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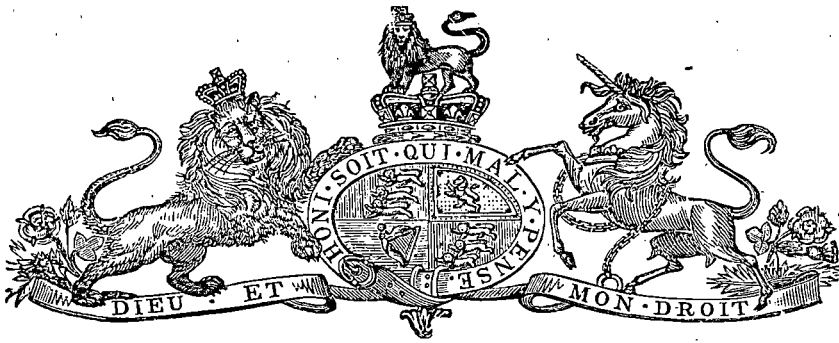
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

THE GREAT MIDLAND AND WEST COAST
RAILWAY BILL, (PRIVATE):

FURTHER REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS.

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GREAT MIDLAND AND WEST COAST RAILWAY BILL.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HON. MINISTER OF RAILWAYS.

*Tasmanian Government Railways,
General Manager's Office, Hobart, 18th August, 1899.*

I DEEM it expedient to reply to the many criticisms which have been written on my report to you on the above subject under date 21st ultimo.

In reporting to you I stated that the information obtained by recent surveys and examinations of the country enabled me to show on the chart *the possible*, and indeed *the probable*, country through which the Great Midland Railway would be constructed should the Bill pass.

I did not, as you will perceive, state positively that the route sketched on the chart would be the one that would be adopted by the Company, but that it was a possible route. *Possible* because the recent surveys—indeed I think the only accurate surveys of portions of the district—shew that the route which I have indicated will be the one most easy of construction, and the *probable* route, because it will enable the promoters to select the most valuable land available.

The Chamber of Commerce in Launceston has discussed this matter, and the *Launceston Examiner*, in addition to two leading articles, published nearly a column of criticism on what it is pleased to describe as alleged inaccuracies.

The *Examiner* seems to have built up its criticisms on the statements of a gentleman named Hinman. Mr. Hinman stated that I was wrong in my distances, that I had set down the distance between the two lines on the Middlesex Plains as only two miles, whilst he (Mr. Hinman) had been on the spot, and could assure the Chamber that a straight line between the two points would not be less than seven miles, and ten or twelve miles if one had to walk them.

Now, it may be reasonably asked—on what did Mr. Hinman base his assumption? What two lines did he refer to? First, I may remark the Great Midland Company has not forwarded any plan of the line; nor, so far as I can learn, have they had a survey made: secondly, the chart of the country as surveyed by Mr. Reynolds had not been available to Mr. Hinman at the time he spoke, being in my office.

By the light of the recent survey made by Mr. Reynolds, two competent engineers in the Government Service have carefully checked my figures, and entirely bear out all that I have written, namely, that it is possible for the Company to construct a line under the proposed Bill which need not at some point be more than one mile from the proposed Government Line from Barrington or Sheffield to Rosebery, and that the distances I have indicated in my report are practically correct.

Without surveys, Mr. Hinman, the Launceston Chamber of Commerce, and other critics, are not in a position to controvert my statement. The printed charts of the country to which the public have access are more or less incorrect in detail. The charts of the country inland from the North Coast, more particularly as one travels westward, are inaccurate, as many of the principal features have been merely sketched in. No actual survey of the country has been made. For instance, from the longitude of Sheffield to the northern boundary of the Middlesex block the distance given on the eight miles to one inch map is 9 miles; on the county map it is ten miles; by Mr. Reynolds' survey it is ten and three-quarter miles. Mr. Reynolds shows Mt. Black to be one mile further north than shown on the Charts, and Mt. Murchison about two miles further to the north-east, whilst the Brougham River, which is shown in the maps, does not appear by Mr. Reynolds' survey to have any existence. Mr. Reynolds' survey shows streams and peaks which have not been charted, and generally gives us an opportunity of locating the probable line with far greater

accuracy than any of the previously-published charts or maps. I attach the memorandum of the two engineers who have compared Mr. Reynolds' survey with the charts and plans, and you will observe that they thoroughly bear out my statements.

Whatever route is chosen for the Great Midland Railway, if the line from Barrington to Sheffield is constructed a considerable portion of the traffic of that line will be affected, should the Great Midland Line terminate at or near Rosebery. The two lines will form a triangle, having for its base the Western line, and its apex Rosebery, or thereabouts—thus the traffic would split at the apex of the triangle, and be carried down both its sides. Further consideration confirms me in the correctness of my previous report.

In joining together the several sheets of county maps in order to have them reduced collectively by photography, it was found impossible to do so accurately, for the reason that certain features, such as rivers, mountains, and blocks of land, when shown on more than one of the sheets considerably overlapped the same features of one of the other sheets. In other cases their positions would have been duplicated owing to the inaccuracies of location, for reasons already explained.

Reference has been made to Stewart's survey, and I read since I wrote on the 21st ultimo, that the syndicate propose to adopt that route. It may be remembered that Mr. Stewart did not carry his survey through to Zeehan, but stopped short at Mount Pelion, a little better than half the distance. Innes' route has been mentioned, but the gradients shown by Mr. Innes put his track out of the bounds of probability as a railway route.

If my often-repeated advice were taken in dealing with private lines, viz., that a plan of the proposed line should be deposited with the Bill, much trouble and controversy would be avoided.

Now as to the criticisms I am replying to on a possible route for the Midland Railway. The Bill asks for powers to construct a railway between two points, and if such power be granted, the line may meander half over Tasmania, provided it terminate at the two given points. Hence, as matters stand at present, all criticisms on my report are based on hypothesis, and not on facts.

It is being advanced in favour of syndicate lines that they pay better than Government lines. I grant this, but the dividends are made at the cost of the public. Take for example the Waratah line—a private line 48 miles in length. The cost of a ton of flour or meat conveyed over this line from Burnie to Waratah is, or was a few weeks ago, £3. On the Government lines the same service is performed for 18s. for meat, and 12s. for flour (less in truck loads) and other charges bear a similar comparison.

The Surveyor-General has read this paper, and authorises me to say he endorses my remarks as to surveys.

FREDK. BACK, *General Manager.*

[COPY.]

August 15th, 1899.

G. H. EDWARDS, Esq.

Re Charts accompanying General Manager's Report on Great Midland, &c., Railway.

THE distances which are given by the General Manager in his report are approximately correct, and the apparent discrepancy between the charts and the scaled measurements, as compared with the distances mentioned in the report, are attributable to many of the features governing the relative positions of the two lines being only approximately located on the various original sheets upon which the lines were plotted, and from which these charts have been photo-reduced.

The V.D.L. Co.'s Middlesex Plains block is located further north and the Dove River further south on the maps and original sheets than their positions given by Reynolds' survey. For instance, from the parallel of Sheffield to the northern boundary of the Middlesex block the distance is given thus :—

On the 8 miles to 1 inch map it is 9 miles ;
On the County maps it is 10 miles ;
On Reynolds' survey it is 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles.

Other features are now located by Reynolds' survey, as follows :—

Mt. Black as One mile further to the north ;
Mt. Murchison about Two miles further to the north-east ;

while the Brougham River, as shown on the maps, does not appear (by Mr. Reynolds' statement), to exist at all.

(Signed) ALF. E. MIDDLETON.

For the General Manager's information.

(Signed) G. H. EDWARDS.