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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

RAILWAY FROM CORNERS TO ST. MARY'S:

REPORT OF ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF.

Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands, and ordered by the House to be printed, July 26, 1881.



Lands and Works Office, Hobart, 25th June, 1881.

MEMORANDUM.

THE Engineer-in-Chief will be good enough to proceed without delay and examine the country between the Railway Station at the Corners and St. Mary's (*via* Avoca and Fingal), with a view to ascertaining by means of a flying survey the practicability of the construction of a line of Railway on a 3 feet 6 inch gauge; also furnishing an approximate estimate of the cost per mile, with a description of the country as to gradients and route, and such other information as he may consider desirable that the Government should be placed in possession of.

C. O'REILLY, *Minister of Lands and Works.*

JAMES FINCHAM, *Esq., C.E.,*
Engineer-in-Chief, Hobart.

Lands and Works Office, Hobart, 19th July, 1881.

SIR,

As instructed by your letter of the 25th ultimo, I have now the honor to submit a Report upon the suggested line of Railway between the Corners Station of the Main Line Railway and St. Mary's.

The length would be about 45 miles, and the works generally of a light character.

The approximate cost for works, viz.—clearing, fencing, ditching, excavation and forming, culverts, floodways; bridges over Stony Creek, St. Paul's River, and Break-o'-Day River; road deviations, permanent way (with 40lb. steel rails, ballast, 9ft. x 1ft. 6in., and 9in. x 5in. sleepers); station yards and buildings at Corners, Llewellyn, Avoca, Fingal, and St. Mary's; accommodation works, as sheep-creeps, level-crossings, &c.; crossings of main or public roads, with gatekeepers' cottages, line of telegraphs, signals, preliminary and contract surveys, engineering, inspection, and clerical and drafting work, will not exceed an average of £3300 per mile. Further cost will be incurred in the purchase and conveyance of land and in the equipment of the Railway.

As to the land, the total quantity required for line, stations, ballast-pits, &c. may be taken at 400 acres, some of which, I understand, would be given free by the proprietors: but allowing for this, the probable cost of conveyance, compensation to lessees and tenants, negotiations for and purchase of other land, and legal expenses, may be taken roughly at from £8000 to £10,000.

There are so many questions that affect the cost of equipment that I am unable at present to offer any decided opinion; but I have no doubt but that works, land, and stock can be provided for at a rate not exceeding £4000 per mile.

General Description.

The Railway would pass chiefly through sheep country more or less cleared, intersects but an insignificant quantity of cultivated land, and would divide the town allotments at Fingal in a favourable manner. The gradients, on the whole, are very easy, and the steeper portions will be in short lengths.

I have preferred the south-eastern side of the South Esk River throughout, as bringing the Railway nearer to centres of population, necessitating fewer crossings of large creeks, and avoiding expensive bridges crossing and re-crossing the above-named river.

Route.

The Railway would commence by a junction with the Main Line Railway, at a short distance to northward of the Corners Station; and, after crossing the Launceston Road, would pass along a high level and gravelly ridge until the main (Fingal) road was reached at the top of the Red Hill,

near western boundary of Douglas Park, descending then to the lower lands adjoining the old Launceston Road, and by a nearly level line past Mr. Badkin's house, and along the high stony ground above main road until Llewellyn (Stony Creek) is reached in a cutting some 10 or 12 feet deep, opposite the "Llewellyn Hotel"; and a short steep grade to the bridge over creek, a few chains above road bridge, will then limit considerably the cost of crossing the gully here.

From Llewellyn the line would be close to the main road until near the boundary of East Selma estate (Mr. C. Parker), when a divergence would be made to avoid broken ground and cultivated land, and to keep a level line at foot of the hills, which can be continued on very easy country all the way to the shepherd's hut at "Rockford," about one mile from Avoca. The St. Paul's River would be crossed at this place, which is an excellent site for the bridge.

From the St. Paul's River at Rockford the line would pass through easy undulating bush land past back of Gilligan's, and then keep the high level still through the rough broken ground on Ormley, crossing to north side of main road not far from Mr. Page's coach stable, and thence along road till Fingal is reached.

On this section the principal difficulties are the broken ground on Ormley, the Vinegar Hill on Tullochgorum, and the provision for the enormous quantities of flood-water that are occasionally discharged after long-continued rain from the eastward.

At Fingal, after an examination of three alternative routes I decided that it would be best to take the line along margin of the flooded ground between the main street (Talbot-street) and the South Esk River.

From Fingal to St. Mary's, country is of more favourable character than on last section, and line continues north of road through Malahide Estate, crosses Break-o'-Day River at Killymoon just above road bridge, and thence along northern side of road to Township of St. Mary's; the Break-o'-Day Bridge and some rough ground near being the only parts that call for any remarks.

Plenty of good gravel ballast will be obtained along course of line, as well as blue gum and peppermint timber; the latter especially will be valuable for fence posts and sleepers.

The Mount Nicholas coal seam is some 4 miles from St. Mary's, and has been opened at a level of 550 feet above the road. The Fingal seam near back of township is opened at about the same level above Fingal, and coal could be delivered on the Railway without difficulty from both mines.

In conclusion, I desire to acknowledge the assistance given me by Mr. James Grant, whose valuable local knowledge materially lessened my work of examination.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

JAMES FINCHAM, *Engineer-in-Chief.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.