

1913.
—
VICTORIA.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON RAILWAYS.

TWENTY-THIRD GENERAL REPORT.

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 TENTH COMMITTEE.

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The Honorable DONALD MELVILLE.

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

TWENTY-THIRD GENERAL REPORT.

To. His Excellency SIR JOHN MICHAEL FLEETWOOD FULLER, *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 its last General Report (11th June, 1912) the Committee has held 219 meetings, and examined 332 witnesses in connexion with various proposed railways and tramways. In making its inquiries the Committee has travelled 3,750 miles by rail, and 1,056 miles by road.

2. On the 3rd July, 1912, the Legislative Council appointed the Honorable Alfred Hicks, M.L.C., as one of the representatives of that Chamber on the Committee, in the place of the Honorable Dr. W. H. Embling, M.L.C., deceased. It is with regret that the Committee has to record the death of Mr. Thomas G. Watson, C.M.G., Clerk of the Parliaments, who was Secretary of the Committee from 1891 to 1901. During that period he rendered the Committee very valuable service.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

3. During the last four years Parliament has authorized the construction of the following broad-gauge railways on the recommendation of the Committee :—

Number of Act.	Name of Railway.	Length in Miles.	Estimated Cost.	Value of Rolling-stock included in Estimated Cost.
SESSION 1909.				
2178	*Beeac and Newtown	36	£ 120,781	£ 2,550
2179	*Ouyen and Kow Plains	55½	155,070	5,600
SECOND SESSION 1909.				
2217	*Eltham to Hurst's Bridge	6¾	44,240	1,240
2220	†Gheringhap to Maroona	100¾	425,160	6,890
2221	*Woolamai to Powlett Coal-field	14½	67,500	..
2222	*Noradjuha to Toolondo	11¼	27,500	..
2223	†Bairnsdale to Orbst	60	391,360	4,650
2224	*Jeparit to Lorquon	14½	39,200	..
SESSION 1910.				
2290	*Kow Plains to Murrayville	11¾	33,395	1,320
SECOND SESSION 1911.				
2349	†Benalla to Tatong	18½	61,788	8,630
2350	†Rushworth to Colbinabbin	12	41,280	2,310
2351	†Crowland to Navarre	22	79,220	1,485
SESSION 1912.				
2414	Tallangatta to Cudgewa	42½	299,448	1,185
2417	Swan Hill to Piangil	27½	95,773	5,826
2418	Chillingollah to Manangatang	18½	57,400	2,450
2419	Sea Lake towards Pier-Millan	17¾	61,271	3,325
2424	Heywood to Mount Gambier (South Australia)	59	242,000	10,345
2424	Murrayville to Pinnaroo (South Australia)	17	65,800	..
2433	Elmore to Cohuna	57½	212,613	9,420
2434	Hamilton to Cavendish	15¾	67,376	9,210
2441	Rainbow towards Nypo	10¾	34,461	875
2442	Linton to Skipton	12¾	67,100	2,100
Total		642¼	£2,689,736	£79,711

* Open for traffic.
† Under construction.

RAILWAYS RECOMMENDED.

4. The following broad-gauge railways were recommended by the Committee last Session (1912), but their construction has not yet been authorized by Parliament :—

Name of Railway.	Length in Miles.	Estimated Cost.
		£
Cavendish to Toolondo	43½	179,917
Koo-wee-rup to McDonald's Track	29¼	145,750
Neerim South to Latrobe and Toorongo Rivers	15	99,000
Picola to Barmah	9¼	35,390
Alberton to Won Wrou	12	55,000
Total	109	£515,057

ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS.

5. In addition to dealing with railway proposals the Committee has, since the date of its last General Report, inquired into the following proposed electric tramways in Melbourne and suburbs, in accordance with the statements made by the Honorable the Premier to the Legislative Assembly on the 3rd October and 13th November, 1912 :—

- East Brunswick, Coburg, and Campbellfield.
- Melbourne, Richmond, Hawthorn, and Camberwell.
- South Melbourne and Albert Park.
- North Fitzroy and East Brunswick.

The Reports of the Committee on the first three proposals were placed before the Legislative Assembly on the 20th December, 1912, and the Report on the last-mentioned project has been forwarded to the Honorable the Acting Premier, and will be submitted to Parliament early in the forthcoming Session.

QUESTIONS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

6. The questions under the consideration of the Committee are as follow :—

1. Railway extension in the Eastern Mallee, and the provision of an adequate supply of water for settlement purposes.
2. Railway extension in the Western Mallee, and the provision of an adequate supply of water for settlement purposes.
3. Railway connexion with Duggan, Fumina, Hill End, and Willow Grove.
4. Railway connexion with Yanac-a-Yanac and Netherby.
5. Railway connexion (steam or electric) with Black Rock and Beaumaris.
6. Railway connexion with Serpentine and Durham Ox.
7. Railway connexion with Mornington Peninsula districts.
8. Railway connexion with Omeo and Upper Tambo Valley.
9. Railway connexion with Tolmie district.

7. Recently the Lands Department had an area of about 60,000 acres of Mallee land lying between Piangil and Manangatang surveyed into 80 farm allotments, of approximately 700 acres each. These were made available for settlement last month, and upwards of 400 applications were received for the 80 allotments, showing that the demand for cheap Crown lands in the Mallee district for wheat-growing is still continuing. As soon as the construction of the railways from Swan Hill to Piangil, and from Chillingollah to Manangatang, authorized by Parliament last Session, is sufficiently far advanced the Committee will deal with the question of extending those lines northwards. A few weeks ago the Committee inspected the country around Wathe, Yallum, and Patchewollock, in the Western Mallee, and is obtaining information concerning the suitability of the country in the neighbourhood of Pine Plains for settlement and cultivation. Evidence has also been received regarding the proposals to connect the Hopetoun and Mildura railways. The connexions suggested by witnesses were Hopetoun to Woomelang, Hopetoun to Lascelles, Hopetoun to Turriff, and Hopetoun to Walpeup

on the Ouyen-Murrayville line. Since then the Committee has been asked to hear evidence for a connecting railway further southward than Hopetoun and Woomelang, and it has promised to do so. Reports on the questions of railway connexion with Duggan, Fumina, Hill End, and Willow Grove; and with Yanac-a-Yanac and Netherby, will be placed before Parliament during the forthcoming Session. All the local evidence has been heard concerning the need of better transit facilities between Sandringham and Black Rock and Beaumaris. The Committee has asked the Railway Department for information regarding the probable traffic and working expenses of a proposal to give improved means of travel between those places, and when the particulars come to hand the Committee will be in a position to furnish the Legislative Assembly with a report on this matter. During this month the Committee inspected the Serpentine and Durham Ox districts, and heard the statements of the residents relative to the necessity of nearer railway facilities than at present exist. Before the Committee reports on this project it wishes to hear the views of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, and also of the Railways Commissioners. Evidence has been heard at Red Hill, Flinders, and Dromana concerning the development which has taken place in the Mornington Peninsula in recent years, and the question of railway extension into that country. A new feature is the establishment of the Naval Base, with a fairly large population, at Crib Point, Western Port, and this aspect of the matter is being considered by the Committee. The outlying Upper Tambo Valley and Omeo district was visited by the Committee in March last. While there a proposal to serve the district by a railway leaving the Orbost line about midway between Bruthen and Nowa Nowa, and proceeding northward *viâ* Timbarra River to Ensay, and thence to Swift's Creek and Omeo, instead of running northward from Bruthen by way of Tambo Crossing and Ensay, was brought under the attention of the Committee. This alternative route is to be inspected by the Construction Branch of the Railway Department. It was evident to the Committee, however, that any railway to open up this remote district must be regarded as a developmental one. Viewing the matter from this aspect, the Committee is taking steps to obtain from the various public officials the necessary reports concerning the extent and quality of the Crown lands, the timber and mineral resources, &c. These will take some time to prepare. When they come to hand the Committee will decide as to the desirableness of building a railway, either broad or narrow gauge, into this extensive hilly country to promote the cultivation of its fertile valleys and the settlement of the adjacent lands. A fresh railway survey has been made to the Tolmie district, and when the quantities have been taken out by the Construction Branch the Committee will investigate this proposition.

E. H. CAMERON,
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,
State Parliament House,
Melbourne, 24th June, 1913.