

1914.

VICTORIA.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON RAILWAYS.

TWENTY-FOURTH GENERAL REPORT.

PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE RAILWAYS STANDING
COMMITTEE ACT 1890 (54 VICT., No. 1177), SECTION 18.

By Authority:
ALBERT J. MULLETT, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

APPROXIMATE COST OF REPORT.

	<i>£ s. d.</i>
Compilation.*	
Printing (500 copies)	5 0 0

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

MEMBERS OF THE TENTH COMMITTEE.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The Honorable ALFRED HICKS
 The Honorable DONALD MELVILLE.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

SAMUEL BARNES, Esquire*
 The Honorable JOHN WILLIAM BILLSON
 The Honorable EWEN HUGH CAMERON
 EDWARD COUGHLAN WARDE, Esquire

CHAIRMAN—THE HONORABLE EWEN HUGH CAMERON, M.L.A.

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

* Mr. Barnes was appointed a member of the Committee on the 21st January, 1914, in place of the Honorable William Hutchinson, whose seat became vacant on his accepting the offices of Minister of Water Supply and Minister of Agriculture on the 22nd December, 1913.

TWENTY-FOURTH GENERAL REPORT.

*To His Excellency THE HONORABLE SIR ARTHUR LYULPH STANLEY,
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 202 meetings, and examined 360 witnesses in connexion with various proposed railways and tramways. In making its inquiries the Committee has travelled 3,541 miles by rail, and 1,065 miles by road.

2. On the 22nd December, 1913, the Honorable William Hutchinson vacated his seat on the Committee by accepting the offices of Minister of Water Supply and Minister of Agriculture. On the 21st January, 1914, Mr. S. Barnes was appointed in his place as one of the representatives of the Legislative Assembly.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

3. During the last five 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	55 $\frac{3}{4}$	155,070	5,600
SECOND SESSION 1909.				
2217	*Eltham to Hurst's Bridge	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	44,240	1,240
2220	*Gheringhap to Maroona	100 $\frac{3}{4}$	425,160	6,890
2221	*Woolamai to Powlett Coal-field	14 $\frac{1}{4}$	67,500	..
2222	*Noradjuha to Toolondo	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	27,500	..
2223	†Bairnsdale to Orbost	60	391,360	4,650
2224	*Jeparit to Lorquon	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	39,200	..
SESSION 1910.				
2290	*Kow Plains to Murrayville	11 $\frac{3}{4}$	33,395	1,320
SECOND SESSION 1911.				
2349	†Benalla to Tatong	18 $\frac{1}{4}$	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	42 $\frac{1}{2}$	299,448	1,485
2417	†Swan Hill to Piangil	27 $\frac{1}{2}$	95,773	5,826
2418	*Chillingollah to Manangatang	18 $\frac{1}{2}$	57,400	2,450
2419	†Sea Lake towards Pier-Millan	17 $\frac{3}{4}$	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	57 $\frac{1}{2}$	212,613	9,420
2434	†Hamilton to Cavendish	15 $\frac{3}{4}$	67,376	9,210
2441	†Rainbow towards Nypo	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	34,461	875
2442	†Linton to Skipton	12 $\frac{3}{4}$	67,100	2,100
SESSION 1913-14.				
2502	Cavendish to Toolondo	43 $\frac{3}{4}$	175,929	824
2504	Neerim South to Toorong River	14	115,844	3,325
Total		700	£2,981,509	£83,860

* Open for traffic.
† Under construction.

RAILWAYS RECOMMENDED.

4. The following broad-gauge railways have been recommended by the Committee, but their construction has not yet been authorized by Parliament :—

Name of Railway.	Length in Miles.	Estimated Cost.
		£
Koo-wee-rup to McDonald's Track	29½	145,750
Picola to Barnah	9½	35,390
Alberton to Won Wron	12	55,000
Lorquon to Yanac-a-Yanac	18½	58,000
Total	69	£294,140

5. In addition to the above lines, the Committee has recommended the construction of a railway branching off the Bairnsdale to Orbost line near Bruthen and ascending the Upper Tambo Valley as far as Tongiomunjie to serve the Omeo district. The route of this extension is being surveyed to ascertain if a broad-gauge line can be built *via* Timbarra River and Ensay at a reasonable cost. The length of this railway will be upwards of 50 miles and the probable cost about £300,000 or £400,000, according to the gauge and gradient adopted. It is intended to construct the line under the provisions of the *Developmental Railways Act 1912*.

6. The Committee has also recommended the building of an electric street railway from Sandringham railway station southwards to Black Rock, a length of 2¾ miles, at an estimated cost of £43,400, including overhead construction and passenger cars.

ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS.

7. On the 20th December, 1912, Reports of the Committee were placed before the Legislative Assembly approving of the construction, by the municipal councils concerned, of the following electric tramways in Melbourne and suburbs :—

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

These proposals were authorized by Parliament last Session (1913-14), and the work of construction is about to be entered upon.

8. In accordance with the statement made by the Honorable the Premier in the Legislative Assembly on the 13th February, 1914, the Committee has inquired into the suggested extension of the South Melbourne and Albert Park electric tramway to St. Kilda West, and a proposal to construct an electric tramway from Power-street, Hawthorn, eastward along Burwood and Camberwell roads to Burke-road. The views of the Railways Commissioners on these propositions have recently been received by the Committee, and it will, during the next two or three weeks, forward to the Honorable the Premier its Reports on the proposals.

QUESTIONS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

9. 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 Serpentine and Durham Ox.
 4. Railway connexion with Mornington Peninsula districts.
 5. Railway connexion with Tolmie district.
 6. Railway connexion with Stanhope Closer Settlement Area.
 7. Railway connexion with Macarthur, Orford, and Yambuk.
 8. Railway connexion with Staughton Vale Closer Settlement Area, and Balliang and Anakie.
 9. Railway connexion with Callignee, Gormandale, Longford, Stradbroke, and Woodside.
 10. Railway connexion with Strathbogie.

10. As soon as Parliament meets Reports dealing with the suggested lines in the Western Mallee to connect the Hopetoun and Mildura railways, and also with the question of railway extension to Serpentine and Durham Ox, will be presented to the Legislative Assembly. The Committee has received evidence regarding the suggested extension northward of the Manangatang and Pier-Millan railways, and will next week visit Bumbaug, Winnambool, and Mittyack to inspect the country to be served by these lines. Evidence has been heard from State officials concerning the character of the Mallee country north of Nypo. It is the intention of the Committee to visit that district to hear the views of the local farmers who have urged the extension of the Nypo railway towards the Pine Plains country. Reports on the proposed railways to serve the Mornington Peninsula and Tolmie districts will be submitted to Parliament next month. All the local evidence has been heard regarding the Stanhope, Macarthur, Staughton Vale, Callignee, Gormandale, and Woodside proposals, and when information sought from the Railway Department concerning them comes to hand the Committee will be in a position to furnish the Legislative Assembly with Reports on these various lines. In consequence of the unusual shortness of the parliamentary recess and the fact that the Strathbogrie proposition was the last on the list of railways referred last Session to the Committee for inquiry and report, the Committee has been unable to visit that district.

CHEAPENING RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

11. The cost of railway construction has increased in recent years by 25 or 30 per cent., owing to the advances in wages and in the prices of rails, sleepers, and other railway material. Nevertheless, the Committee has constantly before it the necessity of securing railway extension at the minimum cost compatible with safety in operation and economy in maintenance. With this object in view, Mr. M. E. Kernot, Chief Engineer for Railway Construction, obtained, at the instance of the Committee, a report from the Commonwealth railway construction authorities concerning the value of a patent excavator in use on the Transcontinental Railway. This showed that in favorable country the machine could do the work of excavation and surface forming at much less than hand labour. Mr. Kernot informed the Committee that he would "watch the further use of this excavator with interest." Towards the end of February last the Committee ascertained that Mr. Kernot had, on the advice of his medical attendant, been granted a few months' leave of absence to enable him to go abroad to improve his health. It thereupon wrote to the Honorable the Minister of Railways, suggesting that Mr. Kernot's leave should be extended for several weeks to permit him visiting Europe, America, and South Africa to ascertain whether, by employing up-to-date mechanical appliances, it would be possible to effect reductions in the cost of railway construction here, and if light railways, such as are in operation in the agricultural districts of those countries, could be used to advantage in this State. On Mr. Kernot consenting to undertake this task—for which he is especially well suited, owing to his knowledge of local conditions and requirements—the Minister granted him the necessary extended leave of absence.

COST OF NEW RAILWAYS.

12. Appended is a table of the railways opened for traffic during the past five years. The estimated cost is compared with the actual outlay on them at the date of completion, and reasons are given in each case why the work cost more or less than the sum estimated. It will be seen on perusing the table and reading the reasons that the estimates were, on the whole, fairly reliable.

NON-PAYING LINES.

13. As shown in the table attached to paragraph 3 of this Report, Parliament has, during the past five years, on the recommendation of the Committee, authorized the construction of 700 miles of railway, at a cost of £3,000,000. Several of these lines have been opened for traffic, and others are about completed, and will shortly be carrying passengers and goods. Most of the lines are expected to show a loss in the first few years of operation. During the last ten years any deficiency arising from the construction and working of new lines has been met out of the surplus earnings of the general railway system of the State. All the new lines were intended to either keep people on the land by giving them cheaper means of transport, or to open up

country and secure increased settlement and production. There is no doubt that these railways will accomplish that object, though it is somewhat uncertain, owing to the increasing demand for sheep and cattle, if the areas in Gippsland and other timbered districts of the State expected to be brought under cultivation in the early years of the new lines will be as large as the advocates of those railways believed. Nevertheless, with a reduced railway surplus and an increase in the number of non-paying lines in the next few years, the necessity of making some provision for meeting the losses on new railways should be kept in view.

SUBDIVISION OF ESTATES.

14. In several instances the Committee recommended the construction of railways in the hope that the promises made by owners of large areas that they would subdivide and settle their lands suitable for cultivation if nearer railway facilities were provided would be given effect to before the opening of the new lines. So far, however, some of these promises have not been fulfilled and, consequently, the expected freight for the railways has not been forthcoming. The Committee suggests that Parliament should take steps which will, in the future, cause the fulfilment of promises which largely influence the recommendation and authorization of railways.

RAILWAY LOCAL RATES.

15. Railway local rates for the carriage of goods over newly-constructed lines were adopted on the suggestion of the first Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways upwards of twenty years ago. Under section 77 of the *Railway Lands Acquisition Act 1893* all new lines are regarded as being detached and separate from other lines, and the railway rates calculated accordingly. Such local rates are less than the cost of cartage, but are higher than the ordinary through railway rates. Their object was to enable a new line to earn more revenue, and thereby lessen the annual loss on the undertaking. When a railway becomes a paying one the local rates are removed, and the ordinary through rates charged. The *Railway Local Rates Abolition Act 1902* gives the Governor in Council power to reduce the local rates charged on any new line on the Railways Commissioners reporting that such reduction will, within a reasonable time, result in such an increase of traffic as will recoup the Department for the present diminution in the receipts from such line.

16. Instances have come under the notice of the Committee where the carriage of goods over a new line would be for ten or twenty miles, but for only about half that distance over an existing railway to reach the port of shipment or market town. The minimum charges for the carriage of goods over an existing line for a distance of from one to ten miles, range from an average of 2s. 3d. per ton per mile on agricultural produce to 4s. per ton on groceries, hardware, and drapery. These minimum charges are, no doubt, necessary where goods have to be conveyed but a short distance by rail, as trucks for them have to be placed in sidings, consignment notes checked, and book entries made. But it is different when the goods are already in the trucks, and the documents prepared by reason of the merchandise having been carried over the new line. The Committee therefore suggests that the *Railway Local Rates Abolition Act 1902* be amended to allow the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Railways Commissioners to reduce the minimum charges for the carriage of all goods and live stock over an existing railway where they have been brought to such railway by a new line. This will permit each case to be dealt with from the standpoint of its particular surroundings, and, while not causing any diminution in the revenue of a new line, will, in some instances, secure traffic for the railways which would not otherwise be obtained.

E. H. CAMERON,

Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,
State Parliament House.

Melbourne, 12th June, 1914.

APPENDIX.

VICTORIAN RAILWAYS.

RAILWAYS CONSTRUCTED BY THE BOARD OF LAND AND WORKS (RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION BRANCH) AND OPENED FOR TRAFFIC DURING THE PERIOD FROM 1ST JANUARY, 1909 TO DATE.

No.	Name of Line.	Opened for Traffic.	Length in Miles.	Whether Complete or Incomplete.	Authorized Cost (not including Rolling-stock).	Cost (including Liabilities for Works in Hand)	Difference (Savings).	Savings due to Secondhand Rails being obtained in lieu of New Rails.	Difference after deducting Savings due to Secondhand Rails.		Remarks.
									Excess.	Net Savings.	
1	Rupanyup to Marnoo ..	15.6.09	15½	Incomplete	£ 40,696	£ 27,106	£ 13,590	£ 9,200	£ ..	£ 4,390	Turntable, water supply, irrigation bridge, and three employes' residences postponed.
2	Ultima to Chillingollah ..	1.7.09	20½	"	39,000	29,662	9,338	..	..	..	Estimate made without survey. Considerable saving on permanent survey. Materials (rails, sleepers, and ballast) obtained at low rates by good luck. Water supply and other terminal provision omitted in view of extension of line.
3	Alexandra Township railway ..	28.10.09	4½	Complete	26,631	26,418	213	..	..	..	Line completed to lower estimate made eight years after date of Construction Act. Some additional expenditure has been necessary since accounts were closed.
4	Moe to Walhalla ..	3.5.10	26	"	115,869	100,451	15,418	..	..	..	Line strengthened on temporary work to get coal £10,000 expended in seven weeks from starting, and line built heavier than estimated for to carry coal traffic.
5	Nyora to Woolamai ..	9.5.10	16½	"	54,746	52,764	1,982	8,500	6,518	..	Cost of whole line was limited by Construction Act, dated 1900, to £2,000 per mile. This portion was heavier than the average, and higher wage rate was paid for labourers and others.
6	Woolamai to Powlett Coal-field	9.5.10	14	Incomplete	67,500	81,170	13,670 (increase)	..	..	..	Wage rate increased.
7	Mildura to White Cliffs (Merbein) (part of Woomelang to Mildura and Yelta line)	4.7.10	7	"	..	16,708	..	..	..	..	Wage rate increased.
8	Beech Forest to Crowe's ..	20.6.11	14½	"	42,189	39,278	2,911	5,100	2,189	..	Wage rate increased.
9	Beaac to Newtown ..	20.9.11	35½	"	118,231	105,673	12,558	13,300	742	..	Wage rate increased.
10	Ouyen to Kow Plains ..	25.6.12	56½	"	149,470	134,376	15,094	23,000	7,906	..	Wage rate increased, and increased expenditure for water supply.

RAILWAYS CONSTRUCTED BY THE BOARD OF LAND AND WORKS AND OPENED FOR TRAFFIC DURING THE PERIOD FROM 1ST JANUARY, 1909, TO DATE—continued.

No.	Name of Line.	Opened for Traffic.	Length in Miles.	Whether Complete or Incomplete.	Authorized Cost (not including Rolling-stock).	Cost (including Liabilities for Works in Hand).	Difference (Savings).	Difference after deducting Savings due to Secondhand Rails.		Remarks.
								Savings due to Secondhand Rails being obtained in lieu of New Rails.	Excess.	
11	Eltham to Hurst's-bridge ..	25.6.12	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	Incomplete	£ 43,000	£ 40,927	£ 2,073	£ ..	£ ..	Wage rate increased. Line fenced throughout. Full cost of new turntable charged to line instead of removing one from Kow Plains. Extra employé's residence, and increased cost for water supply. Turntable and water supply postponed indefinitely; extension of line authorized. Estimate made before permanent survey. Turntable and water supply postponed in view of recommendation to extend the line. Wage rate increased.
12	Kow Plains to Murrayville	25.6.12	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	"	32,075	31,141	934	227	3,766	
13	Noradjuha to Toolondo ..	24.9.12	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	"	27,500	26,308	1,192	Several items of work at terminal station postponed in view of probable early extension. About £2,000 saved on earthworks and sleepers owing to slackness of other work in that part of State. Provision for contingencies, £2,516, not required.
14	Jeparit to Lorquon ..	9.12.12	13 $\frac{3}{4}$	"	39,200	31,500	7,700	..	1,800	
15	Gheringhap to Maroona ..	8.8.13	100	"	418,270	424,073	5,803 (increase)	..	..
16	Chillingollah to Manangatang	28.1.14	18 $\frac{1}{2}$	"	54,950	40,563	14,387	..	7,287	

Railway Construction Office, Railway Department,
24th March, 1914.

M. E. KERNOT.