½	132½	11 2	13 9	16 6	21 0	26 5	35 9	45 6	56 0	68 6	11 2	6 7	99 0									
Toolondo ..	..	N. 72	146½	12 3	14 9	17 8	22 7	29 3	39 3	50 0	61 9	75 6	12 3	6 11	109 0									
	..	O. 74½																						
Dimboola <i>via</i> Ararat ..	..	214½	16 0	10 11	14 8	25 2	34 5	50 9	66 9	84 6	103 3	14 5	6 9	121 6										
	Glenisla ..	N. 78½	153½	12 11	15 3	18 4	23 9	30 4	41 3	53 0	65 3	79 6	12 11	7 3	115 0									
Toolondo ..	..	N. 72	167½	14 0	15 9	19 2	25 4	33 1	44 6	57 0	70 6	86 0	13 2	7 6	124 0									
	..	O. 95½																						
Jeparit <i>via</i> Ararat ..	..	237½	17 7	11 4	15 2	26 9	36 6	55 0	72 6	92 3	112 9	15 2	7 2	134 0										
	Glenisla ..	N. 78½	176½	14 10	16 3	19 10	27 1	34 8	47 0	60 6	74 9	91 0	14 0	7 10	131 6									
Toolondo ..	..	N. 72	190½	15 8	16 1	20 4	27 8	36 3	50 3	64 9	80 3	97 6	14 8	8 1	132 0									
	..	O. 118½																						
Rainbow <i>via</i> Ararat ..	..	255½	18 2	11 8	15 7	27 11	38 2	57 9	76 6	97 9	119 9	15 7	7 7	144 0										
	Glenisla ..	N. 78½	195½	16 1	16 7	21 0	28 7	37 1	51 6	66 6	82 3	100 0	15 2	8 3	136 6									
Toolondo ..	..	N. 72	209½	16 11	16 5	21 0	29 4	38 10	55 0	71 0	88 0	107 0	15 10	8 6	136 6									
	..	O. 137½																						
Nhill <i>via</i> Ararat ..	..	237½	17 7	11 4	15 2	26 9	36 6	55 0	72 6	92 3	112 9	15 2	7 2	134 0										
	Glenisla ..	N. 78½	177½	14 10	16 3	19 10	27 1	34 8	47 0	60 6	74 9	91 0	14 0	7 10	131 6									
Toolondo ..	..	N. 72	191½	15 8	16 1	20 4	27 9	36 4	50 6	65 0	80 6	98 0	14 8	8 1	132 0									
	..	O. 119½																						
Goroke <i>via</i> Ararat ..	..	N. 28½	235	18 3	14 2	18 7	29 7	40 4	57 9	75 0	94 3	115 3	16 8	8 4	140 0									
	Glenisla ..	N. 106½	174½	14 6	15 5	19 2	26 0	34 1	46 3	59 6	73 9	89 6	14 7	7 9	116 0									
Toolondo ..	..	N. 100½	161	13 6	14 9	18 4	24 5	31 8	43 0	55 3	68 3	83 0	12 8	7 5	119 6									
	..	O. 60½																						
Noradjuha <i>via</i> Ararat ..	..	213	15 11	10 11	14 8	25 0	34 3	50 6	66 3	83 9	102 3	14 4	6 9	120 6										
	Glenisla ..	N. 78½	152½	12 10	15 3	18 4	23 9	30 4	41 0	52 6	64 9	79 0	12 10	7 2	114 0									
Toolondo ..	..	N. 72	126	10 7	13 3	15 10	19 10	25 4	34 0	43 0	53 0	65 0	10 7	6 4	94 0									
	..	O. 54																						

Rates *via* Ararat are computed on Mileage rates.  
 Rates *via* Glenisla and Toolondo are computed on "Local" rates.

## APPENDIX C.

COMPARISON OF RATES ON WHEAT, AND QUANTITIES CARRIED DURING SEASONS 1909, 1910,  
AND 1911.

From—	To—	Miles.	Old Rate, per ton.	New Rate, per ton.	Tonnage of Wheat forwarded.		
					1909.	1910.	1911.
			<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>			
Maroona ..	Melbourne ..	167	10 9	9 9	5,030	1,600	1,821
	Geelong ..	125	9 9	9 0	3,872	3,427	3,483
	Portland ..	107½	9 0	8 8	Nil	Nil	Nil
Willaura ..	Melbourne ..	177½	11 0	10 0	9,579	5,835	5,691
	Geelong ..	135½	10 0	9 2	6,647	5,907	4,516
	Portland ..	97	8 9	8 6	Nil	Nil	Nil
Stavely ..	Melbourne ..	184¾	11 3	10 3	2,643	1,634	1,371
	Geelong ..	142¾	10 0	9 2	2,575	1,313	1,189
	Portland ..	89½	8 3	8 3	Nil	Nil	Nil
Glen Thompson ..	Melbourne ..	190	11 3	10 3	466	613	837
	Geelong ..	148	10 3	9 4	2,086	758	776
	Portland ..	84½	8 0	8 0	Nil	Nil	Nil
Dunkeld ..	Melbourne ..	201½	11 8	10 8	Nil	Nil	38
	Geelong ..	159½	10 6	9 6	Nil	46	25
	Portland ..	73	7 3	7 3	Nil	Nil	Nil
Moutajup ..	Melbourne ..	207½	11 8	10 8	Nil	17	7
	Geelong ..	165½	10 9	9 9	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Portland ..	66½	6 9	6 9	Nil	Nil	Nil
Strathkellar ..	Melbourne ..	214¾	11 11	10 11	Nil	273	242
	Geelong ..	172¾	10 9	9 9	Nil	163	306
	Portland ..	59½	6 3	6 3	Nil	Nil	Nil
Hamilton ..	Melbourne ..	220½	12 2	11 2	Nil	13	235
	Geelong ..	178½	11 0	10 0	Nil	42	223
	Portland ..	54	6 0	6 0	Nil	Nil	Nil

## TOTAL QUANTITY OF WHEAT CARRIED.

						Tons.	Tons.
Melbourne,	1909	..	..	..	..	17,718	
	1910	..	..	..	..	9,985	
	1911	..	..	..	..	10,242	
							37,945
Geelong,	1909	..	..	..	..	15,180	
	1910	..	..	..	..	11,596	
	1911	..	..	..	..	10,518	
							37,294
							75,239

[Minutes of Evidence are not printed.]