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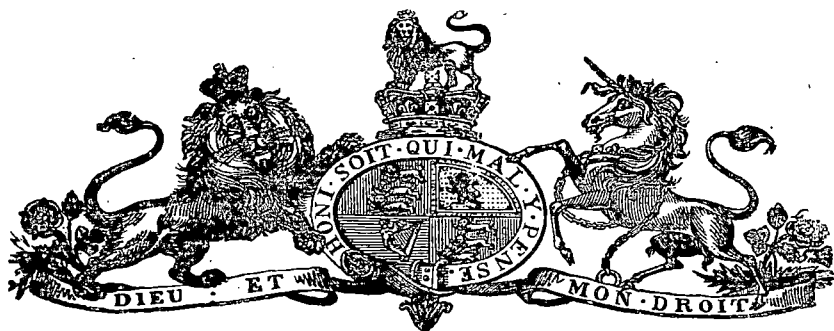
1890.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

EXTENSION OF WESTERN LINE RAILWAY
TO WYNYARD :

REPORT BY GENERAL MANAGER GOVERNMENT
RAILWAYS.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency's Command.



EXTENSION OF WESTERN LINE RAILWAY TO WYNYARD.

*Tasmanian Government Railways, General Manager's Office,
Launceston, 31st March, 1890.*

SIR,

IN accordance with your instructions of the 20th ultimo, to inspect the country from Ulverstone as far as Wynyard (Table Cape), and to report upon a proposal to extend the Western Line to the latter place, I have the honor to state that, at the earliest moment my duties would permit, I visited the district referred to, and made an exhaustive examination of the country.

My examination included the country from Ulverstone to Table Cape, and embraced the Blythe, Emu Bay, the Cam, Stowport, Mount Hicks, Flowerdale, and Boat Harbour, besides a day's ride over a number of the Van Diemen's Land Company's farms inland from Emu Bay.

From a railway point of view, I was pleased and surprised to find such a prosperous and settled district.

A very large area of land is under cultivation, adjacent to which is a considerable area in the course of being cleared. Beyond this, again, a number of sections have been selected, but, owing to insufficient means of transport, the owners have not commenced to effect improvements.

I am of opinion that no district in the Colony with which I am acquainted offers greater inducements for railway construction than that I am now dealing with.

Were a line constructed from Table Cape to Emu Bay I believe that it would pay working expenses at once; and for reasons which I will refer to presently, I have no doubt that in a very few years it would return a considerable sum towards meeting the interest on the cost of construction.

A railway from Emu Bay to Table Cape (probably the terminus would be on the Flowerdale Road) would save the growers of produce and the shippers of timber from four (4s.) to seven (7s.) a ton in the cost of transport. This in itself would be a profit to the producer.

If the present cultivated land were afforded railway facilities, the area of good land beyond, by no means a small one, would at once be brought into cultivation, and the production of the district would be materially increased.

In conjunction with this Section of the Line, I think it would be wise to include the construction of the Section between Ulverstone and Emu Bay, taking the inland route from Ulverstone to Penguin.

This important addition to the Western Line would cause a general improvement in the receipts of the whole line. It would materially increase production and enhance the value of land, bringing into occupation land which would not be otherwise cleared. A considerable impetus would also be given to the export of timber to the Australian Colonies.

With regard to the inland route which I rode over, I think it will be found cheaper in maintenance, and possibly in construction, than the route proposed along the sea shore. It will be a convenience to occupiers of land across the Myrtle Creek, and unquestionably would meet the wishes of the residents and owners of land at the Penguin.

I deem it advisable to touch upon the matter of small ports and harbours in this connection, as from my point of view there is apparently some misapprehension in this matter. The construction of small ports at Table Cape, Penguin, and Ulverstone will not afford producers the saving which would be effected by railway communication to Emu Bay and Formby.

In the first place, if the harbours are only so improved as to allow of better transshipping facilities than at present, no appreciable saving will be found in cost of transport. If the harbours are improved to an extent sufficient to admit of intercolonial boats, such as the *Corinna*, loading, still the benefit to the district will not be equal to railway communication.

If the latter contingency were provided for, and I take it the country cannot afford the expense, the steamers could not spare the time to go round from port to port to pick up a freight without making adequate charges.

The tendency of trade is to concentrate at the most convenient points of shipment produce in bulk to await shipment. Buyers will bring this about in their own interests. Railway and storage facilities will result in an increased price going directly into the pockets of producers.

In conclusion, I have no hesitation in recommending for your consideration the further construction of the Western Line to Table Cape.

I wish to be permitted to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Hon. William Moore and Mr. Norton Smith for the kindness and assistance they extended to me during my stay in the district.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

FRED. BACK, *General Manager.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.