

1926.

VICTORIA.

REPORT

FROM

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON RAILWAYS

ON THE PROPOSED

DARLING TO GLEN WAVERLEY RAILWAY ;

TOGETHER WITH

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE, BOOK OF REFERENCE, PLAN, AND
MAP.

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 16th December, 1926.

By Authority:

H. J. GREEN, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

RAILWAYS STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT No. 12—18466.—PRICE 6D.

REPORT.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS, to which the Legislative Assembly referred the question of constructing a 5-ft. 3-in. gauge railway from Darling to Glen Waverley, has the honour to report as follows :—

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE "GENERAL" REFERENCE.

1. The subject of railway communication with the district lying between the Camberwell to Ferntree Gully and the Oakleigh to Dandenong railway lines was referred to the Committee by the Legislative Assembly on the 11th December, 1924, as a general reference. On the 30th June, 1926, a report from the Committee was presented to Parliament giving a description of the district, particulars of a number of routes for the proposed railway, information regarding the subdivision of estates and proposed betterment rating, estimates of revenue and expenditure, and the views of the Committee on the various proposals. A recommendation was made that a line should be constructed from Darling to Glen Waverley for the purpose of serving this district.

GOLF LINKS AREA AT BAY VIEW-ROAD, BURWOOD.

2. The route recommended by the Committee in its "General" Report crossed the golf links area, adjoining Bay View-road, Burwood. No evidence had been offered by representatives of the Golf Club when the Committee visited the district on the preliminary or general inquiry, but later an opportunity was given for such evidence to be tendered, when witnesses suggested that the proposed route should be deviated in order to avoid the golf links. The Committee, however, has decided to adhere to its original intention as closely as the permanent survey will permit, and the line recommended will accordingly cross the golf links commencing at a point immediately opposite Salisbury-road and continue easterly across the links towards Glen Waverley.

REVISED COST OF CONSTRUCTION.

3. The estimated cost of construction as supplied to the Committee on the general reference by Mr. C. H. Perrin, Chief Engineer for Railway Construction, was £166,000, which has since been amended to £168,000. The original estimate was based on ruling grades of 1 in 40 both ways; under electric conditions, however, grades of 1 in 30 can be readily and economically negotiated, and provision has now accordingly been made for grades of this nature, resulting in less cost for earthworks. The amount of bridging required has, because of this and the slight variation found necessary on the permanent survey, been increased, 960 lineal feet now being necessary, with the result that these items approximately balance each other. The original cost also provided for 80-lb. rails, but in all recent relaying of electrified suburban lines the Railways Commissioners are replacing the 80-lb. rails with others weighing 90 lb. to the lineal yard, and the Committee has agreed that in these circumstances it will be preferable to lay the line at the commencement with 90-lb. steel rails; this item alone accounts almost wholly for the £2,000 increase in the cost of construction.

ROUTE RECOMMENDED.

4. The route which will be followed is one which leaves Darling station, utilizing portion of the existing unused line to a station site on the west side of Karnak-road (50 chains); the line then turns east and runs parallel with and just north of Waverley-road to the second station site at the junction of Batesford-road and Warragul-road (1 mile 60 chains); thence north-east, crossing Grandview-road and reaching Bay View-road at its intersection with Salisbury-road; thence to the third station site in the golf links area on the east side of Bay View-road (3 miles); thence practically due east with the fourth station site on the west side of Stevenson's-lane (4 miles), and the fifth station site on the east side of May's-road (5 miles 10 chains), with the terminal station site on the west side of Spring Vale-road, Glen Waverley (6 miles 8 chains). Having regard to construction costs, this route is as near as can be obtained with the permanent survey to the original route recommended by the Committee.

5. Although the terminal station will be on the west side of Spring Vale-road, at or near Crown Allotment 100, Parish of Mulgrave, a small area of land is to be obtained on the eastern side of Spring Vale-road, immediately opposite the terminal station, so that there may not be expensive shops to purchase and demolish in the event of an extension of the line being authorized at some future date. The line will be 6 miles 8 chains in length. It will utilize about half a mile of existing track on the unused Darling-Oakleigh line, and involve 5 miles 50 chains of new construction.

6. Approximately 10 chains of Salisbury-road at its southern end will be traversed by the proposed line, and it is intended to resume a small strip of land about 40 feet wide for road-diversion purposes on the northern side of Salisbury-road as it approaches and joins Bay View-road. The station to be erected on the golf links area will be used for crossing trains, and an island platform will be provided at the terminal station at Spring Vale-road. There will be no level crossings on the line. At the Warragul-road and Bay View-road crossings the railway will pass over the road; at Stevenson's-lane and Lawrence-road it will pass under the road; at May's-road it will pass over the road, while at the terminal station the site will be approximately level with and on the west side of the roadway.

BETTERMENT RATING PROVISIONS.

7. The Committee reiterates its view as to the necessity for a Betterment Tax, as outlined in its Report on the General Reference, viz. :—

“ A Betterment Rate has not previously been recommended for ordinary railway construction where private land is handed to the Government free of charge for the construction of the line; but, having regard to the great increase in land values which will be (and to an extent has already been) brought about in the district by the construction of this new suburban railway, the Committee has decided to recommend a maximum Betterment Rate of £10,000 per annum for five years, this sum to be devoted to reducing the estimated loss on the line. If the loss in any of the first five years should be less than £10,000, then the Betterment Rate will be abated accordingly, so as to reach only the loss for the year. This rate will be supplementary to the ordinary rate levied by the Railway Construction Trust for the purchase of the necessary land for the railway. The length of new line is 6 miles, and if the land for a distance of a mile back be regarded as served on each side of the railway, an area of 1,280 acres, less (on a liberal allowance) 280 acres for roads and reserves, leaves 1,000 acres served to the lineal mile of track, or a total of 6,000 acres benefited for the whole line. If the payments for the purchase of land amount to £50,000 instead of the £41,500 estimated, this, with the Betterment Rate total of £50,000, will mean that £100,000 will need to be raised from the holders of the 6,000 acres, representing a tax of £16 13s. 4d. per acre, or £4 3s. 4d. per quarter-acre allotment, which, on a frontage of 66 feet with a depth of 165 feet, would work out at approximately 1s. 3d. per foot frontage. A flat rate has been assumed merely for the purpose of showing what the average rate may be; but the rating authorities would probably vary the incidence of the tax, charging a higher rate on land close to stations than on that further distant from the line. It will be remembered also that the £50,000 Betterment Tax will be spread over a period of five years, while the Railway Construction Trust tax to make up a possible £50,000 for land compensation is usually spread over a period of from fifteen to twenty years.”

SUBDIVISION OF ESTATES.

8. There has been within recent years a great deal of subdivision in the district proposed to be served, and statistics taken out by the Traffic Officers of the Railway Department show the following summarized figures :—

Number of Estates	..	..	..	19
Number of Allotments	..	..	..	3,873
Number of Allotments sold	..	..	..	3,251
Number of Individual Owners	..	..	..	2,544

It will be observed that the proportion of individual owners is quite large, and it might be inferred that the provision of railway facilities would induce an early and extensive increase in residential settlement in the district. This would mean a decrease in the areas now used for primary production or their removal to more remote districts. At the same time there are, of course, in the district to be served a number of estates which have not yet been placed on the market for subdivisional purposes; but with the advent of railway facilities it is safe to assume that most of the land will be subdivided and made available for residential purposes.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL CHARGES AND REVENUE.

9. The Railways Commissioners furnished the Committee with the following revised estimates of annual charges and revenue of the proposed railway based on a service of 24 electric trains during week days, 11 electric trains on Sundays, and 3 steam goods trains weekly, viz. :—

DARLING TO GLEN WAVERLEY.

Annual Charges.

Interest at 5½ per cent. per annum on £217,657, being cost (£168,000) of constructing 6 miles of 5-ft. 3-in. railway from Darling to Glen Waverley, with £49,657 added for rolling-stock	£11,427
Working Expenses, Transportation and Traffic Branches	4,454
" " Way and Works Branch (Maintenance, &c.)	876
" " Electrical Engineer's Branch	3,700
" " Rolling-stock (Locomotive expenses, repairs, and renewals)	7,441
" " Signals and Telegraph Branch	300
General Expenses (Administration, Printing, Auditing, &c.)	1,343
	<hr/>
	£29,541

Revenue.

	On New Line.	On Other Lines from New Traffic from New Line.	
Passengers, 902,000 journeys	£5,879	£3,032	
Parcels	250		
Mails	20		
Class goods, 1,500 tons	218	51	
Fruit and vegetables, 2,150 tons	80	608	
Building materials, 1,000 tons	86		
Fruit case material, 900 tons	35		
Firewood, 1,000 tons	33		
Manures, 1,800 tons	88		
All other traffic	25		
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	£6,714	£3,691	£10,405
			<hr/>
Estimated loss first year of operation			£19,136

VIEWS OF THE COMMITTEE.

10. The Committee has given further consideration to this proposed line in the light of the revised figures submitted. It agrees that the provision of separate rail and road crossings at the time of construction of this or any other new suburban railway is desirable, and that, as all the relaying on electrified suburban lines is now being carried out with 90-lb. rails, it is better to incur the extra cost at the commencement than to lay the line with 80-lb. rails, which would soon need to be replaced with those of 90-lb. weight. The Committee accordingly approves of the increase of £2,000 in the construction cost due to these causes.

11. Further investigation by Mr. Perrin showed that over £1,000 would be saved by placing the Stevenson's-lane station on the west instead of the east side of that intersecting road, while at the terminus a slight curve is provided towards the south so as to render the line suitable for an extension towards Wheeler's Hill or adjacent districts at some future date. The Committee is in agreement with these proposals.

12. In its previous report the Committee expressed its disagreement with the method the Railways Commissioners employed in arriving at their estimates, viz., the running of fourteen six-car trains out of the 24 daily trains provided between Darling and Glen Waverley. If these fourteen trains were reduced at Darling and only two or four cars run to Glen Waverley and return a saving could be effected of approximately 150,000 car miles during the first year's operation, representing, at £125 per 1,000 car-miles, roughly £18,750, thus practically off-setting the total estimated loss and making the proposed line a paying one from the outset. Against this might conceivably be set a small debit for portion of a porter's time at Darling; but even this is questionable unless an employee were specially placed at Darling owing to this uncoupling and coupling work being necessary. Cars running beyond Darling could be regularly placed at the fore or rear end of the train and so placarded, and passengers would not then need to change cars at Darling.

13. The Committee is of opinion that the running of so many full six-car trains during the early period of the working of the line is as unfair to the line as it is unnecessary, resulting as it does in an unwarranted inflation of the operating and maintenance costs, and it again records its conviction that any claim against the Treasury for reimbursement of loss on this line should not be passed in full if it is based on unnecessary six-car trains. A comparison with the number of passengers carried will clearly indicate whether the cars provided have been grossly in excess of the number required to deal with the traffic.

14. The estimated loss of £19,000 is for the first year's operation, and will in any case be steadily and quickly lessened until the line is a paying one. The Committee, however, is of opinion that the initial loss will not prove as great as is anticipated if care is taken to keep down running costs, consistent with meeting the demands of the traffic. Moreover, the imposition of a Betterment Rate of £10,000 a year for five years will appreciably reduce whatever loss is incurred.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE.

15. The Committee, for the foregoing reasons, and particularly because it is of opinion that the estimated loss, calculated on an equitable basis, will be considerably less than the estimate of £19,136 supplied by the Railways Commissioners, recommends to Parliament that it is expedient to construct a railway from Darling to Glen Waverly on the route as outlined in paragraph 4 of this Report, and shown on the accompanying map, at an estimated cost of £168,000, with £49,657 added for rolling-stock, or a total of £217,657, provided that the land for the construction of the line be handed over to the Constructing Authority free of charge, and that an annual Betterment Rate be imposed to bring in a total maximum sum of £10,000 per annum for five years, with a view of reducing the estimated loss on the line; in the event of the loss in any of the first five years being less than £10,000 the Betterment Tax to be abated accordingly, so that no higher sum will be raised than the loss for that year.

16. Section 14 of the *Railways Standing Committee Act 1915* (No. 2717) prohibits a member of the Committee taking part in its proceedings when a proposed line through his electoral district is being considered; consequently, the Hon. A. E. Chandler, M.L.C., did not take part in the deliberations of the Committee when this question was being considered.

A. E. LIND,
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,
State Parliament House,
Melbourne, 16th December, 1926.

[*Minutes of Evidence &c., are not printed.*]

