

1916.

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VICTORIA.

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# REPORT

FROM

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON RAILWAYS

ON THE PROPOSED

TIMBOON TO PORT CAMPBELL RAILWAY;

TOGETHER WITH

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE AND PLAN.

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*Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 20th December, 1916.*

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EXTRACTED FROM THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

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TUESDAY, 22ND DECEMBER, 1914.

22. TIMBOON TO PORT CAMPBELL RAILWAY.—Mr. Mackinnon moved, pursuant to notice, That the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways inquire and report on the merits of a possible motion that the 5 ft. 3 in. gauge railway from Timboon to Port Campbell (which the Committee in its Report of the 6th July, 1909, refused to recommend for construction in ordinary course) be authorized to be constructed as a developmental railway under the provisions of the *Developmental Railways Act* 1912.

Debate ensued.

Question—put and resolved in the affirmative.

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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS.

(*Eleventh Committee.*)

S. BARNES, Esq., M.L.A., Chairman;

The Hon. J. W. Billson, M.L.A.,

The Hon. A. Hicks, M.L.C.,

The Hon. D. Melville, M.L.C.  
(Vice-Chairman),

R. H. Solly, Esq., M.L.A.,

R. F. Toutcher, Esq., M.L.A.

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# REPORT.

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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS, to which the Legislative Assembly referred the question of constructing a 5 ft. 3 in. gauge railway from Timboon to Port Campbell as a developmental railway under the provisions of the *Developmental Railways Act* 1912, has the honour to report as follows :—

## DESCRIPTION OF DISTRICT.

1. A broad-gauge railway branches off the Geelong and Warrnambool main line near Camperdown and runs south through Cobden township and across Curdie's River to Timboon. This line is about 25 miles in length, and was opened in April, 1892. It was a non-paying line for a number of years, the revenue just about meeting the working expenses, leaving little or nothing towards paying the annual interest charge of £4,900 a year. In 1911, however, steps were taken by private enterprise to develop the extensive deposits of limestone which exist between Curdie's River and Timboon. This line is used for building and agricultural purposes. The output from the kilns last year was about 10,000 tons, and this new traffic has in recent years considerably improved the financial results of the Camperdown-Timboon railway.

2. The proposal placed before the Committee was to extend the Timboon railway  $9\frac{3}{4}$  miles southwards across some low hills near the farming district of Newfield and on to the seaside resort of Port Campbell, a small township on the coast. The Port Campbell railway district extends from Peterborough on the west (another tourists' resort at the entrance to Curdie's Inlet, into which Curdie's River flows) eastwards past Port Campbell to Princetown, a seaside village facing the Southern Ocean at the mouth of the Gellibrand River. The distance between Curdie's River on the west to Gellibrand River on the east is 22 miles, and as the Port Campbell district extends back from the coast for some 8 miles the area contained in it is approximately 113,000 acres, of which 32,000 have been alienated, the remaining 81,000 being Crown lands, of which 13,000 are timber and other reserves. The alienated lands comprise the best in the district. They are situated along the banks of Cowley's Creek, a few miles to the east of Timboon, and in the valleys of the Newfield hills and of Campbell's Creek, a small stream running from those low hills southwards into Port Campbell Bay. Narrow fertile belts of country also extend along the banks of the Gellibrand River above Princetown and at Kennedy's Creek, a tributary of that stream. The principal uses to which the alienated lands are put are grazing and dairying. A very small portion of these lands is cultivated, the crops raised being chiefly oats and potatoes for local consumption. It was explained that, in consequence of the hilly and bad roads from Cowley's Creek, Newfield, and Campbell's Creek Valley to the railway terminus at Timboon, it did not pay farmers to grow grain or potatoes for sale in the markets of the Western District or in Melbourne, as the cost of cartage from their holdings to the station was about £1 a ton, and that was an effective bar to all such trade, except in occasional seasons when unusually high prices prevailed. The Committee was informed that if the railway were extended to Port Campbell or to within 2 miles or so of that town (there being a good limestone road from Port Campbell northwards for that distance towards Newfield) it would cause these farmers to grow potatoes and other root crops on their rich valley lands, and to clear the lighter soils on the hills, and produce thereon, by the aid of fertilizers, oaten crops, which would either be cut into chaff or thrashed for grain and despatched over the railway to the Melbourne or Western District markets. A statement was made that several of the thirteen dairymen and graziers near Princetown and several others at Kennedy's Creek would also grow potatoes and oats and cart

them to the proposed railway if it were constructed. But the Committee considers that the cartage distance of 12 or 13 miles from those places to the suggested railway terminus north of Port Campbell, involving a charge of 17s. 6d. a ton, would in most seasons discourage this traffic.

#### COASTAL SCENERY AND TOURISTS.

3. Upwards of a thousand tourists visit the three seaside resorts of Peterborough, Port Campbell, and Princetown each year during the summer months. Most of these travel by train to Timboon and drive in coaches from there to one or other of those resorts, reaching their destination about 4 p.m. or 5 p.m. At Peterborough the main attractions are Curdie's Inlet and the rocky ocean frontage with patches of sandy beaches. From Port Campbell eastwards to Loch Ard Gorge and on towards Princetown the rugged coast line, with its high sandstone cliffs rising almost perpendicularly from the foaming sea—the scene of several shipwrecks with large losses of life—must always attract visitors to that part of the State. It was stated the dusty coach journey over unmade roads deterred many from visiting these seaside resorts, and that the extension of the railway from Timboon to Port Campbell would remove this objection and largely increase the number of tourists. But even if this were so visitors to Peterborough and Princetown would still have to travel several miles by coach from Port Campbell to those places.

#### TRAFFIC IN LIME.

4. It was urged in support of the proposed extension of the Timboon railway towards Port Campbell that there were extensive deposits of limestone of good quality near the latter place, and there was a probability of these being developed if the railway were carried on from Timboon. But similar deposits exist alongside the railway between Curdie's River and Timboon station. These are being operated on, but the output could be largely increased if there were a better demand for the building and agricultural limes produced at those kilns. One lime company informed the Committee that it had now only one kiln working out of three, and had sufficient limestone to meet a demand for several years if it had the three kilns in operation. Another company was closed down at the time of the Committee's visit to the district through lack of orders. It, however, stated that it had about ten years' supply of limestone on its property, allowing for a revival of the industry at the conclusion of the war. The Committee considers that supplies of lime for a number of years for both building and agricultural purposes will be obtainable from the existing kilns near Curdie's River, and that in view of the present restricted demand there is no justification to extend the Timboon railway so that the deposits of limestone towards Port Campbell may be developed.

#### ROUTE AND COST OF PROPOSED RAILWAY.

5. There is no doubt a mistake was made 25 years ago in terminating the railway at Timboon. It ended in a hollow about 3 miles from the main Port Campbell-Camperdown road, access to the terminal station being difficult owing to a steep hill to be crossed. The road to Timboon station has remained almost unimproved and unmetalled in consequence of the belief that the railway would be extended to the main road, if not all the way to Port Campbell, and therefore any expenditure on road formation over the 3 miles referred to would be largely wasted if the line were continued towards Port Campbell. Supplies of bluestone can be obtained from Glenfyne, a station on the Camperdown side of Curdie's River, and the Country Roads Board has informed the Committee that if the railway extension is not authorized at an early date it will deviate the road from Timboon station to the main road by carrying it around the hill so as to get an easy grade, and will form and metal the new road, thus giving easy access to the present railway terminus. This new road is estimated to cost about £6,750, including land resumption.

6. Mr. M. E. Kernot, Chief Engineer for Railway Construction, informed the Committee that the survey of the extension on passing out of the Timboon station proceeds in a south-easterly direction on an ascending grade keeping close to Power's Creek for 2 miles. On coming to the Port Campbell-Camperdown main road it turns southwards and follows down the valley of Campbell's Creek past Newfield and on to Port Campbell, terminating a short distance north of that township. This railway would be on the 5 ft. 3 in. gauge, and 9 miles 51 chains in length, and, with a ruling gradient of 1 in 40, was estimated to cost £42,929, or £4,453 per mile, exclusive of land

and rolling-stock. This sum was based on a wage rate of 9s. per day for labourers, and at prices of materials ruling prior to the war. He informed the Committee that serviceable second-hand rails were not available, but should they be obtainable the estimated cost of the extension would be reduced by about £300 a mile.

7. When hearing evidence at Cobden the Committee was informed by Mr. D. F. Cole, engineer of the Heytesbury Shire, that the foregoing estimate was about 25 per cent. too high. He took exception to the estimated costs of clearing, earthworks, bridges, culverts, sleepers, and the extent of the proposed accommodation at the stations. He also provided for the use of second-hand rails at a cost of £700 a mile in lieu of £1,000 for new rails, as allowed for in the estimate. But the difference in this item was met by the explanation previously given by Mr. Kernot that if serviceable second-hand rails became available they would be used, thus reducing the cost by £300 a mile. It was explained by the Railways Construction Branch that Mr. Cole had not fully recognised the difference between railway construction and road works, the latter being carried out in small sections at a chosen period of the year, and were not subject to a maintenance charge, as the railway works are. That Branch adhered to its estimates of cost, pointing out that the acreage of clearing would be larger than Mr. Cole had assumed. Its estimate of cost of earthworks included rolling and consolidating the railway track, which was not usually done with shire works. The railway bridges had to be more substantial than those along roads. Experience had shown that the accommodation to be provided at the stations was necessary, and if postponed would soon be asked for. The sum provided by Mr. Cole for engineering supervision and general expenses was stated by the Branch to be quite inadequate, and, furthermore, he had made no provision for unforeseen contingencies, thus showing in that one item alone an apparent saving of £2,000. The charge for sleepers included the cost of inspection and delivery along the railway track. Mr. Kernot informed the Committee that a similar statement concerning a reduction in the estimated costs was made some years ago in connexion with the Beech Forest railway. But when the earthworks, &c., were offered to local men at the reduced prices stated by the shire engineer they would not undertake the work.

#### REPORT OF TRAFFIC OFFICER.

8. Mr. C. H. Barber, Traffic Officer of the Victorian Railways, who visited the Port Campbell district to report on the probable traffic over the proposed extension, stated that the area which would be benefited by the construction of the line to Port Campbell was 113,000 acres. With the exception of the cleared timbered land at Cowley's Creek and in the Newfield Valley, totalling a few thousand acres, and several isolated patches of agricultural land on the coast in the Parishes of Waarre and Latrobe, the area to be served, generally speaking, consists of belts of timbered land which fringe extensive grass-tree plains. These plains are unoccupied, inferior country, and until they have been drained and the soil sweetened it is unlikely that this large extent of country will be put to any productive use. Along the valley of the Gellibrand River from Princetown up-stream to Kennedy's Creek there are narrow strips of arable land on either side of that stream, the balance being rangy country unsuitable for cultivation. A portion of the good country at Cowley's Creek and in the Newfield valleys has been cleared and put under crop, oats being the main cereal grown. Small plots of potatoes and peas have also been cultivated, and have given payable yields. The produce of the farm, however, is generally used for home consumption, dairying being the principal industry. He considered that the major portion of the occupied land in the district would still be devoted to grazing and dairying. The total area occupied was 34,000 acres, the remaining being unselected land and forest and timber reserves. During 1913 the area under cultivation in the district likely to furnish traffic to the new line was 978 acres, or about 3 per cent. of the occupied area. The population of the district was approximately 400 persons, exclusive of tourists. The live stock numbered as follows:—Horses, 520; dairy cattle, 1,252; other cattle, 1,434; sheep, 3,868; and pigs, 440. He added that Port Campbell, Peterborough, and Rivernook, which is near Princetown, offered inducements for the tourists' traffic, which usually extends from Christmas time till after Easter. In his estimate of traffic he had allowed for 1,500 inward passengers, representing mostly holiday-makers.

9. He explained that Port Campbell Bay was a mere indent in the coast, being an open port which could only be entered when the weather and tide were favorable. Communication by boat was so irregular and berthing at the jetty at Port Campbell so risky, together with the likelihood of delay off the port due to unfavorable weather

conditions, that he believed if the railway were extended towards Port Campbell the boats would discontinue calling there, and the line would obtain all the available traffic. Occasionally, however, heavy goods, such as fencing wire and galvanized iron, might be taken to Port Campbell by boat, but the tonnage so carried would not be large.

10. Mr. Barber, in referring to the probable timber traffic over the new line, stated at the time of his inspection the three saw-mills which had been operating in the country beyond Timboon were closed down, and the only reason he could learn for their cessation was the determination of the Timber Mills Wages Board. As the rates of wages fixed by that Board operated equally in other forests, he assumed that the saw-millers near Timboon were unable to profitably compete with more favoured localities closer to the markets and where timber is more easily obtained. However, in framing his estimate of traffic he had allowed for three mills being established in the untouched forest reserves in the Parishes of Paaratte and Waarre, and had credited the line with an outwards traffic of 1,500 tons of timber. In addition there would be 1,150 tons of agricultural produce despatched over the railway, and also other goods, such as hides, skins, cheese, &c., bringing the total outwards traffic up to 2,900 tons. The inwards traffic was estimated at 430 tons, consisting of groceries, drapery, flour, bran, pollard, hardware, and household articles.

#### ALTERATION IN TRAIN SERVICE.

11. Mr. C. E. Norman, Chairman of the Railways Commissioners, stated in evidence before the Committee that if the railway were extended from Timboon to the Port Campbell-Camperdown main road, 3 miles, or further on to Newfield or Port Campbell, it would be impracticable to operate this short extension with the present train and crew and maintain the existing afternoon service. He explained that there was an interval of but 40 minutes between the arrival of the Camperdown train at Timboon and its departure from there on the return trip. That time was barely sufficient for the locomotive to re-make the train by altering the position of the guard's van, to perform the necessary shunting operations by taking off inward trucks and attaching others containing outwards goods, running the locomotive on to the turntable, and other terminal requirements. Moreover, on a line like the Timboon railway, with its steep grades and sharp curves, it was impossible to lessen the running time, having regard to the loads hauled, and therefore sufficient time could not be gained in that way to permit the train being run on even the 3 miles to the Port Campbell-Camperdown main road, and maintain the existing connexion with the "up" afternoon train from Camperdown to Melbourne. Therefore, the Commissioners proposed to change the "up" train service from the afternoon to the morning by stabling the locomotive and train each night at Port Campbell, and leaving there at 5.30 a.m. and Timboon at 6.15 a.m., arriving at Camperdown at 8.15 a.m., thus connecting with the "up" morning train to Melbourne. The afternoon service from Camperdown to Timboon would be the same as now. This would enable the one train and crew to operate the Camperdown-Port Campbell railway. But if it were desired to continue the afternoon train service from either Port Campbell or from a terminus at 3 miles (Goldstraw's) on the Port Campbell-Camperdown main road, it would be necessary to provide a second train and crew to operate that short extension.

#### ESTIMATES OF WORKING EXPENSES AND REVENUE.

12. On the understanding that the present train service was to be reversed by starting from Port Campbell at 5.30 a.m., thus permitting the one train and crew to operate the Camperdown-Port Campbell line, the Railways Commissioners furnished the following estimates of annual charges and working expenses for a daily train service :--

##### TIMBOON TO PORT CAMPBELL.

##### *Annual Charges.*

Interest at 4 per cent. per annum on £43,469, being cost (£42,929) of constructing 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of 5 ft. 3 in. railway from Timboon to Port Campbell, at a wage rate of 9s. per day for labourers, with £540 added for rolling-stock	..	..	..	..	..	£1,738	15	3
Traffic expenses	..	..	..	..	..	193	0	0
Maintenance charges	..	..	..	..	..	770	5	0
Locomotive expenses, including repairs and renewals of rolling-stock	..	..	..	..	..	595	5	8
General charges	..	..	..	..	..	38	19	3
Total annual charges	..	..	..	..	..	£3,336	5	2

		<i>Revenue.</i>				
		On New Line.	On Other Lines from New Traffic from New Line.			
Passengers	..	£211	15	0	£252	0 0
Parcels	..	106	0	0	..	
Mails	..	75	0	0	..	
Class goods	..	52	7	4	59	2 10
Live stock	..	7	10	9	..	
Timber	..	36	3	9	193	0 6
Agricultural produce	..	34	7	3	214	16 4
All other traffic	..	10	0	0	..	
		£533 4 1			£718 19 8	
		..			£1,252 3 9	
Estimated loss first year of operation					.. £2,084 1 5	

13. The foregoing revenue is based on ordinary mileage rates being charged on all goods and live stock carried over the proposed extension. Had railway "local" rates operated the estimated revenue would have been £1,500, and the loss the first year £1,836.

#### THE GRASS-TREE COUNTRY.

14. The question of a developmental railway to serve the Port Campbell district rests mainly on the uses to which the unoccupied Crown lands are to be put, as they comprise two-thirds of the district. This country lies mostly to the east of the proposed extension between Newfield and Kennedy's Creek, but there is also some on the west side of Newfield. It consists of low ridges, on which stringybark and messmate timber is growing, and numerous slight depressions commonly known as the grass-tree plains, as they are devoid of timber and are covered with grass trees and other small vegetation. These plains or depressions are usually very wet in winter, receiving and holding the drainage from the adjacent timbered ridges. The clay comes close to the surface, and thus helps to retain the water on the plains. In summer, when the water evaporates it leaves the surface in a hard state, owing to there being such a large proportion of clay in the surface soil. These plains differ from other grass-tree areas, which have more sand in the soil. It was thought some years ago that these unoccupied Crown lands could be made suitable for settlement by draining the grass-tree depressions by means of open drains 3 feet or so in depth every few chains, and by turning over the soil with a disc plough and allowing it to sweeten, and also by liming the land so as to render it more friable and better fitted in that way for ploughing and other agricultural operations and for growing crops. With this object in view an experimental farm was established some years ago by the Department of Agriculture on the Heytesbury grass-tree country a few miles south-east of Cobden. That experiment, however, was not the success anticipated, although a large sum of money was expended on the farm. Crops of oaten hay and some potatoes and fodder crops were grown there by the liberal use of fertilizers. But, generally speaking, the results obtained were not sufficiently encouraging to warrant the Government draining other portions of this country and making those Crown lands available for occupation. Since then these Crown lands have been withheld from selection, pending a decision being come to regarding the future uses of this country and the likelihood of a railway being constructed into it.

15. Opinions differed as to the value of these Crown lands. Several of the local residents asserted that, if the unoccupied country were divided into holdings of about 200 or 300 acres each, and the land surveyed so as to give each blockholder portion of a timbered ridge and part of the grass-tree plains, he would in the course of a few years be able to make a living from the holding. They claimed that if the land were cleared and drained and worked by practical men crops of oats and potatoes could be successfully grown on such land with the aid of fertilizers. Fruits, it was said, such as apples and pears could also be profitably produced on the ridges when they were cleared of timber.

16. On the other hand, some of the local farmers had little or no belief in the profitable cultivation of the grass-tree plains. Councillor J. McKenzie, who is also a farmer on the Port Campbell-road, near Cobden, was asked—"Would you care to settle

on the grass-tree country?" His answer was—"No, I would not care about the grass-tree country. We came to the conclusion that it was no good. It is too wet, but they can grow good crops of potatoes there." In answer to a further question he said the grass-tree country would not be suitable for dairying. Another witness, Mr. W. Thompson, a dairy farmer who had an orchard on Curdie's River about 7 miles below Timboon, stated that he knew the grass-tree country well. He was asked his opinion of it, and he replied—"I believe that fruit-growing there could be made a profitable industry." He was then questioned as to the value of that country apart from fruit-growing—as to its suitability for farming or dairying—and he replied—"I have not much faith in it." Mr. C. H. Barber, Traffic Officer of the Railway Department, thought so little of the grass-tree country that he said he would not pay the municipal rates on it, regarding it as being "fit for nothing." Mr. W. H. Luly, Chief Valuing Inspector Crown Lands Department, stated that he had inspected the grass-tree country and other unoccupied Crown lands in the Port Campbell district, and was of opinion that none of that land was suitable for closer settlement or dairying, being such poor country. He was asked—"Do you think if a railway were extended into that country that land would be worth reclaiming?" His answer was—"If you want my honest opinion I should say, No."

17. Mr. P. Campbell, surveyor for the Melbourne district, Lands Department, who had also inspected the grass-tree country, did not take such a hopeless view of the prospects of that unoccupied land as his fellow officer, Mr. Luly. Being of opinion there was very little Crown lands outside of the Mallee now remaining for settlement, and believing that the grass-tree country would, if cleared, drained, and properly treated, produce fairly good crops of hay, Mr. Campbell thought the Government should make some further experiments with the unoccupied poor country in the Port Campbell district to see if it could be brought into a condition which would cause these lands to be suitable for settlement. If a railway were constructed into that country he considered there would not be much demand for land there while it remained in its present condition. But by dividing the country into farm allotments of about 320 acres, giving each holder portion of a grass-tree plain and portion of an adjoining timbered ridge, and by expending about £3 or £4 an acre in draining, ploughing, and liming part of the former, letting it lie fallow for a year or so, and in clearing part of the timbered ridge he thought the country could be made suitable for settlement by industrious, practical men. He considered that some of the heavily-timbered land when cleared would be highly productive, but it would take some years and a great deal of expense to bring it into that condition. It would, he thought, cost £10 an acre to clear the ridge land of green timber where the trees were fairly large and dense, but the lighter-timbered country could be cleared sufficiently for agricultural purposes for £4 or £6 an acre. In the course of his evidence he said—"The problem of effecting successful settlement on large areas of the class of country under consideration is a difficult one. But the solution, if there be one, will, in my opinion, be found in choosing areas which can be most easily worked, and preparing them for cultivation in moderate-sized allotments before placing selectors on them. . . . None of those who know the grass-tree country best have shown any disposition so far to tackle the problem. It is not inviting country, and I do not know of anyone who has succeeded on that grass-tree area. . . . I would rather select land in the Mallee. I would have a far better chance there of success. . . . If a few men could be induced to settle in the grass-tree country in the Port Campbell district, and they could show what that country could do, their example might cause others to settle there. . . . But it would be necessary to extend the railway to induce settlement in that country." He was asked towards the conclusion of his evidence—"After you have drained and ploughed the land and allowed it to remain fallow for a year to sweeten, do you think you are likely to get settlers to take up that poor class of country if there is any better land available?" His answer was—"No, I do not." He was then asked—"Then it is a question of no other land being available before you can get settlement there?" He replied—"Yes, that is exactly the position."

18. Mr. Temple Smith, Chief Field Officer, Department of Agriculture, reported that the 30,000 acres of alienated land was the best in the district. About 8,000 acres at Newfield and at Cowley's, Port Campbell, and Kennedy's creeks were rich agricultural land, 10,000 were fair agricultural land suited for the production of cereals and grass, and 12,000 acres comprised hilly land of lighter soil adapted for fruit-growing and grazing. Of the 70,000 acres of Crown lands, outside of the timber and other reserves, over 40,000 were grass-tree plains, and the balance was heavily timbered land, growing stringybark and messmate, with thick scrub



as undergrowth. This land, he said, would cost from £7 to £25 per acre to clear. The soil is a light-grey loam, with a good clay bottom, and would be suitable for fruit-growing when cleared; portions would also grow hay and fair grass. This land is third class, and, though suitable for fruit-growing, would, in his opinion, not be selected freely. With a railway there would be an increase of production on the most fertile areas, but the expectation of any material increase of production on the bulk of the land within the railway area would, he considered, not be justified for many years to come.

19. In answering questions put by the Committee Mr. Temple Smith said—“I think there will be very little demand for the Crown lands in the Port Campbell district. There are many other places where people could get land which could be developed much more cheaply. . . . I would prefer the Portland heath country, where there are about 84,000 acres. . . . The timbered Crown lands in the Port Campbell district, which would cost from £7 to £25 an acre to clear, would not be worth anything like that sum when cleared.” He was asked—“Are there any possibilities of development by the utilization of the grass-tree plains for agricultural purposes?” He replied—“Hardly any at all. There might be odd patches suitable for agricultural purposes, but the balance is very poor sour country no good for agriculture.” He was questioned as to the possibilities of development by the construction of the proposed railway, and replied—“There are very little.” He added—“All that grass-tree plain country is really not fit to put a man on to make a living. The timbered country is so difficult of development that a man would starve for a great many years before he could get ahead at all.”

#### TIMBER RESERVES.

20. Mr. H. R. Mackay, Conservator of Forests, informed the Committee that there were several thousand acres of white stringybark and messmate timber on the ridges of the Crown lands to the east of Newfield, in the direction of Kennedy's Creek. It was a slow-growing, durable timber. The larger trees were suitable for saw-milling, and the smaller for splitting into fencing posts. Most of the good milling timber within reasonable carting distance of Timboon station had been cut out. An extension of the railway as far as Newfield would cause saw-millers to cut some of the milling timber he had referred to, and sell it for building purposes.

21. He, however, told the Committee that the Forests Department was about to have an area of 10,000 acres of the poorer country in the Parish of Waarre to the east of Newfield planted with pines, as there would in a few years be a shortage of soft woods throughout the world, and we must provide for our future supplies. The annual rainfall in the Port Campbell district was from 30 to 35 inches, and this was ample for the growth of pines. He considered the site selected a suitable one for such soft woods, and in that soil the trees should be fit for milling in thirty years or so.

#### VIEWS OF THE COMMITTEE.

22. The Committee is of opinion it would be a mistake to extend the Timboon railway to Port Campbell township. A railway to Newfield,  $5\frac{3}{4}$  miles in length, at an estimated cost of £27,000 would amply meet the requirements, and later on it could, if necessary, be extended eastward towards Kennedy's Creek, the route depending on the probable settlement and development of the country in that direction. But the Committee considers that railway extension to Newfield is not at present justified, nor is it likely to be for several years, because of the comparatively small area of settled country which would be served by it. The restricted gathering-ground for traffic makes it improbable that the railway would become a payable one even in twenty years. Until land for settlement in Victoria becomes so costly or difficult to obtain that the Government will be compelled by the circumstances then existing to turn its attention to draining, liming, and improving the Heytesbury grass-tree country and clearing the adjacent timbered ridges, so as to make these Crown lands suitable for occupation, there is little likelihood of these inferior lands being sought after. The Committee is satisfied that these improvements would cost at least £5 or £6 per acre, and even then there is no certainty that the soil would be brought into a friable condition, or that crops could be grown on the land without a liberal use of fertilizers. Therefore, while naturally better lands are obtainable or purchasable at a lesser outlay in the Mallee and elsewhere, there will be no inducement to settle on the Heytesbury Plains.

The proposal for a developmental railway there is consequently premature, and the Committee is of opinion that it is inexpedient to submit a motion to construct the proposed railway from Timboon to Port Campbell, or for the lesser distance to Newfield. The farmers at the latter place are within 7 or 8 miles of Timboon, and when the Country Roads Board makes the main road, and also the branch road from it to Timboon station, they, and also the farmers at Cowley's Creek, will have no difficulty in carting potatoes, oats, &c., to that station.

23. Had it been possible to run the afternoon train from Camperdown to 3 miles or so beyond Timboon, and for it to return to Camperdown in time to maintain the connexion with the "up" afternoon train from Warrnambool to Melbourne, the Committee would have recommended the extension of the Timboon railway to the Port Campbell-Camperdown main road, near the site formerly occupied by Goldstraw's mill. This would have removed the railway terminus from the hollow at Timboon and carried it about 3 miles nearer to Newfield and Port Campbell, and would have saved the proposed outlay of £6,750 by the Country Roads Board in making a new graded road from Timboon to the main road. But in view of the evidence of Mr. C. E. Norman, Chairman of the Railways Commissioners, that the afternoon train could not be run this extra short distance without incurring the risk of failing to make the connexion at Camperdown with the "up" afternoon train to Melbourne, the Committee had to abstain from recommending this 3-mile extension. The alternative was either to employ a second train and crew to operate that short extension, which would have been absurd, or to change the time of departure of the train from the afternoon to 5.40 a.m. or thereabouts. This would mean that visitors to Peterborough and Port Campbell would have to be astir at 4 a.m. or soon after so as to get breakfast and drive 8 or 9 miles to catch the train to Camperdown, Colac, Geelong, and Melbourne. As there would be but one train daily such early rising would be a hindrance to tourists' traffic. The Committee considers that the visitors to these coastal holiday resorts would prefer to have the afternoon train service, even though it involves 3 miles extra coach-travelling from and to Timboon station.

SAMUEL BARNES,  
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,  
State Parliament House,  
Melbourne, 18th December, 1916.

*[Minutes of Evidence are not printed.]*