

1929.

VICTORIA.

REPORT

FROM

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON RAILWAYS

ON THE QUESTION OF THE

MERINGUR RAILWAY EXTENSION
(MILLEWA DISTRICT);

TOGETHER WITH

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE, PLAN, AND MAP.

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 28th August, 1929

By Authority

H. J. GREEN, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, MELBOURNE.

RAILWAYS STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT No. 6.—[9D.]—10985.

EXTRACTED FROM THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 29TH AUGUST, 1928.

3. MERINGUR RAILWAY EXTENSION.—Motion made and question—That the question of connecting the district lying west of the Redcliffs to Meringur railway with the existing railway system by means of a 5-ft. 3-in. gauge railway be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways for inquiry and report (*Mr. Tunnecliffe*)—put and, after debate, agreed to.

MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS.

(*Sixteenth Committee.*)

* The Hon. A. BELL, M.L.C., Chairman.

The Hon. M. MCGREGOR, M.L.C., Vice-Chairman.

A. A. Dunstan, Esq., M.L.A.

A. E. Lind, Esq., M.L.A.

R. T. Pollard, Esq., M.L.A.

†The Hon. R. F. Toutcher, M.L.A.

* The Hon. A. Bell, M.L.C., was elected Chairman on 17th July, 1929, in succession to Mr. A. E. Lind, M.L.A.

† The Hon. R. F. Toutcher, M.L.A., was elected to the Committee on 16th July, 1929, in place of the Hon. H. Beardmore, M.L.A., who resigned upon being appointed an Honorary Minister of the Crown.

APPROXIMATE COST OF REPORT.

Printing (250 copies)

£ s. d.
15 0 0

REPORT

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS, to which the Legislative Assembly referred the question of connecting the district lying west of the Redcliffs to Meringur railway with the existing railway system by means of a 5-ft. 3-in. gauge railway, has the honour to report as follows :—

PREVIOUS REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE.

1. In December, 1923, an extension of the Redcliffs-Werrimull line to Meringur (then named The Hut) was recommended by the Committee, and in October, 1925, the line was opened for traffic. In July, 1925, the Committee investigated the question of serving the districts lying between the Ouyen to Mildura Railway and the South Australian border. At that time the Committee stated that while it was satisfied that the land in many portions of the area—

“ warrants settlement, with water and railway facilities, it would be unwise, in view of the only partially-settled state of the land adjoining the Werrimull line, and the lesser settlement still towards The Hut, . . . to extend further railways into this area at the present juncture, more especially as the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission does not anticipate being able to supply the necessary water and channels to the whole of the natural gathering ground for the Werrimull line until June, 1927.”

For those and other reasons, the Committee recommended—

“ . . . that at present no further railway extension be authorized into the districts lying between the Ouyen to Mildura railway and the South Australian border ; but at the same time the Committee wishes to record its conviction that the quality of the land to be served does warrant settlement and the provision of railway facilities, and it has accordingly made this a Progress Report, so that when water channels have been provided, and further settlement has followed the construction of the Werrimull-The Hut section, this proposal may be reconsidered, and a suitable route or routes selected for a railway or railways to serve the district.”

2. In December, 1927, the Committee reported further to Parliament upon this proposal, stating, *inter alia*—

“ The Committee wishes to stress the point that the recommendation in this inquiry would have included a westward extension from Meringur . . . were it not for the expediency of first obtaining a Joint Committee investigation.”

As no joint reference has been made, the Committee is finalizing in this Report the Reference made by Parliament on 29th August, 1928, of “ connecting the district lying west of the Redcliffs to Meringur railway with the existing railway system.”

DESCRIPTION OF DISTRICT.

3. The Meringur district lies in the north-western portion of the State, the Meringur railway station being 50 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles west of Redcliffs at the terminus of the Redcliffs-Werrimull line. That railway was completed to Werrimull and opened for traffic in April, 1924, and from Werrimull to The Hut (since renamed Meringur) during October, 1925. The country that would be served by an extension of the Meringur line is of the average mallee type, similar to that along the Werrimull line, for practically its full length of nearly 10 miles. On the southern side the parishes of Malloren, Tunart, and Warrimoo are perhaps a little lighter in the quality of the soil, while in the south-west, in the parishes of Nerick and Boorlee (and also north-westerly in Taparoo), it is intended to make a number of areas available for settlement in larger allotments than has hitherto been the practice, some of the blocks being intended for grazing purposes. The remainder are suitable for mixed farming with sheep and wheat.

4. Along the southern areas of the parishes of Karween and Morkalla, in the portions where settlers have not yet cleared the land, it is mostly timbered with mallee, a little Murray pine on the sand ridges, sandalwood, salt-bush, blue-bush, and cabbage-tree. In the northern portion the country is more of a slightly undulating nature, the soil being a sandy loam, with limestone in places.

RAILWAY LINE INDICATED ON LANDS DEPARTMENT SELECTION PLAN.

5. When the land in the parishes of Karween and Morkalla was thrown open for selection in 1925, the plan issued by the Lands Department indicating the location and areas of the respective allotments also showed a railway line through the southern portion of the parishes of Karween and Morkalla marked boldly—

REDCLIFFS AND MILLEWA NORTH RAILWAY,

with a Township Reserve in each parish for a railway station site. The land adjoining the route of the line at these township sites has been reserved for the purpose indicated, and it was stated in evidence by a number of settlers that they had no doubt when making application for their allotments that such a railway line was either in existence or was to be immediately provided.

6. The Committee examined Mr. W. McIver, Director of Land Settlement, on this matter, and was informed that the plan had been authorized by Mr. Lang, who was then Surveyor-General. Mr. C. H. Perrin, Chief Engineer for Railway Construction, had supplied to the Department at its request a plan showing the route of a trial survey which would be followed for a permanent survey. Although this did not at all involve the construction of a railway line, either on that or any other route, the position was apparently misunderstood by Mr. Lang or his officers, and the plan was issued with a railway line indicated and the misleading statement printed upon it—REDCLIFFS AND MILLEWA NORTH RAILWAY. Mr. McIver stated that he personally was of opinion that it should have been made clear that the line was only "proposed" or "suggested," and that he had given instructions that in future nothing of this nature should be put upon the plans without the approval of the permanent head and the Minister for the Department.

PROVISION FOR WATER SUPPLY.

7. A plan supplied to the Committee by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission shows that a number of water channels have been extended to Karween, Morkalla, and Tunart, and that in addition one channel serves portion of Warrimoo, and another the central portion of Taparoo. In the parish of Morkalla, four of the allotments (Nos. 4, 5, 8, and 9) are, however, too high for a gravitation service. Public tanks have been constructed on allotment No. 17, parish of Taparoo, and allotment No. 11, parish of Warrimoo, and have been filled from the channels which have been constructed there for the last three years.

8. It was stated that, following the allocation of allotments in the parishes of Warrimoo, Nerick, Boorlee, and Taparoo, channel extensions could be made to serve all the agricultural allotments, and water made available during the annual run from May to October. The Committee was informed by the Commission that it is not proposed to install the ironclad water catchment system in this portion of the county of Millewa, as the area can be served from the Millewa Waterworks District, the rate being 5s. in the £1 on the annual valuation for lands in the first division, with a minimum payment of 8d. per acre, or £21 6s. 8d. per square mile. Each settler must also construct a suitable tank and connecting channels at an estimated cost of £180.

DISTRICT RAINFALL STATISTICS.

9. The Committee obtained from Mr. H. A. Hunt, Commonwealth Meteorologist, a number of valuable graphs respecting the past and prospective rainfall in this and adjacent areas. Generally, they tend to indicate an average annual rainfall of about 10 to 11 inches in the district that would be served by a westward extension from Meringur to Morkalla. Of this total rainfall, 7 to 8 inches might be expected during the wheat-growing months from April to October, and of this amount it was stated that from 2 to 2½ inches would probably fall during August and September, and from 1 to 1½ inches during the month of June. It is also to be anticipated, according to Mr. Hunt, that in this district the annual rainfall once in three years will fall to between 8 and 9 inches, and once in five years it will fall to between 7 and 8 inches.

10. Information obtained by the Railways Commissioners shows that at Ned's Corner, on the River Murray, approximately 16 miles in a direct line north-easterly from Meringur, the rainfall for each of the past five years has been :—

Year.	Inches.
1924	9.82
1925	8.70
1926	10.33
1927	4.73
1928	11.35

or an annual average of nearly 9 inches. For other recording stations the information supplied to the Railways Commissioners by the Commonwealth Meteorologist was as follows :—

Recording Station.	Period of Record.		Average per year.
	Years.	Inches.	
Lake Victoria, New South Wales	10	9.31	
Tarleena, New South Wales	8	10.83	
Paringa, South Australia	6	8.26	
Taldra, South Australia	5	8.14	
Ned's Corner, Victoria	6	9.30	
Meringur, Victoria	1	11.36	

SETTLEMENT AND PRODUCTION PROSPECTS.

11. The views of Mr. W. McIver, Director of Land Settlement, and of Mr. A. E. Tobin, Surveyor-General, were obtained by the Committee upon this proposal. It was ascertained that no portion of the parishes of Warrimoo, Nerick, Boorlee, and Taparoo (which would be served by this extension) have yet been thrown open for selection. It is now proposed to enlarge the areas that had been tentatively decided upon. Mr. McIver, on 23rd August, 1929, stated—

“ It is expected that the surveys into larger areas in these parishes will be completed in about four months. Parts will be supplied with water by channels, and part by ironclad catchments. It is likely that the first wheat crops will be available in 1931-32.”

12. Dealing with the number of present settlers who would be benefited by the construction, a return was submitted showing that the number of lessees who are now over 10 miles from Meringur and who would be within 10 miles of either of the proposed stations at Karween or Morkalla is—

Parish of Morkalla	20
Parish of Karween	2
Parish of Tunart	4
Total	26

13. When all the areas are allotted in Taparoo, Boorlee, Nerick, and Warrimoo, approximately 70 settlers in those parishes would also be brought within 10 miles of a line, that number, however, being subject to a slight reduction consequent upon the intended enlargement of the blocks before applications are invited. It is estimated that the number of settlers who are at present within 10 miles of Meringur, but who would use the new stations at Karween and Morkalla in preference to Meringur, are :—

Parish of Karween	37
Parish of Tunart	40
Parish of Morkalla	24
Total	101

14. Regarding the prospective production, Mr. McIver is of opinion that an average yield might be expected of “ about 10 bushels per acre on well-cultivated fallow land after farms are

brought into a proper state of production." With further reference to the anticipated yield and the use that might be made of the land, he states—

"It is difficult to make accurate estimates of the probable yield in this country, although the rainfall maps indicate that the average yield must be low. It is necessary, if the best is to be obtained from running sheep on the blocks, that there should be a considerable amount of cultivation carried out. The blocks should be used for the dual purpose of sheep and wheat."

Mr. McIver added that in respect to the parishes of Warrimoo, Nerick, Boorlee, and Taparoo "it is intended to make the areas available, even if the line be not extended."

15. It will be noted, in relation to the provision of a water supply, that although the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission expects to command by channels the whole of the area to be served, with the exception of blocks 4, 5, 8, and 9, in the parish of Morkalla, Mr. McIver considers that it will be necessary to supply portion of the area with water by means of the ironclad catchment system. On this point Mr. Tobin, Surveyor-General, who estimates that 53 per cent. of the land in the parishes of Warrimoo, Nerick, Boorlee, and Taparoo would be fit for wheat-growing, says—

"The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission by letter dated 22nd December, 1926, stated 'that a water supply can be provided to the parishes mentioned, and that the usual loading of £127 10s. per allotment, in addition to the Crown Lands Improvement amount of 3s. per acre, will be sufficient.' It was also mentioned that channels already traverse portion of these parishes.

In a letter dated 26th June, 1929, the Commission stated that it 'would be unable to undertake channel water supply to agricultural and grazing allotments in these parishes of over 1,500 acres, classed 4 and 4A, or to agricultural allotments which may be isolated.'"

Mr. Tobin adds that, as large areas in the parishes of Taparoo, Boorlee, and Nerick have recently been re-subdivided into allotments ranging from 1,500 to 3,521 acres, it seems probable that the Commission may abandon the extension of the channel system and substitute artificial catchments.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS.

16. The Committee heard evidence at Meringur from a number of settlers, some of whom are carting approximately 20 miles to the Meringur railway station. Mr. F. D. Heittmann, President of the Meringur-Morkalla Railway Extension League, stated in evidence that the League represented the majority of the settlers in the parishes of Tunart, Karween, and Morkalla, and that they favoured an extension along the route of the original survey shown on the Lands Department plan at the time the blocks were allotted.

17. Mr. R. E. Wilson, Karween, representing the Pine Tank Progress Association, said that a majority of the settlers represented on that association favoured a deviation from the route suggested by Mr. Heittmann. They preferred a route along the original survey as far as the proposed Karween siding, then turning in a north-westerly direction to a terminal point between block 18, Morkalla, and block 21, Karween, adjoining Pine Tank. The object of making this proposed deviation was to serve the Olney district, and though it would mean longer carting from the southern portion of Warrimoo, there were as yet no settlers there. For the 1928-9 wheat season he had obtained only 230 bags from 130 acres. The average return that the man adjoining him had received was about $1\frac{1}{2}$ bags to the acre. In another case, however, on block 4, Morkalla, the settler had taken 1,300 bags of wheat and 50 tons of hay from 400 acres. The difference in the yield would in some cases be caused, apart from natural differences in the soil and its treatment, by a patchiness in the rainfall at the critical periods.

18. Other witnesses contended that on the route north-westerly from Karween to Pine Tanks there would be seven or eight heavy sand ridges to cross, whereas a direct westerly extension along the route of the original survey offered a materially better track in this respect. The main current of opinion was that the illustration of a line on the Lands Department plan used for application and selection purposes was in effect a promise by a Government Department, and that that promise should have been honoured when the settlers took up their blocks.

ESTIMATED LENGTH AND COST OF CONSTRUCTION.

19. Mr. C. H. Perrin, Chief Engineer for Railway Construction, furnished the Committee with an estimate of the cost for an extension from Meringur to Morkalla, along the route of the original survey, as marked on the Lands Department plan, a distance of 9 miles 52 chains, the details of the estimated total cost of £47,500 being as follow :—

APPROXIMATE ESTIMATE OF COST OF PROPOSED MERINGUR TO MORKALLA RAILWAY, 9 miles 52 chains in length, 5-ft. 3-in. gauge. Ruling gradient, 1 in 75, with 1 in 50 momentum grades. Sharpest curve, 60 chains radius. In a country district. Based on rate of 15s. per day for labourers.

For Light Traffic.	Permanent Survey.			
Description of Work.	Total Cost.	Rate per mile.		
	£	£		
Preliminary expenses and surveys (not including past expenditure)	200	21		
Clearing and grubbing 9.65 miles at £57	550	57		
Fencing at stations only, 2.5 miles at £65	160	..		
Cattle guards, gates, notice posts, &c.	260	44		
Earthworks in cuttings, 13-ft. 6-in. formation width; for main line, 16,600 cubic yards at 2s. 4d.	1,940	..		
Earthworks in side and back cuttings for main line, drains and creek diversions, 16,700 cubic yards at 1s. 9d.	1,460	..		
Earthworks in widening out for stations and in road approaches, 8,400 cubic yards at 3s. 2d.	1,330	490		
Bridges over W.S. Channel	200	..		
Timber culverts, 810 cubic feet at 6s.	240	..		
Brick, stone, and concrete culverts	110	57		
Metalling and gravelling in stations and road crossings, 740 cubic yards at 8s.	300	..		
Ballast, 4 inches thick, sand and limestone, 8,200 cubic yards at 6s.	2,460	286		
Sleepers, 8 ft. 6 in. x 9 in. x 4½ in., 23, 100 at 6s. 8d.	7,700	798		
Permanent Way Material	{	Main line and sidings, new 60-lb. rails, 10.25 miles at £1,400	14,350	..
		Points and crossings	420	..
		Railway freight	1,430	..
		Laying Permanent way	1,850	..
Terminal station; buildings, platforms, cranes, &c.	450	..		
Roadside stations; buildings, platforms, &c., 1 at	140	..		
Residences for employees, 1 at	700	..		
Signals and safety appliances	300	..		
Additions to junction station, including signals and interlocking	270	193		
Reversing triangle (removed from Meringur); also new ashpit and temporary coal stage	650	..		
Water supplies, 1 at	850	155		
Telegraph, 9.65 miles at £130	1,250	130		
Improved conditions for workmen	1,500	155		
Tools and plant—2½ per cent.	1,030	107		
Engineering, supervision, and general expenses, 7½ per cent.	3,150	326		
	45,250			
Provision 5 per cent. for unforeseen contingencies	2,250			
Total	£47,500			

£4,920 per mile, exclusive of land and rolling-stock.

If serviceable rails become available the cost will be reduced by about £450 per mile.

TRAFFIC OFFICER'S REPORT.

20. Mr. J. H. Olsson, Chief Special Officer of the Railway Department, has submitted a report on this proposal in which it is stated that an area of approximately 226,900 acres (including roads and reserves) would be served by the proposed railway. Of this area 173,000 acres would be within 10 miles of the proposed line. The parishes of Karween, Morkalla, and Tunart are

already settled, while the parishes of Warrimoo, Nerick, Boorlee, and Taparoo have been tentatively subdivided by the Surveyor-General after consultation with the Director of Land Settlement, but actual settlement has not yet taken place. An area of 18,000 acres to the north of the parishes of Karween, Morkalla, and Taparoo, and within a radius of 10 miles of the proposed extension has not yet been subdivided, nor has a further area of 17,900 acres outside a radius of 10 miles, but within 12 miles of the proposed extension, and lying to the north of the area of 18,000 acres above mentioned.

21. The distance from the proposed terminus at Morkalla to the South Australian railway line running parallel with the Border to Paringa is approximately 19 miles, and portion of the area which has been regarded as tributary to the Morkalla extension would be within 5 to 7 miles of the South Australian line. The number of holdings on which the traffic estimates were based, together with the respective areas to be served, are as under :—

Description.	No. of Blocks.	Acres.	Average Area per Block.
Already settled	88	78,893	896
Subdivided, but not settled	98	119,000	1,214
Not yet subdivided (approximately)	18	18,000	1,000
	204	215,893	1,058

22. The nature of the country to be served is regarded as similar to that along the Redcliffs-Meringur railway, which was opened for traffic to Werrimull in April, 1924, and to Meringur in October, 1925. Since the opening of this line it is stated that several bad seasons have been experienced, and statistics extracted from information supplied by the Government Statist disclosed that in the four seasons ending 1928-9 the area sown by 178 settlers in the five parishes averaged 188 acres under wheat for an average production of 1.55 bags, or 4.65 bushels. Mr. Olsson added—

“ While the soil in the Morkalla district is very suitable for wheat production, it cannot be disregarded that the uncertain rainfall militates against high average yields, and in view of this possibility the traffic estimates have been based on an average area of 200 acres per holding under crop each year, with an average yield of $6\frac{1}{2}$ bushels, of which $5\frac{1}{2}$ bushels would be available for transport by rail and 1 bushel retained for seed purposes.”

ESTIMATED ANNUAL CHARGES AND REVENUE.

23. The Railways Commissioners furnished the Committee with figures showing the prospective annual charges and revenue of the proposed railway based on a service of a goods train with a passenger car attached, running twice weekly. The estimates are as under :—

MERINGUR TO MORKALLA.

Annual Charges.

Interest at $5\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. per annum on £49,020, being cost (£47,500) of constructing 9 miles 52 chains of 5-ft. 3-in. railway from Meringur to Morkalla, with £1,520 added for rolling-stock	£2,574
Working Expenses, Transportation and Traffic Branches	250
Working Expenses, Way and Works Branch (Maintenance, &c.)	1,170
Working Expenses, Rolling-stock (Locomotive expenses, repairs, and renewals)	694
General Expenses (Administration, Printing, Auditing, &c.)	53
	<u>£4,741</u>

Revenue.

	On New Line.	On Other Lines from New Traffic from New Lines.	
Passengers, 1,400 journeys	£83	£150	
Parcels	20	..	
Mails	10	..	
Live stock	7	13	
Class goods, 750 tons	78	454	
Building materials, 200 tons	16	..	
Cornsacks, 80 tons	5	..	
Firewood, 500 tons	22	65	
Grain, 6,000 tons	110	2,096	
Manures, 750 tons	10	..	
All other traffic	25	..	
	<u>£386</u>	<u>£2,778</u>	<u>3,164</u>

Estimated Loss first year of operation £1,577

VIEWS OF THE COMMITTEE.

24. The Committee has recently inspected this district and heard local evidence on the proposal. It has also examined at length the railway officers responsible for the traffic estimates of revenue and expenditure, and has obtained the views of a number of departmental heads on various phases of the matter. It is considered that the railway estimates of revenue have been calculated upon a sound basis, with normal seasons, and that the provision for working expenses is not excessive.

25. A little delay has occurred in dealing with this proposal because the Committee has been anxious to see if there were any likelihood of an investigation being made jointly with the South Australian Committee of Public Works, as was recommended in its report to Parliament in December, 1927. It is understood that the Victorian Government has recently communicated with the Government of South Australia on this matter, but that no reply has been received, and in view of the length of time that has elapsed since this matter was first considered, the Committee is of opinion that finality should now be reached as far as this particular section of line is concerned.

26. An exceptionally strong reason urged by the settlers in support of this extension was that misleading information had been placed before them on the Lands Department plan inviting applications for the allotments. While the Committee is dealing with this proposal on its merits, it is felt that there is a strong moral, if not legal, claim for the construction of the line because of this factor alone. A further point that has weighed with the Committee in arriving at its decision is that this line will serve many settlers whose blocks are already cleared and cultivated as contrasted with a line opening up entirely new country,

27. The nature of the country to be served is similar to that along the Redcliffs-Werrimull line, and it is considered that with ordinary seasons, and with the natural improvement of the soil under cultivation as the years advance, both that line and this will prove profitable ventures. It is obviously unjust to judge the permanent prospects of a district by its temporary depression when passing through an exceptionally long dry period; in this section of country there was a drought last year and there will quite likely be another for the coming season. With a return of normal seasons, however, there is no need to be apprehensive as to the progress that will be made, and the Committee feels that it can safely and on a sound basis look beyond the comparative failure of a dry season in this district to a better and more prosperous future.

28. It is expected also that the application of ordinary common-sense methods will bring about such co-operation and co-ordination as are necessary between the Lands Department, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, and the Railway Construction Branch so as to ensure that land settlement and the provision of water and railway facilities will advance simultaneously in this area, thus avoiding such economic and financial waste as is now being incurred in connexion with the Nowingi to Millewa South Railway.

29. The estimated loss on this proposed line is £1,577. In this respect a comparison may be made with the Redcliffs-Werrimull and the Werrimull-Meringur sections of line, which have since the dates of opening shown the following results, viz. :—

Year ending 28th February.	Revenue.	Working Expenses.	Interest.	Loss.
<u>Redcliffs-Werrimull—</u>				
	£	£	£	£
1925*	3,934	4,543	6,450	7,059
1926	5,181	5,577	6,938	7,334
1927	11,087	5,974	7,012	1,899
1928	7,114	6,647	7,063	6,196
1929	11,041	8,113	7,200	4,272
<u>Werrimull-Meringur—</u>				
1926*	113	622	1,118	1,627
1927	1,139	1,855	3,210	3,926
1928	1,249	3,173	3,234	5,158
1929	2,690	2,910	3,278	3,498

* Open for portion of the year only.

30. It will be observed that with a fair average season the revenue may be expected to meet the working expenses on the Redcliffs-Werrimull line. With an exceptionally good season as in 1927, that section almost provided for the full interest charge as well, and that in only its third year of operation. The Committee feels, however, that in order to put the construction of this

proposed line on a more favorable financial foundation, it is advisable that assistance should be given so that the interest load may be materially lessened. A recommendation is therefore being made that of the total cost for line and rolling-stock of £49,020, an amount of £29,020 be provided from the Developmental Railways Account as a free gift, leaving only £20,000 on which interest will be charged to the line. This amount of £29,020 at 5½ per cent. represents £1,523, and the result is that whereas there was under the proposal that the line should bear the full interest charge an—

Estimated loss of £1,577

there will now be an—

Estimated loss of £54

or in other words this gift from the Developmental Railways Account will have the effect, in a normal season, of practically squaring the ledger. It is to be remembered also that these figures relate to the first year's operation only, and it may confidently be expected that as the years go on and the land in the district is brought to a higher state of productiveness, the financial position of the line will show a corresponding betterment.

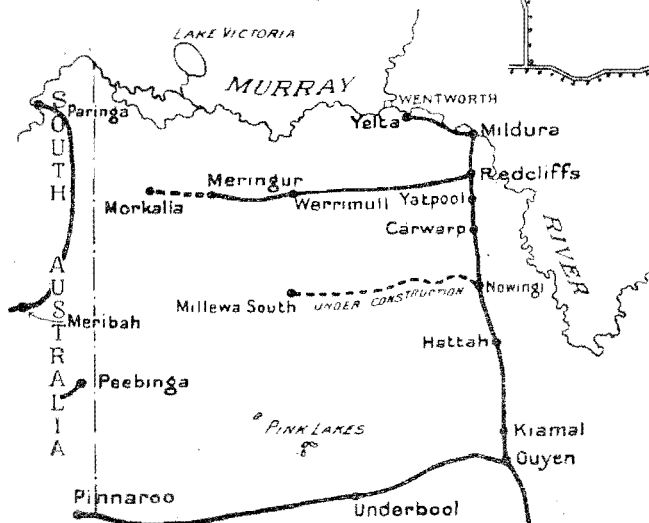
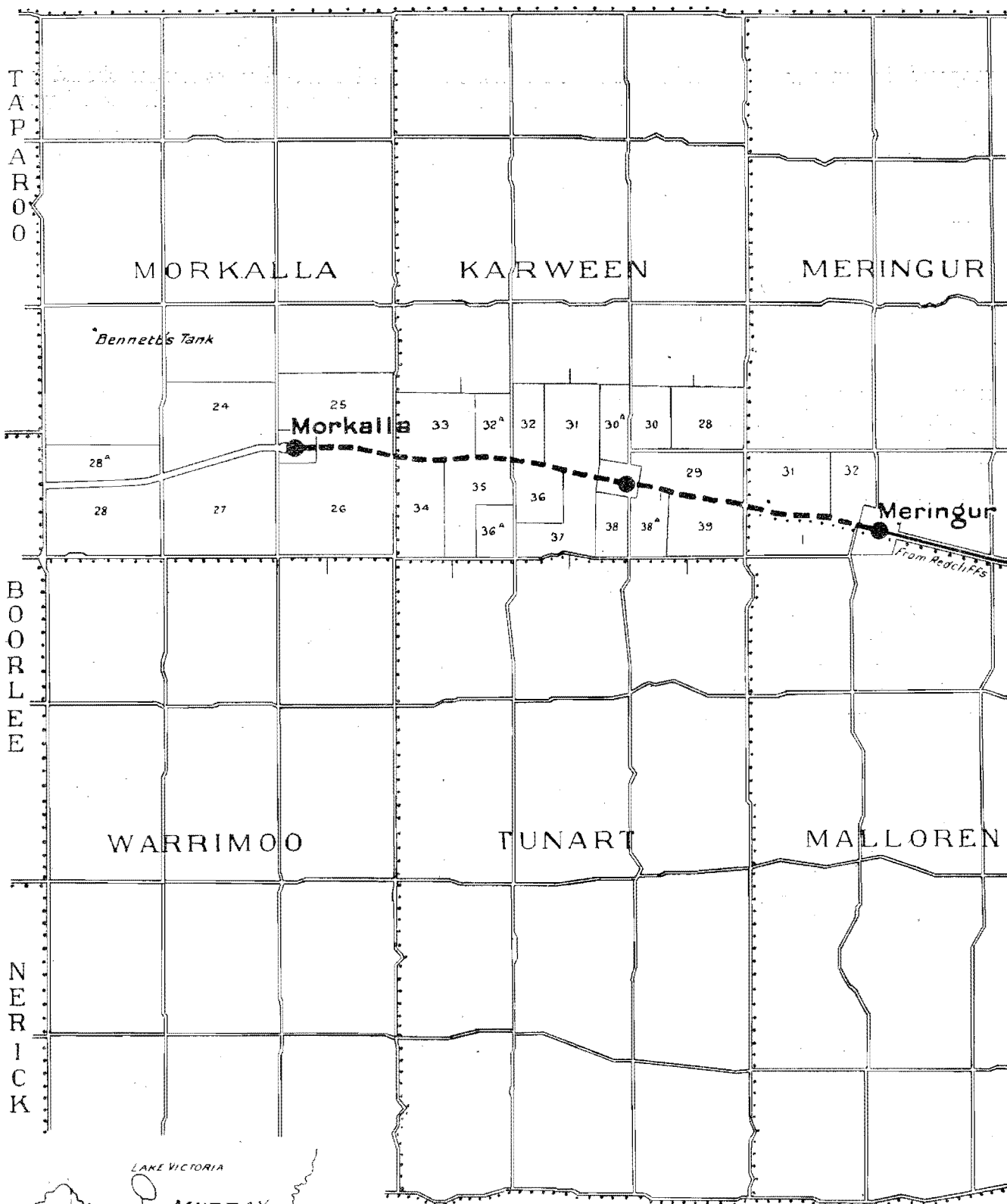
RECOMMENDATION.

31. The Committee for the foregoing reasons recommends that it is expedient to construct a railway line on the 5-ft. 3-in. gauge from Meringur to Morkalla, a distance of approximately 9 miles 52 chains, along the route of the permanent survey, and terminating between Blocks 25 and 26 in the parish of Morkalla, at an estimated cost of £49,020 for the line and rolling-stock, provided that a free gift of £29,020 is made from the Developmental Railways Account, so that interest will not be charged against the line on a higher amount than £20,000.

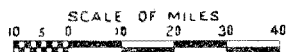
ALEXANDER BELL,
Chairman.

Railways Standing Committee Room,
Parliament House,
Melbourne, 22nd August, 1929.

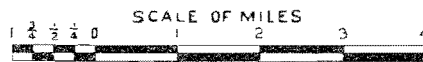
(Minutes of Evidence and Plan are not printed.)



—LOCALITY PLAN—



—MILLEWA RAILWAYS—



- SUGGESTED RAILWAY ————
- ROADS = = = =
- PARISH BOUNDARIES
- EXISTING RAILWAYS ————

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION BRANCH
APRIL 1929