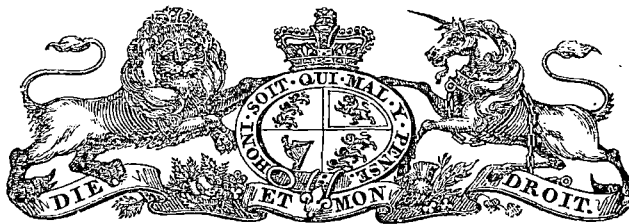


(No. 74.)



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SESSION II.

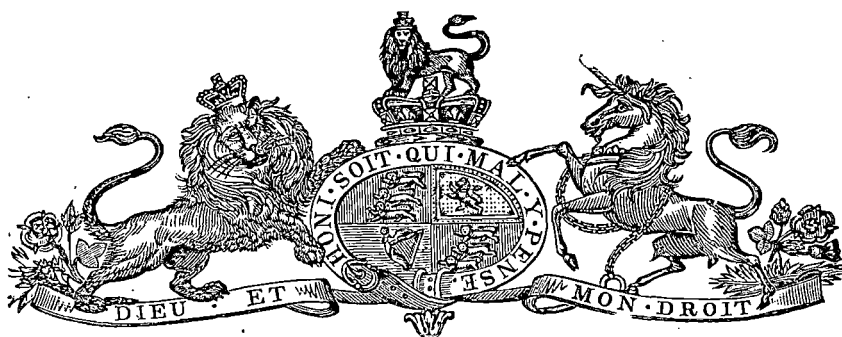
PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

THE TASMANIAN CENTRAL AND WEST COAST
RAILWAY BILL, 1897, (PRIVATE):

REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE, WITH MINUTES OF
PROCEEDINGS, EVIDENCE, AND APPENDICES.

Brought up by Mr. Fowler, December 15, 1897, and ordered by the House of
Assembly to be printed.

Cost of printing—£24 5s.



SELECT COMMITTEE appointed, on the 18th day of November, 1897, to consider and report upon "The Tasmanian Central and West Coast Railway Bill, 1897," (Private).

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE.

MR. ARCHER.
MR. HARTNOLL.
MR. DUMARESQ.
MR. BURKE.

MR. LEWIS.
MR. PAGE.
MR. HALL.
MR. FOWLER.

DAYS OF MEETING.

Friday, November 26; Monday, November 29; Friday, December 3; Wednesday, December 15.

WITNESSES EXAMINED.

Mr. Edward Henry Heazlewood; Mr. W. H. D. Archer; Mr. Charles Barnes Grubb; Mr. Charles Youl; Mr. George Edward Harrap; Mr. Robert Joseph Archer; Mr. R. P. Furmage; Mr. Arthur Hinman; Mr. Joseph Wills; Mr. G. T. McKinlay; Mr. P. H. Parsons; Mr. Harry White; Mr. Francis William Hales; Mr. J. T. McDonald.

R E P O R T.

THE Select Committee appointed to consider "The Tasmanian Central and West Coast Railway Bill" has the honour to report that it has taken a large amount of evidence in support of the allegations contained in the Preamble of the said Bill.

Your Committee regrets that the time at its disposal has been insufficient to enable it take all the requisite evidence, and to determine whether the Preamble has been proved by the Promoters.

The Committee submits to the House for its information the evidence already taken, with the Minutes of Proceedings.

ALEX. R. FOWLER, *Chairman.*

*Committee Room, House of Assembly,
15th December, 1897.*

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1897.

Members present—Mr. Fowler, Mr. Hartnoll, Mr. Burke, Mr. Dumaresq, Mr. Page, Mr. Hall.

The Order of the House appointing the Committee was read by the Clerk.

Mr. Fowler was appointed Chairman for to-day's sitting.

The Chairman laid upon the Table the petition asking for leave to bring in the Bill. (Appendix A.)

The Chairman also laid upon the Table a petition from Mr. R. J. Sadler against the Bill. (Appendix B.)

Ordered, That the promoters be heard by Counsel.

Ordered, That the petitioner against the Bill be heard by Counsel.

The Committee adjourned, to meet at the Ministerial Room, Public Buildings, Launceston, on Monday, 29th instant, at 11 o'clock.

IV

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1897.

The Committee met in the Ministerial Room, Launceston, at 11 A.M.

Present—Mr. Fowler, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Hartnoll, and Mr. Archer.

Mr. Fowler was appointed Chairman of the Committee.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this Committee it is contrary to the practice of the House of Assembly that the partner of a Member of the House should appear before the Committee, but, in view of the fact that members of the Committee and witnesses have attended in Launceston this morning at some expense and inconvenience, it is decided to allow Mr. Croft to appear for Mr. Sadler at to-day's sitting; but at any future meeting of this Committee no partner of a Member shall appear for either party as Counsel.

Ordered, That all evidence be given in accordance with the provisions of "The Parliamentary Declarations Act," (35 Vict. No. 11).

Mr. Hobkirk (Messrs. Martin and Hobkirk) appeared as Counsel on behalf of the promoters, and Mr. Croft (Messrs. Clarke and Croft) on behalf of the petitioners against the Bill.

Counsel intimated that it was their intention to address the Committee when the evidence had been disposed of.

The Committee then proceeded to take evidence.

Mr. Edward Henry Heazlewood was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. Heazlewood withdrew.

Mr. W. H. D. Archer was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. Archer withdrew.

Mr. Charles Barnes Grubb was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. Grubb withdrew.

Mr. Charles Youl was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. Youl withdrew.

Mr. George Edward Harrap was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. Harrap withdrew.

Mr. Robert Joseph Archer was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. Archer withdrew.

Mr. R. P. Fumage was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. Fumage withdrew.

At 1.12 P.M. the Committee adjourned till 2.30 P.M.

The Committee met again at 2.30 P.M.

Present—Mr. Fowler (Chairman), Mr. Page, Mr. Archer, Mr. Hartnoll, and Mr. Lewis.

Mr. Fumage was further examined.

Mr. Fumage withdrew.

Mr. Arthur Hinman was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. Hinman withdrew.

Mr. Joseph Wills was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. Wills withdrew.

Mr. G. T. McKinlay was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. McKinlay withdrew.

Mr. P. H. Parsons was called; and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. Parsons withdrew.

Mr. Harry White was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. White withdrew.

Mr. Francis William Hales was called; and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. Hales withdrew.

Mr. J. T. McDonald was called, and having made the Parliamentary declaration, was examined.

Mr. McDonald withdrew.

At 6.30 P.M. the Committee adjourned *sine die*.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1897.

The Committee met in the room of the Chairman of Committees, House of Assembly, at 11 A.M.

Present—Mr. Fowler (Chairman), Mr. Dumaresq, Mr. Archer, Mr. Hartnoll, Mr. Page, and Mr. Lewis.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Mr. S. P. Crisp (Simmons, Crisp, and Simmons) appeared on behalf of the promoters.

Mr. Crisp handed in a letter from Donald Norman Cameron, dated the 2nd instant, and addressed to Messrs. Grubb, Youl, Barclay, Gunn, Bourke, and Eardley-Wilmot, resigning his trusteeship as one of the promoters of the Tasmanian Central and West Coast Railway Bill, and requesting that his name be withdrawn from the Bill.

Resolved, That the letter be received.

Mr. Crisp asked that effect be given to the request contained in the letter.

Mr. S. J. Sutton was called in for examination, but upon a protest being laid before the Committee on behalf of Mr. R. J. Sadler, on the ground that he had not received notice of the meeting, the examination of Mr. Sutton was not proceeded with.

At 11.55 A.M. the Committee adjourned *sine die*.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1897.

The Committee met at 10.30 A.M.

Present—Mr. Fowler (Chairman), Mr. Burke, Mr. Dumaresq, Mr. Hartnoll, and Mr. Lewis.

The Minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed.

Resolved, That it is not desirable that Counsels' addresses for and against the Bill be included in the Minutes of the proceedings of this Committee.

Resolved, That the right to produce further evidence, and to address the Committee by Counsel in some future session, be reserved to the promoters and the petitioner against the Bill.

Resolved, That the limited time at the disposal of the Committee not being sufficient to enable it to conclude its work, an *Interim* Report be presented to the House.

Draft *Interim* Report submitted by the Chairman, and agreed to.

The Committee adjourned *sine die*.

E V I D E N C E.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1897.

MR. EDWIN HENRY HEAZLEWOOD, *called and examined.*

1. *By Mr. F. C. Hobkirk.*—What is your name? Edwin Henry Heazlewood.
2. I think you are a farmer? Yes.
3. And grazier? Yes.
4. Where do you reside? At Glenore.
5. At Glenore? Yes.
6. In Tasmania? Yes.
7. At Glenore? Yes, in the Westbury District.
8. Are you at present, Mr. Heazlewood, a producer of fat stock? Yes, Sir.
9. And you have cattle and sheep? Yes.
10. Of course, that includes cattle and sheep? Yes; but I have not done as much lately as formerly, on account of the markets being weak. It has been a good season this last spring.
11. At the present time, what is the market open to you for stock? We have not any market now but simply Newstead market. At one time we used to have a large sale at Carrick, but that has died out since the Newstead market opened.
12. What is the state of the Newstead market as regards supply? We find it very irregular; sometimes we get good prices, sometimes it has to be sacrificed.
13. As a general rule, is the supply in excess of the demand? Yes, as a rule it is.
14. It is as a rule? Yes, except in the spring of the year.
15. Are you a producer, Mr. Heazlewood, of agricultural produce, such as hay? Yes, Sir, I grow hay and wheat.
16. What market have you for your hay and similar produce? We have only the Launceston market, Sir.
17. You have only the Launceston market—well, what is the state of that market as regards supply and demand? It has been irregular this last year, but, as a rule, it is low.
18. As a rule, you say, it is low—is the supply in excess of the demand generally? Well, it has been, Sir.
19. I mean as a rule? When we get good seasons it is.
20. Now you are aware, Mr. Heazlewood, that certain gentlemen are proposing to acquire rights with a view to construct a railway from Mole Creek to the West Coast mineral fields? Yes, Sir.
21. If that railway be constructed, can you inform the honourable Members of the Committee what the effect will be upon the market for fat stock and for general agricultural produce? I consider it would be a very great benefit. It would open another market for the stock and produce.
22. Would the stock and produce produced by you increase supposing that market was open? Yes, Sir. If we had a better outlet I could produce double the fat stock we have been producing; I should grow less grain, and go in more for fattening.
23. Would you, as a fact, do that? Yes, unless the wheat market went up.
24. Is there any chance of that? I don't think so, Sir.
25. Can you tell the Committee what area or extent of country, grazing or agricultural, in Tasmania would be benefited by this line of railway to the West Coast fields? A very great extent, I should think.
26. What area would it take in—what districts, as far as you know? It would take in the Deloraine District, the Westbury District, the Cressy District, in fact half the country would gain a benefit.
27. You say half the country would gain a benefit? Yes, Sir.
28. Would the Longford country gain? Yes.

MR. W. H. D. ARCHER, *called in and examined.*

29. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—What is your name in full, Mr. Archer? William Henry Davies Archer.
30. You are a grazier and pastoralist? Yes.
31. Residing at Longford? Yes.
32. You are a large producer of stock and general farm produce? Of general farm produce; not so much of stock. I have been a large producer of stock, and am now a moderate producer thereof.
33. You have been? Yes.
34. Why have you ceased? Because I have let the land, that is to say, a great deal of my land, which is both agricultural and pastoral.
35. I think you are a shareholder in the company which has been formed for the purpose of acquiring rights for a railway between the West Coast Mineral Fields and Mole Creek? Yes.
36. Can you inform the Committee what part of, and how, in your opinion, the country would benefit by the construction of this railway from Mole Creek to the West Coast? I should think in the carriage of stock and produce from all the important districts in the Municipality of Longford certainly, and all the country adjoining.
37. What other portions of the country would benefit except those in the neighbourhood of Longford? I should say it would benefit the whole of the country.
38. I presume you mean the northern portion? Yes, the northern portion, and perhaps the southern districts.

39. Can you say anything as to the market for produce and for stock in Launceston at the present time? Do you mean as regards—

40. Well, supply and demand? I can hardly say very much about that.

41. Is there a supply of stock in excess of the demand? I should hardly think there is in Launceston at the present time.

42. At the present time? No.

43. What has been the rule in past years? Why I say this is because I think there have been certain reasons for it: for instance, speaking particularly about farmers, the farmers have been killing their calves for several years past, certainly for two or three years, because they have had no sale for them.

44. Do you think Mr. Archer, from your knowledge as a grazier and of agricultural products, that the construction of a railway from Mole Creek to the western mineral fields would open up a new market? I do.

45. You do? Certainly.

46. And consequently it would lead to increased production not only of agricultural produce but of beef and mutton? Yes, and I would like just to say this—I know this in consequence of talking to farmers—that their reason for destroying the calves will be done away with. The calves have been perfectly unsaleable and the farmers have killed them in consequence. If there seems likely to be a better market they will increase their cattle by breeding.

47. Have you spoken to many of the farmers and graziers about this line of railway? Yes, I have.

48. What has been the opinion of the benefit, generally, of the railway? That it will be of the greatest benefit.

49. What is their opinion? That it will benefit them by enabling them to get rid of more stock and general farm produce.

50. Is that the general opinion? Yes, both of farmers and graziers.

51. The reason being given that it will open up a new market and lead to increased production? Yes, Sir.

52. *By Mr. F. Archer.*—You said that the supply is not in excess of the demand. Do you allude to this present year? Yes, this present year.

53. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—Supposing railway communication were established from some point at or near Mole Creek Station on the Chudleigh railway, or some other point on that railway, to some point within the western mining division of Tasmania, and gave you markets at the West Coast, do you think, Mr. Archer, that many of the farmers would thereby be induced to go in for the production of fat stock and give up grain growing? I would not say that. I should think they would be more inclined to feed off their straw which they are now selling—getting rid of it by selling, and so not keeping cattle.

54. And they would produce more crops—mangold crops, turnips, and so on? Yes, and as I say, feed off their straw which they are now selling, and so produce both more fat and also store stock.

55. And that would be a benefit to the country? Yes, the greatest benefit.

56. Keeping the fertility in the soil? Yes, and so produce more grass and grain.

MR. C. B. GRUBB, *called in and examined.*

57. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—What is your name in full? Charles Beaumont Barnes Grubb.

58. You are a grazier? A wool-grower.

59. Farmer and grazier? Yes.

60. Living near Launceston? Yes.

61. Are you a producer of stock and general farm produce? Yes, I fatten over 200 head of cattle a year, I suppose.

62. And sheep as well? Yes.

63. Do you produce general farm produce? Yes.

64. Wheat—in fact every kind of farm produce? Yes.

65. What have you to say, Mr. Grubb, as to the markets for your produce? Well, up to the present year, the production has been in excess of the demand.

66. In excess of the demand? Yes.

67. You are a large shareholder, I think, in the company that has been formed for the purpose of acquiring these railway rights to go to the West Coast? Yes, I am a shareholder.

68. Will you inform the Committee what, in your opinion, would be the effect on the market for general produce and stock by the construction of a railway from Mole Creek to the West Coast Mineral fields? I think the railway would be a very great advantage to fatteners of stock and producers of grain, and we should have a better market for the stock; and I think that it would be a great help to agriculture generally.

69. Do you know at the present time what means there are of getting stock to the West Coast? I have sold stock to go there, and several drafts have gone *via* Quamby Bluff and the Great Lake, taking seven days, and of course they lost a good deal.

70. Would it be an advantage to graziers generally to send their stock by rail rather than by road? Yes, certainly.

71. What would the advantages be? Quick transit, and the cattle would not fall away as they do now. Of course they get nothing to eat from the time they leave the farm until they are slaughtered.

72. What would be the gain in the price to the producer? I cannot say that.

73. Can you say what the loss is on the value of the beast from the time it starts on its journey until the time it arrives? A beast would lose at least £1 in value, that is from the time it leaves until the time it is slaughtered.

74. Can you say what would be the proportion of weight that would be lost? I have been told by some of the large butchers down there—I do not say that it would be—about 60 or 70 pounds. Of course they fall off. It takes seven or eight days to get there, and they are kept about a fortnight. I think the loss would be more than that.

75. The loss in weight, then, I presume takes place during transit? Yes, and whilst they are waiting to be killed. Of course with the railway they would be sent there as they are wanted.

76. As they are wanted. Would you use the railway as a means of transit if it be constructed? At present we sell to men down there, and they take delivery from the owner.

77. There would be a market for public competition? I don't know, probably there would be.

78. Do you know whether sheep or cattle are forwarded by sea? I think a great many sheep are sent by sea—a great many from the other side; probably the loss is very great.

79. What are the advantages of sending by sea as compared with the railway? Sometimes they get round with comparatively small loss, whilst at other times they lose nearly half the sheep. It entirely depends on the weather.

80. *By Mr. Croft.*—You have spoken of the advantage that would be derived by the farmers and graziers only by the construction of the railway—can you give any evidence how it would benefit others? I am quite sure that the railway would be largely used by merchants, and so far as the benefit to farmers is concerned, I consider that the advantage would be felt quite as far as the Fingal District.

81. You are only speaking of the advantage that would arise to farmers? Yes, I am only connected with that business myself.

82. What is your reason for saying that it would benefit as far as Fingal? It is a large dairying district, and butter is produced there largely, and that is an item very largely used, and cheese, of course, on the fields. That would all go up by rail, in preference to being sent round by water as at present.

83. That is your object in becoming a promoter in the Tasmanian Central and West Coast Railway Company, or syndicate—that it would benefit you and other graziers and farmers? Partly for the benefit to myself, but really more for the benefit of the country. I don't see exactly where it would benefit myself.

84. You expect a direct benefit for yourself and for your friends—you think it would be a benefit to the country generally? Yes.

85. If a railway were constructed? Yes.

86. Therefore you have been induced to become a promoter of this Company? Yes.

87. *By the Chairman.*—Do you think that the construction of this railway would be of any advantage to Ringarooma and Scottsdale district? It would affect them in the same way as the Fingal district, having the railway. There would be a difference in the distance, which, of course, would affect the freights. It would benefit them certainly.

88. *By Mr. Lewis.*—With regard to the food supply, can you inform the Committee where the food supply for the West Coast comes from? There is a great quantity of fat cattle goes from the south at one time of the year, but this last year the bulk of it has come from the Deloraine and Chudleigh districts and North West Coast.

89. Are any supplies sent from New South Wales? I am aware of some going from King's Island.

90. Are many sheep sent from Victoria? I think that the only sheep from Victoria go after the Tasmanian supply falls off?

91. Do you think with these concessions asked for you will be able to complete the undertaking? I don't think there will be the slightest difficulty.

92. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—You are speaking more directly as a producer. I suppose you are perfectly assured that the consumers on the West Coast would also receive a great benefit from the inter-communication between their centre and the railway system? I am sure that things would be very much cheaper.

93. They would get their stock in better condition and their supplies more regularly? Yes, more regularly. Months ago they were paying 9d. for meat when we were only paying 4d. and 5d. here.

94. Supplies would be increased by the farmers, and in that way do away largely with the tinned meats that are now of necessity consumed on these mineral fields? I am convinced that the farmers can produce material if we only get the market.

95. *By Mr. Archer.*—You said that the reason why you became a promoter of this railway is because you believe, first, that it will benefit the farmers, and then the community at large; that, while it benefits the farmers it will benefit a great many others besides, for instance, it would benefit the working man. You also said you fattened about 200 head of cattle a year—if there were a payable market would you fatten twice as many? I could fatten a great many more. Within the last two or three years I have found that number quite as many as I could get rid of.

96. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—Are you one of the directors of the company for the acquirement of these rights? I believe I am. Yes, Sir.

97. Have the company any end in view after they acquire these rights beyond the desire of seeing the railway constructed? None that I am aware of.

98. There is no intention on the part of the company to obtain for themselves any pecuniary benefits? None that I am aware of, in fact, I went into it on that understanding.

99. That the object of the company was merely to acquire the right to construct the railway? Yes.

100. Not with the intention to huckster the rights if they obtain them? No.

101. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—I presume you will be equally satisfied with the Government undertaking the construction of this line as with your own Company? I would very much prefer the Government constructing the railway if it would save me from further taxation. I consider a syndicate would put it up and make a profit out of it; but if the Government puts it up I am afraid it would result in my being taxed more: that is my contention. I would very much prefer the Government making it.

102. In this particular instance would you prefer being associated with this company—this Bill—to seeing the Government take it in the general interests of the country, and stand your proportion of the risk? I remember so well what our Government railways have cost us. I am quite prepared to go into this with the gentlemen who are associated with it, and see it through. I feel satisfied that it can be done

as we state. If the Government built it we would never know what we have to pay for it—that is just my candid opinion. The railway, of course, would open up a large quantity of country, and would benefit the country generally of course, because it would represent a large benefit through the Customs duties. Although I have not been through myself, I have had a great deal of conversation with men who have, and it seems to me there is a lot of valuable land both for feeding and for mineral purposes.

MR. CHARLES YOUL, *called in and examined*

103. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—Your name is? Charles Youl.
 104. And you are a farmer and grazier residing at Symmons' Plains? Yes.
 105. You are a producer of fat stock and general farm produce? Yes.
 106. I think you are one of the promoters of the Tasmanian Central and West Coast Railway Bill? Yes.
 107. And a shareholder in the Company? Yes.
 108. Will you kindly tell the Committee what, in your opinion, will be the benefits that will ensue from the construction of a railway from the Mole Creek to the West Coast fields? I think it will open up a new market for the produce we are producing.
 109. At the present time, and during the past few years, what has been the general state of the market for produce and stock?—is the supply in excess of the demand? Fat stock?
 110. I am not speaking of a particular year? As a rule fat stock for some years, with the exception of two months in the spring, the supply has been in excess of the demand.
 111. Do you think that by the construction of the railway to the West Coast a new market will be opened up? That follows, as a matter of course.
 112. That would lead to the increased production of not only stock, but the general farming produce of farmers generally? Yes.
 113. What extent of the country would be benefited? The country would benefit by the new market that would be opened up. I think the part of the country that would benefit most would be as far as the midland district taking right away from the western district, in Deloraine, away through Longford down the Tamar right away round as far as the midland district.
 114. Would it take in Fingal and Ringarooma? Except they benefited indirectly, I think they would not benefit directly.
 115. How would they benefit indirectly? By having an extra market for meat and produce. It would equalise the prices better. For many months in the year we can scarcely sell our fat stock here.
 116. Do you think they would be all that would benefit? To a great extent.
 117. Would not the farmers even farther down than Deloraine benefit—would not those at Barrington, Sheffield, Devonport, Sassafras, and I think Northdown, benefit? I think they would all benefit. I merely mentioned the names as they occurred to me.
 118. Are you one of the directors of this company, Mr. Youl? Yes.
 119. I think the only object that there is in the constitution or in the formation of the Company is merely to bring about the construction of this railway—there is no desire to acquire these rights for the purpose of selling them at a profit? No, all the people I have spoken to, and who are associated with it, have been dead against anything of the kind.
 120. Their mere wish is entirely to get the railway through? Yes, that is the mere wish, undoubtedly.
 121. *By Mr. Croft.*—We quite understand that your company, Mr. Youl, require rights from Parliament for the construction of this railway in accordance with their Bill? Yes, I believe so.
 122. You believe so? Yes.
 123. What is the capital of your company? I can hardly tell you from memory.
 124. You can't?—What interest do you hold yourself? Only £100.
 125. 100 shares at £1? Yes, I have been away from home ever since the company was formed.
 126. You don't know very much about it? I did not refresh my memory. I went into it very thoroughly at the time.
 127. You invested in 100 shares valued at £1 each? Yes.
 128. Can't you tell the number of shares in the company?
Mr. Hobkirk.—Here is the prospectus.
Mr. Croft.—I have not seen the prospectus. I do not know anything about it.
Witness.—I cannot say positively from memory. I have not a prospectus with me.
By Mr. Croft.—This is the prospectus of the Tasmanian Central and West Coast Railway and Mineral Company, Limited, of £5000 in 5000 shares of £1 each (prospectus produced, share capital £5000 on 5000 shares of £1, payable 2s. 6d. per share on application; 2s. 6d. per share on allotment; balance, if required, by calls not exceeding 2s. 6d. per share per month.)
 129. The provisional directors are C. B. Grubb, T. Bourke, Thomas Gunn, Charles Youl, J. I. Boyes, W. Fordyce, W. Martin, F. Holmes, and others? Yes.
 130. You have 100 shares at £1 each? Yes.
 131. You don't mean to say that this company could construct it. It would be too absurd on this basis, would it not? No.
 132. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—I asked you whether the sole desire of the company was to acquire the rights and bring about the construction of the railway, and not with a view to something which is not set out in the prospectus? Yes, it is stated in the prospectus.
 133. Do you think if you acquire the rights, that this company would construct the railway—would have the power, financially, to construct this railway? We should be in a position to raise the money.
 134. You would be in a position to raise the money? Yes, to raise the money.
 135. To build the railway? Yes, to build the railway.

136. You have not, as a fact, the money to construct the railway? I think the names of the company are—

137. First and foremost, do you know what would be the cost? Something like £250,000, I think.

138. From what you know, do you believe it would cost £250,000 per mile? (Witness did not reply.)

139. *By the Chairman.*—This company has been formed: on the prospectus it was only a preliminary company with a view of acquiring rights, and after that, of raising the capital? Yes.

140. Have you received any intimation or assurance that if these rights were obtained by the company you would be in a position afterwards to raise the necessary capital to construct the railway? I beg your pardon?

141. Have you any warranty to suppose that if you obtain these rights for which you are now asking you would be in a position to raise the necessary money to construct the railway? From information I have I have not the slightest doubt about it. I have no doubt about it.

MR. GEORGE EDWARD HARRAP, *called and examined.*

142. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—Your name is?—George Edward Harrap.

143. You are an auctioneer? Yes.

144. And carrying on business in Launceston? Yes.

145. You have business with farmers and graziers in Northern Tasmania? I have.

146. And you are, I presume, as well acquainted as, if anything better acquainted than, anybody in the colony of the general state of the produce and stock market? I have a good knowledge of it. I cannot say a better knowledge than anybody else.

147. What has been, during the past few years, your experience as to the excess or otherwise of supply over demand of the stock in Northern Tasmania? During the present year the supply has not been what it was in the past, and the demand has been better.

148. But not speaking of this particular year, but during the past five years? There has been an increasing demand.

149. An increasing demand? Yes, an increasing demand—you are speaking now, I presume, of fat stock, are you not?

150. Yes. Now, as to the general farm produce, hay, straw, and so on, what has been your experience—speaking from your knowledge, what has been the state of the market as regards trade? There has been more business during the past few years than previously, especially for home consumption.

151. I am speaking of the market that is open to the producer? Well, the sales at shows are better now than they were.

152. Do you think that these shows would be improved by opening up direct communication with the West Coast? Undoubtedly, if you get sufficient population there; that is just what we want.

153. That is what you want. Do you think this chance would be improved by opening up direct communication with the West Coast? Yes.

154. Have you any idea of what the population is at the present time down there? I only take it from what I have heard—from 10,000 to 15,000 people scattered over the districts there; that is what I have been informed. I have not been there.

155. Do you think it would be a benefit to the producers if a direct market were opened up? I have not the slightest doubt of it.

156. Do you think it would lead to increased production on the part of farmers and graziers? I think it would.

157. Would prices be better on the whole? I should say they would be, with the increased consumption to assist prices. I can tell you, at the present time, in several lines prices have been improved by the increased consumption on the West Coast.

158. Is there any other advantage to the producer that would be gained by railway communication as compared with the present method of getting there, that is by droving? Certainly. Taking the question of stock—it ought to be cheaper, decidedly cheaper; it is the least dangerous for the stock, and therefore you would have better results from the stock. If you have to drive them a considerable distance the stock loses weight, and so forth.

159. That is, the animal is of a higher value when it reaches the West Coast by train than it would be by droving? Yes, undoubtedly. I suppose every beast would lose from 60 to 80 lbs. at the very least.

160. From 60 to 80 lbs.? Yes.

161. I presume from a consumer's point of view the meat would be of better quality? Yes. It would be far better.

162. Do you know what the present means of getting stock to the West Coast are? We have the seaboard and travelling overland; mostly it is done overland.

163. Do you know that any stock is imported from Victoria or New South Wales? Sheep, possibly, are taken to Strahan. I have not heard of any cattle.

164. What do you think the effect would be upon these importations if direct communication were opened up from Mole Creek? I think it would be checked to a large extent.

165. Have you spoken to many farmers and graziers on the subject?—Have you discussed it at all? Yes, I have.

166. What is the general opinion of the utility of the proposed railway? They would like to see the railway go through.

167. Do they give reasons? Yes. They would likely have an outlook for their produce in that direction.

168. Would it help the farmers residing at Ringarooma and Fingal districts?—Would they be benefited? I think they would indirectly, because it would open up a better market for their stock, and Launceston and Hobart markets would be relieved, and of course allow more meat to go into consumption.

169. That is, of course, you can say that the advantages to be gained by the northern part of the country would be very large? I consider it would be very large.

170. *By Mr. Croft.*—You have formed your own opinion about this matter. I presume the construction of a railway from Mole Creek to the West Coast mining fields—have you formed any opinion of your own as to whether there would be advantages or disadvantages? Yes, I have; there would be advantages.

171. Both to the purchaser and consumer? Yes.

172. And to the general public? Yes, to the community at large.

173. *By Mr. Lewis.*—Do you know which route cattle are driven over at the present time? At the present time they generally go from Stanley.

174. *Via* Trial Harbour—that is, at the back of Trial Harbour? I think it is at the back of Trial Harbour. I think that is the route. I am not quite certain, but I think there is a route through there.

175. Are cattle taken from this portion of Tasmania and driven round *via* Stanley? I don't know; they are bought up the country here, and taken down to the North West Coast pastures, and thence sent on. We had an example of that only lately.

176. *By the Chairman.*—Have you heard of any cattle being driven along the roads lately? I have not heard. The coast buyers are often the best buyers of cattle in our markets, so as to replenish their stocks. The northern market is benefited in that way.

177. *By Mr. Lewis.*—Do you know if any large number of fat stock has been driven across to the West Coast? I know there is a good steady demand for them.

178. For fats? Yes, for fats; because I have been in conversation with men who have been dealing with the matter.

179. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—You say that Ringarooma and Scottsdale would have an indirect benefit from the construction of this Railway. Would they not have any direct benefit, looking at the fact that they would have through communication for their stock right on to the West Coast? It all depends upon what the charges would be—the Railway charges.

180. Of course that is the nearer the scene would be: the advantages would be different from the places at a greater distance? Yes. I was going to point out that it might benefit these people; they might be better supplied by places that are nearer.

MR. R. J. ARCHER, called in and examined.

181. *By Mr. Hobbs.*—Your name is Robert Joseph Archer? Yes.

182. And you reside in Launceston? I do.

183. You were at one time largely, I think, interested in the grazing business? I was.

184. Are you in the habit, Mr. Archer, of visiting the various farmers about the northern and western portion of the Island? I am.

185. And I presume you are acquainted with the general state of the market, both for fat stock and general farm produce? Yes, fairly well.

186. I am not speaking to you about this particular year, but during the last few years: can you tell the Committee what has been the state of the market generally, I mean as to stock and farm produce—has there always been an outlet for all that could be produced? Always an outlet.

187. Yes, always an outlet—always a good market in Northern Tasmania? No, not always; I know there has been a glut, and some stock has been driven back again and again to their pastures consequent upon the over supply.

188. Do you think that that state of affairs is likely to happen again and again? I know no reason why it should not at certain seasons of the year.

189. I presume in your opinion advantages would be likely to arise to graziers and farmers in opening up a new market? Certainly.

190. You are aware, I think, that it is proposed to construct a railway to the West Coast Mineral fields *via* Mole Creek? Yes.

191. Do you think the construction of such a railway would be a benefit to the farmers and graziers in the northern portion of the island? So far as my limited knowledge goes, I should say most certainly it would; it is a most important movement that can be made for them.

192. In opening up an entirely new market? Yes.

193. Is that market opened at the present time? No.

194. That is to a limited extent? Well, to a very limited extent.

195. Why is it limited, Mr. Archer? Because there is no facility for transit.

196. What would be the advantages that would be gained by the producer by the construction of the railway as regards the method of transit? That which the railway would possess over the ordinary road traffic.

197. And supposing the advantages, what are they? The stock would lose less in weight and would arrive in better condition as to quality; and other farm produce, which cannot now be sent, would be forwarded.

198. What is the ordinary time that is taken up in getting cattle from, we will say, Deloraine to Zeelan? The ordinary time?

199. Yes? Driving?

200. Yes, driving? I suppose it would be from one to two days.

201. Are you quite sure on that point? Driving along the road?

202. Yes? Along the road from Deloraine to Launceston?

203. From Deloraine to the West Coast? I could not say positively; it would be several days.

204. Many days? Yes.

205. I think I understood you to say that the effect of driving them for many days would be a serious loss in the value of the animal? Yes, very serious, I am sure.

206. Do you know, Mr. Archer, that a large number of sheep are imported from the other colonies into Strahan and the West Coast—do you know that of your own knowledge? No, I do not, excepting by the newspapers and from hearsay.

207. You have, I understand, spoken to many farmers and graziers with reference to this proposal? Yes, I have, to a great many.

208. What has been the generally expressed opinion as to the utility of the proposed line? They are nearly to a man in favour of it.

209. What are the reasons which they give? That it would give them another market.

210. What extent of country would be benefited by this railway—how far north would it extend, and how far east and west, or south? To Deloraine, Westbury, Bishopsbourne, Cressy, Longford, Evandale.

211. From Cressy down to the midland districts, I suppose? Yes.

212. From thence to Fingal—do you think the graziers in Fingal would benefit? They would not participate in the benefit to anything like the extent of the other named districts.

213. There would be some benefit, would there not, in this way, there would be less chance of a glut, and the Launceston market would be relieved? Yes, certainly.

214. And they would have a better chance in the Launceston market than if all the goods were concentrated on the one point? Oh, certainly.

215. *By the Chairman.*—Do you travel about this district? Yes, very frequently, amongst the farmers.

216. You meet the farmers and producers? Yes.

217. You have had many opportunities of conversing with them? Yes.

218. Did you say that they are unanimously, or nearly so, in favour of the construction of this Railway? Yes, nearly to a man; certainly all the men we call progressive men.

MR. DONALD CAMPBELL, *called in and examined.*

219. *By Mr. Hobbs.*—Your name is Donald Campbell? Yes.

220. And you are a storekeeper at Cressy? Yes.

221. Are you also a farmer? Yes.

222. A grazier as well? Yes.

223. You are aware, Mr. Campbell, that a Company has been formed for the purpose of opening up direct communication by Railway between Mole Creek and the West Coast mineral fields? Yes, Sir.

224. The Committee would like to know your opinion as to the advantages that would be likely to ensue to the country people in consequence of the opening up of communication in that direction? I have very little knowledge of the route; I think it would be direct.

225. We will assume that? Direct communication for the storekeepers, farmers, merchants, and gentlemen, means the opening up of a tract of country which has not hitherto been opened.

226. Would you kindly tell the Committee whether it would lead to the increased production of stock, and so forth? Yes, I believe so.

227. What has been the condition, as a general rule, in the past, as to the markets for stock? Up to the last few years very low indeed, exceedingly low—no market for it.

228. All the farmers, then, I presume, are sighing for new pastures in the form of markets? Yes.

229. I think you said it would lead to increased production? Yes.

230. Has it been your experience or come within your knowledge during the past year or so, has it frequently happened that farmers have had to drive stock back again from Newstead through the glut? I don't know about driving them back; I know it has come within my experience that they have had to pay for keeping stock there until the sales took place afterwards.

231. Do you think they would be benefited by the West Coast communications? Yes, undoubtedly.

232. It would be an advantage to proceed by rail compared to sending them by the road? Yes, I should think so.

233. What advantage? The state of the market.

234. Would it be any advantage to others, and in what way? Yes, the grazier would have more chance of competing with the importers of stock.

235. He would have more chance—why? Because he could reach the market cheaper by rail.

236. Is there any advantage in a beast arriving in better condition—would there not be the loss of value and weight of the beast by droving? Yes, there would be a loss in the weight.

237. And I dare say it would injure an animal if it were driven for a long time—it would reduce the animal as much or more than travelling by train? Conveyance by train would mean 24 hours. I consider that cattle travelling from here, that is as far as I know of the country, would take from 10 to 12 days. The advantage would be very much even with improved communication.

238. Without a good track there the advantages would be on the side of the railway? I think so, yes.

239. Do you know where, at the present time, the West Coast is supplied from? What do you mean, beef?

240. Yes, beef and mutton? I think most of it is got from Victoria at the present time. They have had some from here at various times.

241. Do you think if there were railway communication any portion of the Victorian trade would be diverted to the Tasmanian farmers and graziers—would there be fewer sheep imported? I don't think it would pay Victorians to send sheep down there by rail, but we cannot tell what the Victorians would do. At the present time it would not pay them to send them there.

242. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—Mr. Campbell, you are only speaking of the present time, I presume? It is not possible to say what the Victorians would do sometimes; sometimes they can supply very cheap meat.

MR. RICHARD P. FURMAGE, *called in and examined.*

243. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—Your name, Mr. Furmage? Richard Penney Furmage.
244. You reside at Deloraine? Yes.
245. You are a storekeeper? Yes, at Deloraine.
246. You are aware, Mr. Furmage, that a company has been formed for the purpose of acquiring the rights to construct a railway from Mole Creek to the West Coast fields? Yes.
247. Are you acquainted with the proposed route? Yes, I have travelled over it for the last 15 months pretty regularly.
248. Are you acquainted with the general nature of the country through which it is probable the railway would go? Yes.
249. Is it practical to construct a railway without any great difficulties? A large extent of the country is very easy for a railway; I should think there are no difficulties to that, having been overcome by Innes and Stewart's surveys.
250. In the course of your travels through the country have you noticed the nature of the land passed through? Yes.
251. What are the general characteristics? You mean to start from the terminus?
252. Yes; I want generally, the nature of the land, having reference to the probability of its being mineral-bearing? Starting from the terminus at Mole Creek on to Circular Ponds the country is held in small holdings principally. There is a great deal of land that could be taken up for agricultural purposes: a lot of it could be made into good holdings.
253. Do you think it would be taken up if the railway is constructed? Undoubtedly; it is only the cost of carriage from places beyond Circular Ponds to Mole Creek and from Mole Creek to the Main Line again that prevents a lot of small farmers establishing holdings.
254. Go on from Circular Ponds, Mr. Furmage? It is good agricultural land and down going to the Mersey Bridge, to where Stewart's survey starts from, and where it branches off from where the main road crosses the country there is good land heavily timbered, and on to Gad's Hill; the timber there is the very best I have seen in the country; there are trees there that for splitting purposes would be worth £25 to £30 if available for a market.
255. Do you think the construction of a railway would be likely to lead to the timber industry starting in that district? Yes, there are two saw-mills on the road now; they are working under very great difficulties supplying the wants locally, but they would no doubt supply farther afield if they had the means of communication. The land at Gad's Hill has been taken up to some extent; I know of three instances where it has been taken up recently with a view to the railway going there afterward.
256. For agricultural purposes? Yes, for agricultural purposes. Their only capital is their own labour, pretty well.
257. For say, that up to the Mersey, the land would be fit for agricultural purposes? Yes, and going on to the top of Gad's Hill, in fact up to the Berriedale Plain, there are five or six thousand acres of really good agricultural and pastoral land as far as the Berriedale Plain.
258. Is it possible that the land would be opened up without a railway? No.
259. None of it has been taken up, has it? Yes, some of it has been held on and off, but they cannot get a market. The anticipation of the railway has brought three at any rate on Gad's Hill lately.
260. Then, you think if the railway were constructed it would lead to more land being taken up? Undoubtedly.
261. And of its being improved and worked as agricultural land? Yes, undoubtedly.
262. Is there much demand for land by settlers now? Yes, good land; there are plenty of men who cannot get farms near to the market.
263. Do you think the land would be taken up to a very great extent if the railway were assured? I think so; that is the general opinion of those who have been there—Messrs. Field for instance. Mr. Lindsay Field, and others who have been there with him, are of opinion that the whole of that land would be taken up in small holdings if there was a prospect of a market.
264. As regards mineral, have you noticed the indications? Yes, I spoke of land as far as the Berriedale Plains. Well, there is a barren stretch from there; there is a place known as Magpie Hill, and from there down to the Oakleigh Range there is a barren stretch. As far as known there is no mineral land there, and it is no good for agricultural or pastoral purposes; but on going through Oakleigh into the Pelion Valley you come again into good land suitable for pastoral or agricultural purposes.
265. What extent? In the vicinity of Mount Pelion or Oakleigh there is land to the extent of 800 or 1000 acres fit for agricultural and pastoral purposes.
266. What is the valley on the other side? I do not know; it is probable there is more. Down at Howell's there is good feeding ground, as good as there is in the country, some thousands of acres I should say. It is managed by Messrs. Field.
267. What means of communication have they? No means of communication at all, except by driving their stock through the bush.
268. What market would be opened up to them if the railway were constructed? The whole of the West Coast market. In the Deloraine District we are thoroughly land-locked as we are both for cattle and communication with the West Coast.
269. Going on, Mr. Furmage? In the Pelion Valley there is a good streak of agricultural and pastoral land, and then the mineral sections start.
270. How far are you then on the route? Twenty-eight miles from the Mersey.
271. How far from Mole Creek? About 42 miles.
272. You say then you start on the mineral land? Yes, the country then is principally button-grass plain. The first mineral section is that of the Mount Pelion Consolidated Copper Company, which has taken up about 600 acres of ground there.
273. Has anything been done in the way of development or prospecting there? Yes; last year there was considerable work done on the section, and it was formed into a company, and they are now working

there. I was there last week from Sunday till Friday, and they had made their first shot at the shaft on the Thursday and took out during the day about a ton and a half, I should say, of first class ore, and the Manager valued it at from £12 to £14, judging from previous assays.

274. What would the lode be? There is a lode 51 feet wide, and the manager estimates that at the lode they are working the formation is about 10 feet wide.

275. The prospects of this particular mine, you believe, are satisfactory? Yes, the manager's opinion is that there is a good percentage of copper. We have had various assays, one was about 30 per cent. of copper, and another about 24, I think, and the other lodes on the property in the 50-feet go I think, about three or four per cent.

276. That is a very good average, I think, is it not? Yes, for such a large formation.

277. Supposing that railway communication is not established *via* Mole Creek, what would be the effect upon this particular show and upon mineral land generally? It would have the effect of paralysing them. They could only stack the ore. There would be no means of getting it away from the ground. They would have to smelt it on the ground. But, unless there was a road, there would be no means of doing that.

278. Is it in your opinion absolutely for the benefit of these fields that there should be a railway? Undoubtedly.

279. Have there been any other discoveries? Yes, there are three. The first one I visited last week was a show lately discovered by M'Gowan and Andrews. They have a very promising lookout. There is a large formation about ten or twelve feet wide, with veins of copper pyrites two or three inches wide; it is widening as they get into the hill, and they get a fair amount of backs, so it is easy prospecting.

280. Are there any other assurances? Yes, there is Tarrent's company. He sent samples of coal and other minerals in to Launceston.

281. Do your remarks as to the first show you mentioned apply with equal force to the chance you have just mentioned? Yes, no good without the railway.

282. What is the general character of the land as regards minerals—you got up to a certain point where minerals began—can you go on a little farther—I should like you to say, in your opinion, whether there will be any further developments? I think there will be further developments. Good reports are coming in from the prospectors as to the land further west, which they report as being highly mineralised. It only wants further prospecting.

283. Would a railway give further facilities to the mines and increase prospecting in the district? Yes, increase the facilities for stores, and the prospectors would be in a better position to work than at the present time. It means now that for two days' prospecting they want four days' "tucker."

284. Before the railway started, if it were an accomplished fact that there would be a railway, would it lead to more prospecting than before? Yes; certainly.

285. What is retarding the development of the country? The uncertainty of the means of communication. One of the largest shows at Pelion at the present time is coal.

286. Have you visited that yourself? Yes; last Thursday.

287. What is the present condition of the discoveries there? I talked with Mr. Teasdale, who is managing, a man who is thoroughly practical, having had 25 years' experience in English collieries, and in speaking of the mine it was evident that he was cognizant of what he was talking about.

288. What did he have to say? First of all we inspected the measures and followed them along to see how far we could trace them. The measures were showing plainly in the mountain, and now and then we came across a seam of coal. There was one place notably where there was 3ft. of splendid-looking coal.

289. Has the coal been tested? Yes; we are using it at the present time to sharpen our drills. The men are using it for all purposes connected with their mining.

290. Have any analyses been made for the sake of comparison with Mount Nicholson and other local coals? I believe so, Mr. Teasdale so told me.

291. Do you know the result of the analyses yourself? No.

292. Do you know if the coal is put to any use now; is it of any value, save for mining purposes? Yes; it is good for smelting, steam, and for household use.

293. I understand it makes good coke? I saw the coke. It is used by the men for the purposes which require a great heat in connection with the drills.

294. Did you form any opinion as to the extent of the country; that is the coal country? I have formed my own opinion about it. It is an opinion easily formed, because the measures are plainly seen going through the ranges of the mountains—right along the tops of the mountains. It seems practically inexhaustible. I have heard it stated that it is 10 or 12 miles, but from my own practical knowledge it can be traced for 3 or 4 miles.

295. That would mean it is practically inexhaustible? Yes. Mr. Teasdale has tunnelled at three or four different points and driven nine or ten feet in the seam, and it is very much better nine or ten feet in than it is on the surface, having lost the slate or shaley appearance that it has on the surface, and when broken, comes away in squares or nuggets.

296. You say Mr. Hinman has assays of this coal? Yes.

297. Is a railway absolutely essential if these coal measures are to be developed with any degree of success? Yes, decidedly. Mr. Teasdale and I were speaking about the prospects of the field, and he said that once they got the railway they would be ready to truck coal. He says it is good for smelting purposes, and they would be ready to truck coal away as soon as the railway is in working order.

298. Is he so thoroughly satisfied of the quality of the coal? Yes, he says undoubtedly it is good enough for smelting purposes. He says it could be hewn out and delivered at any point at Pelion for about 10s. per ton.

The Committee adjourned.

AFTERNOON SITTING.

Examination by Mr. Hobkirk continued.

299. You were telling us, Mr. Fumage, before we adjourned, from your knowledge and information received from people about, that after the poor country was passed the mineral country began, and that the country was charged with minerals for 40 or 50 miles? Yes, taking it from Pelion, I should say that it was about 40 or 50 miles.

300. That would be to Rosebery? Yes, to the Rosebery.

301. Are the coal discoveries near there? About 11 miles from Pelion and at Pelion, and of course a considerable distance from the Rosebery side.

302. Going beyond the actual discoveries, what are the indications? Undoubtedly good at Mount Farrell. I know Innes and Aylett were out prospecting for some six weeks quite recently, and brought in several good samples, indicating a find of some nature; I do not know what nature. I know, however, that Mr. Innes considered it very good. All through Murchison, right round about Murchison and the Canning district, other prospectors have told me the indications are good. It will be tapped by the railway. Murchison, decidedly, and Canning would be rather to the south of it, still it would be served by the railway to some extent, bringing the people nearer to communication.

303. Have you any experience in the grazing and general farm produce business—you are a merchant at Deloraine? Yes, a general merchant. My business is with grain a good deal.

304. Are you acquainted at all with the state of the market, with farm produce and stock for the farm? Yes, I have experience all round the district, that is the district which the railway would start from, presuming it is constructed. It would greatly benefit that district, because our freights are prohibitive now from touching the Zeehan market at all. I tried to send butter and other produce there, but I found I could not compete.

305. With whom? With the Coast. The Coast is always before us; also we have no chance against Hobart, which supplies them through our railways.

306. Would it be likely to increase the production? Yes, undoubtedly, by increasing the number of settlers, and also giving them an opportunity for a profitable outlet for the stuff which they cannot produce now to advantage.

307. What is the present communication between your district and the West Coast? First of all, the farms round about Circular Ponds coming from outlying parts are first of all handicapped by a certain amount of cartage and the too heavy freights from Mole Creek to Devonport. They can ship produce from Latrobe and Devonport on the Government railways *via* Hobart cheaper than we can from Deloraine, also from Hobart and Launceston by water to the West Coast cheaper than we can on the Government line to the shipping port.

308. What is the passenger communication between Deloraine and the West Coast? Rail and water.

309. There is a track for driving stock? Yes, from Deloraine stock is sent over the Lake country on to the Linda track. It means a distance necessitating 8 or 9 days driving cattle, and I have been told, by those engaged with cattle, that the cattle lose a good hundred-weight from the time they start.

310. And the advantages would be considerable on the side of the railway? Yes, decidedly.

311. A direct gain? Yes, decidedly a direct gain.

312. Would not the district towards Devonport and Sheffield be gainers? Yes, the line from Mole Creek would serve them—Launceston and Devonport.

313. Are there many producers round Devonport? Yes.

314. And Sassafras? Yes, it would be a benefit to the people below Kimberley.

315. How would it benefit the people in that immediate vicinity, and so on towards the Forth?—Would they be benefited by it, or would it be better to drive by way of Burnie? I should say it would be far better to truck stock at Devonport or the Forth and send them on by the line *via* Mole Creek. The mere effect of driving cattle and shipping them would be far worse than that of trucking them by rail.

316. Is there any other information you would like to give the Committee that you think can be of service to them? There is nothing that I can call to mind just now, except that to prospectors the railway would be a great convenience; well, not only a great convenience, but also as a means of livelihood.

317. Do you think that if it were assured that the railway was going through, it would lead to an increased energy of the prospectors? Decidedly.

318. Would there be an immediate effect? Yes, an immediate effect.

319. Even before the railway were started? Yes; there are a great number at work now even, on the assumption that the railway will go there.

320. From your knowledge of the country—you say you have been there three or four times—do you think it would be difficult to obtain a railway route from Mole Creek to the West Coast? I should say that as far as Pelion it would be a matter of no difficulty at all, and we have Innes's assurance that he could get a railway through to Rosebery. I was speaking privately to Innes, and he said that he had not the least doubt of it, and others to whom I have spoken have said the same thing. I believe that there would be no difficulty.

321. Well, as far as you have been, can you speak as to the grade? The most difficult grade to be dealt with would be the grade from the Pelion Valley to Pelion Saddle. Mr. Innes's survey skirts the Oakleigh Range down to the valley. It was thought at one time that it would be impossible to get the grade over Pelion. Many won't give in now that there is a good grade round it, but this last time—I had been over Pelion before over the regular pack-track—but this time I went over Innes's survey round the mountain, and I was surprised to see the easy grade. In looking at his chart I saw that there is not a grade higher than 1 in 18, and, for a railway, a much better grade could be obtained.

322. Has there not been another man—a man named Aylett—along Innes's survey, and discovered another easier method round Mount Pelion? Not round Mount Pelion; the easier grade he speaks of branches away at Oakleigh Range.

323. Has not Aylett found an easier method of getting round Mount Pelion? Not round Mount Pelion. The deviation that Aylett speaks of branches off at the foot of Mount Oakleigh, and from there

goes through a break in the country, leaving Mount Pelion West, I suppose, about four miles, or three miles to the right, and it would go through the Lake Dora District. Aylett shows a lower elevation than Innes's track of, I think, 1100 feet.

324. Where would the branching-off take place—how far before you would reach Mount Pelion? Before you reach Mount Pelion west, about three miles, I should say.

325. Have you any knowledge of that route yourself? Yes, I should think that Aylett is right, that he is quite right that he got a much lower elevation than Innes; but Innes's instructions were to go to Rosebery, and that would go nearer to Lyell.

326. How near to Rosebery would it go? Innes's goes to Rosebery, this I suppose would go to within about 20 miles. That is merely a guess from having seen the chart. I would not give that as any fixed idea of the distance. It would be somewhere about that, I should think. For a good part of the distance it would mean an alteration of the route.

327. Then, as a supposition, you say that the nearest point to Rosebery would be 20 miles away? Yes.

328. Have you read a letter from Mr. Aylett, which appeared in one of the Launceston papers to this effect:—

"I venture, through the medium of your valuable paper, to draw the attention of those whom it may concern to the practicability of running or constructing a line of railway, *via* Mount Pelion, at a much lower altitude than the track now surveyed. I guarantee to show a route through the range with, of course, a slight deviation, at a lower level than can be obtained over Pelion proper, of about 1300 feet, which, you will allow, is a consideration, and which will also avoid any heavy snowstorm. I only wish to point out that, after going through the divide, it will be down-grade to Rosebery. Another item of interest for consideration is this—if the line is constructed, and runs in the direction I have pointed out, it will have this advantage—by touching on the Lake Dora country, and running to Rosebery, a branch line can easily be run to Mount Lyell, or *vice versa*. Of course, every one knows what the country is on this side of Pelion, so that there is no need for me to enlarge upon that; but I may say, that right on from the other side of Pelion is all mineral-bearing country, and, I believe, valuable at that."

Mr. Aylett assumes from that that there will be no difficulty in going to Rosebery direct? I should say that a good deal of it is supposition, as Mr. Aylett is not a railway expert.

329. Supposition on his part? Yes; although I believe a lower elevation could be obtained to Lyell by Lake Dora.

330. That is probably 20 miles from Rosebery? That was merely supposition on my part. Perhaps I should not have said that, because it might be misleading if you take notice of it. It is merely an idea I had of the chart in my own mind. It might be that, and it might be nearer.

331. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—One matter occurred to me: you were speaking about the advantages of this railway, and you spoke about getting productions from Deloraine on to the silver-fields, and that then you would be able to compete—while now you are not able to compete—against the North-west Coast and Hobart. It occurred to me, while you were speaking, that that was only altering the advantages, giving them to Deloraine, and taking them away from those places which now enjoy them? I do not say that at all—I say, why should we be unduly handicapped as we are at the present time?

332. But you were speaking of the general advantages that at the present time the North-west Coast enjoy, advantages that you do not enjoy. That, as I understand it, is the way you put it? Yes.

333. Now, the construction of this railway would give you the advantages, and the consideration comes in that you would come into competition with them if you supply what you did not supply before? That is if the population remains the same. There will be no necessity for a railway if it does not increase demand.

By Mr. Hartnoll.—That is right enough, but it only alters the advantages from one place to another.

334. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—Perhaps Mr. Furnage puts them on an equality? As it is at the present time we are handicapped. We have to take so much less for our produce.

By Mr. Hartnoll.—Yes, it puts them on an equality.

335. *By Mr. Lewis.*—Can you tell me where the West Coast supplies of flour and dairy produce come from? The dairy produce from the North West Coast and Hobart, and its flour, I should say, from Launceston, and I dare say Longford—a good deal from Launceston and Devonport; a greater quantity of it is shipped from Hobart.

336. Do you know that much of it is imported from Victoria to Strahan? I don't think so.

337. Flour and dairy produce? No, very little flour. There is a fair amount of dairy produce, such as butter, during the last few months.

338. How far along is Innes's track—have you been along it? I have been about 40 miles.

339. Where will that take you to? That goes to the other side of Pelion West; I suppose it would be within 3 or 4 miles of Baru Bluff.

340. Have you been over the divide? No.

341. From your knowledge of the country, do you think that it is likely that a route will be found with a lower elevation than Innes's; do you think Innes found the lowest elevation? I am not competent to speak, although I should think one might be found for a railway; it would be quite likely Innes took the shortest practical route to Rosebery for a road.

MR. ARTHUR HINMAN, *called in and examined.*

342. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—Your name, Mr. Hinman, in full? Arthur Hinman.

343. You are a merchant in Launceston? Yes.

344. Have you a large business on the West Coast mining fields? A moderate amount.

345. Do you know whether there is a large amount of business or trading between the West Coast and Launceston? I believe there is a very fair amount.

346. And at the present time what is the means of carriage? By sea to Strahan.

347. Are you aware that it is proposed to construct a railway from Mole Creek to the West Coast silver-fields? Yes.

348. Do you think when that railway is constructed it will be availed of by the trades-people of Launceston for the purpose of forwarding goods instead of sending them round by sea? Yes, very considerably.

349. To a considerable extent? Yes, very considerable, because it will save all double handling at Strahan, and my experience as a business man is that at anywhere near equal rates, even at slightly heavier rates, storekeepers would prefer to get their goods by rail instead of by sea. Our experience of the North-West Coast has been to that effect.

350. Your customers prefer that, even at a slightly higher rate? Yes, many of our customers at Ulverstone and Latrobe are now ordering all their goods by rail, where before they had them by water.

351. Giving as a reason? I presume it is the greater convenience; I never asked the reason.

352. You speak of that as a fact—they are doing that? Yes.

353. Have you been yourself by sea to the West Coast *via* Strahan? I believe 7 or 8 times.

354. The only means of travelling is by sea at the present time? I have travelled once overland.

355. Yes, but for all travelling purposes that is useless? Yes.

356. Can you tell the Committee what effect the railway would have upon the travelling—what proportion would travel by sea, and what proportion would travel by rail? I can only give an opinion. No doubt, the gentlemen of the Committee hold their own opinion.

357. You say that you have travelled to the West Coast seven or eight times—would you travel more frequently to the West Coast if there were a railway? I should probably travel three times as often.

358. *By the Chairman.*—Is it an enjoyable trip? (No answer).

359. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—You have had opportunities of speaking to other people who have expressed a similar opinion? Yes, everybody is of the same opinion.

360. Is it too much to say that, practically, the whole of the passenger traffic to Zeehan would be by railway if there was a railway from Mole Creek to the West Coast? That is only a matter of opinion, of course, Mr. Hobkirk. My opinion is that there would be very few passengers going by water.

361. I think, Mr. Hinman, you are interested in some of the discoveries that have taken place near Mount Pelion. I wish you now to tell the Committee the nature of the discoveries? Some two or three months ago Mr. Sutton and myself secured 800 acres of ground, for the purpose of prospecting for coal, under lease. I promoted a small syndicate, and about three weeks ago we sent up three men there under a very able man.

362. His name, Mr. Hinman? Thomas Teasdale. He has been connected with coal all his life. I should like to read a few extracts from a letter he wrote. He does not give the date, but I should judge it would be about the 20th November. He says:—"I am prospecting on your sections on Ossa"—the local name of the place is East Pelion. "I have trenched and bared the face of the coal in eight places, and the coal was 22 inches thick"—(that is to say, along the face of the coal he has gone in eight different places.) "In seven places the coal was 22 inches thick, and 19 inches in one place. . . . It seems to run very regular all along the crop. I am driving on the seam to get good hard coal, so that you can have good samples if you want them." That was written on the 20th. On the 27th, that was Saturday, he wrote this:—"I have continued to prospect your Ossa sections. I have proved that the seam extends right across your two 100-acre sections." (I may explain that 600 out of the 800 were taken up on West Pelion, and 200 acres on East Pelion, or Osser.) "I found it within a few yards of your east line here; it is about 2 feet 9 inches thick. . . . The conclusion I have come to is that the seam eastward thickens. I proved it so far 20 to 22 inches thick on the western sideline." Those of you who are cognizant will know that that is a very payable seam of coal. Dulverton and Tarleton coal did not average more than 18 inches, and they have been worked for years with a profit. This coal, 22 inches, is within 35 miles of Queenstown by railway line, and is of very superior quality to both Tarleton and Dulverton coal, and must of necessity be worked at a profit if it is of an average of four inches thicker than the others. Towards the eastern sideline of the two 100-acre sections the coal is 33 inches thick, and he draws the conclusion that it is thickening eastward. He says, "it is a very fair quality of coal; a good all-round coal." From many of the samples I have seen I consider it the best coal discovered in Tasmania. It is highly bituminous. I just brought this small piece of coke. It is entirely different from the Fingal or Mesey deposits of coal, quite different in character. (Piece of coke produced.) That is the written evidence of a practical man who has had 30 years' experience in the South Yorkshire Coal fields, and also the coal-fields in Tasmania.

363. Having got what you call a valuable find, to what uses can it be applied? Of course, without a railway we can do absolutely nothing, except to send down a ton or two for assay.

364. Where do you expect to find a market for the coal? In the western mineral fields. The coal is of an intense heat. I have tried it at home on particular occasions.

365. Are you likely to bring it into competition with the Fingal coal in Launceston? I don't think so.

366. Would it be too far to bring it? No, it would not be too far to bring it, as the coal is entirely different to the local coal now in use. It is a good blacksmith's coal, which the Fingal coal is not; but there would be a large market for such a coal on the western mineral fields, and they would consume all we could supply for many years to come.

367. To what uses could you apply it? The gentlemen of the Committee will understand that we are just developing this coal. Everything proves its nature to be equal to Newcastle coal, but until we develop it, and have proper tests where it is perfectly free from the action of the weather, we cannot tell exactly. Its nature proves it to be a highly bituminous coal.

368. What is your opinion of the general benefits that are likely to ensue to the northern part of the colony from the railway? I think, as a business man, they will be very great, because it will put us in a very much better position to compete with Australia—a very much better position—and for the delivery of urgent orders it is most desirable.

369. What difference of time would there be in supplying goods by railway or by sea? One is so very uncertain, and the other is practically certain. Delivery would be made within 24 hours.

370. *By Mr. Lewis.*—Have you any assays made of this coal? No, Sir, not since we have started work: there was an assay of a piece before this syndicate worked the coal, but we prefer to get it clear of the weather before we get an assay made. I got that piece (produced) from Harry White, who will be examined. I simply wanted to show that to the gentlemen because it is made from coal from that district, and all the coal seems to be of a similarly bituminous nature. I was trying to point out the difference between the coal of that district and that of the Fingal and Mersey districts. The Manager says he has driven in 9 feet, and is in clean coal, and I am going to submit to the Directors that it is desirable to get half a ton to try at the gas works. I could not express an opinion, but it proves to me at present the difference in the natures of the coal. We have not before found bituminous coal in Tasmania, as far as I know.

MR. JOSEPH WILL, *called in and examined.*

371. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—What is your name? Joseph Will.

372. What is your present calling? Prospecting.

373. You reside in Launceston? Yes.

374. I think you are aware, Mr. Will, that application is being made to Parliament for the right to construct a railway between Mole Creek and the West Coast mineral fields, probably stopping at Rosebery? Yes, I am.

375. I think you are well acquainted with the country between those two points? Yes, I have been through that country by different routes, four or five different times.

376. Have you ever gone through the country and observed whether it would be practicable to get a railway route? Oh, yes, I think so.

377. You know the route known as Innes's survey? Yes, I know it pretty well.

378. You know it fairly well? Yes.

379. Is that route capable of any modification or improvement? Yes, I have not been along the route since Mr. Innes surveyed. I went there before that, and I saw that it was possible to get a railway through there about two years before he went there.

380. Can you say whether, in your opinion, it is possible to get an easier route? I could not say that. I could not say. I believe it is possible to get an easier route from Mole Creek to Pelion. I have only been along the latter part of it.

381. Do you know Mr. Aylett, who is a prospector? Yes.

382. Do you know anything about the route, which he alleges he has discovered, which would give an easier grade round Mount Pelion? No, I do not know.

383. Do you know anything about the nature of the country so far as its agricultural properties are concerned? Yes, I do.

384. What extent, if any, of agricultural land will probably be opened by the proposed line of railway? If we took the line along the land where Mr. Scott surveyed it a few years ago, where it cuts the Mersey, or rather it follows it for several miles, it is all nice agricultural land for miles up, and it is also good agricultural country in the valley of the Forth.

385. Would that country not be tapped by Mr. Innes's route? No. At the valley of the Forth it would.

386. Mr. Innes's line—would Mr. Innes's line take in so much of agricultural country as the one you now speak of? No.

387. Can you give us any idea about how much agricultural land would be served by Mr. Innes's line? When you get up to the top of Gad's there are five or six miles square there of good agricultural land.

388. How many acres, about? I could not exactly say, 3 or 4000 acres I should say, then there is good grazing country right on to Pelion.

389. By Innes's route? Yes, by Innes's route.

390. What is the difference between Innes's route and Scott's? Innes' route would be a little shorter than Scott's, but Scott's is not so difficult as Innes's.

391. Which would be the most expensive? I think Innes's would.

392. Do you think the cost of construction in Innes's route would be greater than that over Scott's route? I do.

393. Do you know the country sufficiently well to form a competent opinion on the question of the two routes? Yes, I know the country well. I have travelled over both routes, especially Innes's route, before he surveyed it, but I know exactly the ins and outs and twists of it. I have been over it a good many times.

394. You still say you consider Scott's the better one of the two? Yes.

395. It taps more agricultural land; it is longer? Yes.

396. But on the whole cheaper to construct? Yes, of course, that is my opinion.

397. What about the mineral land? Mineral land,—neither of them taps mineral land till they get to the Pelion. Mr. Scott only surveyed to Pelion.

398. Do you know Innes's line from Pelion? I know not only Innes's route, but I have been through the country.

399. What conclusions did you come to as to its mineral characteristics? I believe there are good indications there. I believe it would be a big mineral country, the same class of country as at Lyell.

400. What class of minerals do you think will be discovered there? Chiefly copper and coal.

401. Do you know of any coal discoveries at the present time? I know of discoveries there now.

402. Have you seen them? I have seen them, about two years ago.

403. Are they promising? Yes, very promising shows.

404. Do you think the railway is necessary for their development? Yes.

405. That there should be a railway? Yes, I do.

406. If there should not be a railway constructed, what would be the effect on those shows? They could not do anything with them at all.

407. What extent of country, in your opinion, is mineral bearing? Copper, silver, and coal—it carries a per-centage of each. You start from the bottom of West Pelion right on to the Barren Bluff, about 12 miles further, and you get in and out a granite country; there is a good mineral country for 40 miles right on to the Rosebery to Pelion.

408. Do you know how many actual discoveries have been made? Really, I could not say.

409. How many do you know of? I knew of four when I was up there last.

410. How long was that ago? Between two and three years ago.

411. *By Mr. Croft.*—Since Innes's survey started do you know of any discoveries? I have heard of them, but have not been along there.

412. You don't know of your own knowledge? No.

413. What are they? Copper shows.

414. Do you know the names of any of them? I cannot recollect the names just at the present time. I know there was one floated here not long ago.

415. Are you aware that that survey has led to an increase of prospecting, or that the number of prospectors have increased along there? I beg pardon.

416. Do you know whether a greater number of prospectors have been at work? Yes, I know of a few parties lately; two or three parties from Launceston went up.

417. You know that of your own knowledge? Yes.

418. *By Mr. Lewis.*—When did Scott make this survey? Just after the V.D.L. Bank broke.

419. What Scott was it? Scott and Stewart.

420. You speak, Mr. Will, of Innes's track, and from what we know of Scott and Stewart's it goes down the western bank of the Mersey. Is there not another track called the May Day track, and is that track distinct? Yes, of course it is a different track altogether from the May Day track. That goes across the Forth, you see.

421. That May Day track would not come within the survey at all? No.

422. It is now just a matter of opinion between Innes's track and Scott's survey? That is my opinion.

423. Scott's track runs by the Mersey? Yes, and then the junction goes back until it gets into the valley of the Forth on the north side of Stewart's.

424. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—Is there not this distinction, that Scott and Stewart had instructions as to the survey for a railway, and Mr. Innes as to a survey merely for the purposes of a cattle track? Yes, I think so.

425. *By Mr. Page.*—Why do you say that Innes's track would be more expensive than Scott's? Mr. Innes did not take a survey from Mole Creek, and there is a big fall before you get to the Mersey. You fall about a thousand feet, and to rise to the top of Gad's Hill you rise 1200 feet, and I think it will be difficult to get a grade all round to get on the table there.

426. *By Mr. Lewis.*—Is there any object in going to the top of Gad's Hill? None at all that I know of.

MR. G. T. MCKINLAY, *called in and examined.*

427. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—What is your name in full? Gilbert Tennent McKinlay.

428. You are a draper at Launceston? Yes.

429. And a shareholder in a company to be formed to acquire right to construct a railway between Mole Creek and the West Coast? I am.

430. Has your firm had business relations with the West Coast? We have at Mount Lyell, Queenstown.

431. And the means of transit are?—By sea.

432. In the event of a railway being constructed, would that railway be taken by you in preference to the other method of conveyance? Most certainly.

433. And can you speak regarding passenger traffic? It would be, most certainly, for passenger traffic.

434. And for goods? To a certain extent.

435. What particular goods would go by rail? The more expensive and light, which make cheaper freights than bulky or heavy goods, would go by rail, and other goods by water.

436. Do you think there would be, not only by yourself, but the trades people generally of Launceston, a considerable traffic over the railway? I should think so.

437. Do you know whether there is a large body of trade between Launceston and the West Coast? It depends upon what the word "large" includes.

438. Well, considerable? Yes, considerable, yes.

439. Do you think a portion of that would be diverged from the steamers to the line? Undoubtedly.

440. Have you been in the habit of visiting the West Coast yourself? Yes.

441. On how many occasions? Very frequently, I suppose 10 or a dozen times.

442. The present means of transit to the West Coast are by sea entirely? Yes, for goods; of course, you can go overland; I have gone overland myself.

443. What proportion of the passenger traffic would be diverged? I should think a very large proportion. I know numbers of people who would undoubtedly go by railway rather than the sea route.

444. Do you think it would increase the traffic? Undoubtedly, I know many persons who would go there by railway, but who will not go by water, and others who would travel oftener than they now do if they could go by rail.

445. Can you venture an opinion as to the increase that would result? No, not as regards ratio. I should simply say in a general way that if there were railway communication there would be considerable local business—passenger traffic I am speaking of direct from Launceston, and of course passenger traffic would be picked up *en route*, and we would certainly expect to get a very considerable amount of the

Melbourne traffic. Of course a large amount of the Melbourne traffic would go direct to the Bay, but there would be other than Bay interests, and it would be split up. There are so many engaged in commercial interests in Launceston, and mining interests, and many of those would travel by the proposed line of rail. Melbourne people who had business to transact in this part of the colony would go that way. And then, I consider, a great many others would make the round trip—go this way, and get back the other way, or *vice versa*. Then there would be land opened up. There would be developments along the proposed line. We expect considerable mineral developments, and people would come from the other side to inspect them, as Melbourne folk always watch our mineral developments.

446. I take it, then, that those who now use the line in connection with mineral developments would go the round trip? Yes.

447. *By the Chairman.*—The round railway trip? Yes.

448. *By Mr. Hobbs.*—Do you think the whole of the local Tasmanian traffic would go by that route? Yes, the main portion of it (alluding to passenger traffic).

449. I am speaking of the whole of Tasmania—the Hobart people can come by Main Line? Yes, that is what I maintain; I think that is one of the chief advantages in connection with such a line as projected. Presuming that Hobart does not get the Western line as projected, this line should serve the Hobart end of the island very well.

450. For passenger traffic? Yes; and, to a certain extent, other traffic too.

451. Is there any other information, Mr. McKinlay, that you would like to give the Committee? Only to say that, not simply from my own opinion, but that of many other commercial people, not only in this section—this end of Tasmania, but in other parts of the island, their opinion is that it would be a considerable accession to the commercial interests of the island—to all portions of the island which are not served by some other line of railway.

452. You are a Director, are you not, of the company that is being formed? Yes.

453. What are the sole objects of that company? Simply to promote commercial intercourse between the producing portions of the colony which are not now in touch with the West Coast.

454. Are you actuated, or those associated with you, by any desire to make money out of this concession? Most certainly not; not so far as the company is concerned.

455. What is the sole object of the company? Simply to be put in closer touch than we are now, for commercial purposes, and for the producing portions of the colony. Of course we naturally expect to derive benefit along with the rest of the colony—the whole of the colony, including so many important interests, but not direct out of the company itself.

456. Presuming that the rights that the company ask Parliament for be granted, it is not the intention of the company to make one single penny beyond the indirect benefit that will arise—is it not the intention to hand over the concessions to the parties finding the capital? That is so; I may go further still, and say it is not only the intention, but an offer has actually been made on these lines—to hand over the concessions under the control of the company to a certain syndicate company which is to construct the line upon the preliminary actual expenses for getting the Bill through Parliament being paid.

457. You have been in communication with the representative of capital, and an offer has been made on those lines? One offer which has been made on those lines was made to the representative of another syndicate which has a Bill before the House.

458. I was not referring to that—I mean communications have taken place between your Board and a representatives of capital on these lines, if the rights are obtained for the construction of the line? I was going to say, I was only giving instance No. 1. The second case is one in which we have been approached by a representative of English capital. I cannot say that there is a specific offer in writing on the terms I have mentioned, but it is understood it will be completed at any moment by the company, if desired.

459. Have you in your mind any doubt that the requisite capital will be submitted? No.

460. Can you give us any idea what proportion may be reasonably expected to be raised from Tasmania alone? No, I don't think I could.

460A. Could you not give some proportion, do you think half? Well, it is thought so by some, but that is a matter of opinion.

461. Is that opinion shared in conjunction with your co-directors?—Is that the general opinion? As far as I know on the subject, but I could not say positively. It is not mine.

462. At least one-fifth of the capital would be raised? I certainly think it would. That view of the subject is held by men whose financial knowledge of the colony is more extensive than mine.

463. I presume the directors and shareholders are mostly men of considerable means—they are men of high status, are they not? They are all men of standing.

464. Have you any idea of the individual number of persons who are interested in the company? I am not quite sure as to the number—I think about 300.

465. Can you say what parts of the island they embrace, whence they come? I would not say—I know they embrace a very large area.

466. And represent, I think, all classes of interests, from the grazier down to the cockatoo, is it not so? Yes.

467. *By Mr. Croft.*—Have all the shares in this company of yours been taken up, Mr. McKinlay? Not to my knowledge.

468. You are a director of the company—how many shares do you hold? Five and twenty.

469. Twenty-five? Yes.

470. That represents £25 when the whole of the capital has been called up. You have already paid 2s. 6d. per share? Yes.

471. You do not know whether the whole of the shares have been taken up? I am almost certain they have not.

472. The share capital was £5000? The secretary can give you more information.

473. You are a director, and you don't know whether the shares have been taken up? I have already answered that question.

474. I may take it, then, that you do not know how many shares have been taken up? No, I do not.
475. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—If the gentlemen with whom you are associated for the promotion of this company only desire to see the railway carried through, and have not any intention to make any profit out of the venture, does it matter to yourself and those with whom you are connected whether the Government construct this line or not so long as you get it? Would it make any difference to the people of Launceston with whom you have any connection whether it is a syndicate railway or whether it is constructed by Government? Not the slightest, except that it would save them trouble and expense.
476. Presuming the Government takes it over, would the syndicate be as willing to see it built by Government as to build it themselves? Yes, that is so, presuming the colony could bear the obligations.

PHILIP HENRY PARSONS *called in, and examined.*

477. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—What is your name? Philip Henry Parsons.
478. And you are a prospector? Yes, a prospector.
479. You live at Deloraine? At Chudleigh.
480. Do you know they are talking of a railway between Mole Creek and the West Coast mineral fields? Yes.
481. I think you know about the country? I have been traversing the country, prospecting it for the last ten years.
482. These last ten years? Yes.
483. Do you know the line known as Innes's survey? I have not been along the whole of the line since it was surveyed. I have been through the country before it was surveyed.
484. You have been through the country through which Mr. Innes has been? Through most of it.
485. Do you know Scott's survey? Yes, I have been along that.
486. They both converge on the same point at Mount Pelion? Yes, they do.
487. Which do you consider the most direct, the easier, and cheaper route to Mount Pelion, Mr. Innes's or Scott and Stewart's? Well, I should almost say Scott and Stewart's, and the lowest grade would be got at the lowest elevation, and I should almost think the easiest grade.
488. It would be a little longer than Mr. Innes's, would it not? Yes, I believe it would; it takes the Mersey Valley, and runs up a lower level.
489. Can you name any particular difficulties which Scott's survey escapes, and which Mr. Innes's has to overcome? Only the higher elevation of the top of Gadd's Hill, and went over what they call the M'Kenzie Plain. Stewart kept round what is commonly known as Howell's Plains and up the Mersey Valley, from Circular Ponds to Mount Pelion.
- 489A. Which of the two lines pass through the most agricultural country? I really believe Mr. Innes's would pass through the most available agricultural land.
490. You think Mr. Innes's does? Yes, because over Gadd's Hill the land is more practical for farming purposes.
491. Mr. Will has just stated that he thinks there is more agricultural land opened by Scott's? Yes, Scott's line opened up a good deal of good grazing and agricultural land. It would not touch at Lienna, and Mr. Innes's goes through Lienna.
492. Is there agricultural land in the immediate vicinity of Lienna. Yes.
493. Innes's line goes right through, and Scott's only passes it? Yes, within five or six miles, so far as I should judge, and the other line is a little further off.
494. After you get to Mount Pelion, do you know anything about the nature of the country between there and Rosebery? Yes, I have been over it; possibly the worst country over the line is getting round Mount Pelion.
495. Do you know the line Mr. Innes has followed in getting round Mount Pelion? Yes, I do.
496. Do you think it is possible to improve on that in any way by going round, by taking a longer grade? I think you would get a better grade by going round.
497. How would that bring him out as far as Rosebery is concerned? It is a long stretch of country to travel over before he gets to Rosebery after he gets on to Mount Pelion.
498. And the difference as to distance? It does not make above two or three miles difference in the distance—not a mile.
499. You mean to say that by going round Mount Pelion, and keeping lower than Innes' line, it would not make more than two or three miles difference? He would not take a better track; not deviating more than is necessary.
500. Is this what you mean: you don't think Mr. Innes's line would be improved upon to a greater extent than by making a slight deviation, and that would make a difference of two or three miles in the distance? Not to keep the same route.
501. It would lessen the grade by taking a longer route? Yes, I don't think it would be taken by a much better place—not to keep the same route.
502. To get a much easier grade than Innis's would take you through an entirely different country—is that what you mean? Yes, through an entirely different country.
503. Where would it bring you out? You keep to the south of East Pelion instead of to the north.
504. How would you get to Mount Rosebery by that? It would bring you out on to the Lake Dora country, about 20 miles, I should say, as near as I could judge. I have not been through the Dora district direct into Rosebery.
505. What would be the distance nearly from Dora to Rosebery? Twenty miles, as nearly as I can say.
506. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—After having travelled that way, do you mean it would be 20 miles additional, or is it 20 miles from the Lake Dora country into Rosebery? Twenty miles, I should think, from the Lake Dora country into Rosebery.

507. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—You say it would be 20 miles from the Lake Dora country into Rosebery? I would not positively say. I should think that.

508. That is your opinion? Yes, not positively.

509. How much longer would it be over the Mole Creek line than by Innes's line over Mount Pelion? I should think it would make very little difference. I don't think it would make much difference.

[Witness here explained the two lines by means of a chart.]

510. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—How far do you think it is from Lake Dora to Mount Pelion by the way you have been? I could hardly estimate.

511. *By Mr. Lewis.*—Have you ever been from Pelion to Dora? Yes; but I have not followed the route I have been speaking of. It would be 30 miles, I should think.

512. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—Mr. Innes made the distance from Pelion to Rosebery about 50 miles? About 45 miles.

513. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—Which line, do you think, would tap the more valuable country—Innes's line or Aylett's? I don't think that there was a great deal of difference between them. Innes's track taps the most mineral.

514. The other would, perhaps, tap more coal? I would not say.

515. Either route would serve Mount Pelion as far as coal is concerned? Yes, on either side.

516. You are aware of the recent discoveries of coal at Mount Pelion? Yes, decidedly.

517. They have been actually working upon one? Yes, undoubtedly.

518. As regards that particular mine, either route would serve? Yes.

519. Either Aylett's or the other? Yes.

520. Do you know whether there have been, in that country up towards Mount Pelion, any recent discoveries? Yes, I believe there have been two or three.

521. Two or three—there is the Mount Pelion Consolidated, is there not? Yes.

522. And there are, in addition, two or three others? Yes, I have packed out and sent away from these discoveries 140 weight of specimens the week before last.

523. The week before last? Yes.

524. What has become of those specimens? Some were sent to Launceston and some to Deloraine.

525. Have they been assayed do you know? I do not know; there were 56 of coal and 58 of copper sent to Harry White. I consigned them at Mole Creek.

526. What are the discoveries, and their extent? One is copper, two are coal.

527. Copper and coal? Yes, copper and coal.

528. Can you say whether the mineral-bearing land is of a large extent? Well, from Pelion to the West Coast and Rosebery there is mineral-bearing land right through.

529. Without a railway would it be of any value to the Colony? No value whatever; it would not be worked. [Piece of ore produced.]

530. Where did this piece of ore come from? It came from the consolidated copper. I brought 280 weight from the same place.

531. Is there any extent of that? Yes, I believe so, so far as we know. We have not sunk any depth.

532. Do you know whether this has been assayed? Yes, there has been an assay of that.

533. What was the result? As high as 30 per cent. of copper; as to silver I would not say; the gold, I believe, was 5 dwts.

534. You cannot say what was the average assay? No, I cannot; but I know there was 30 per cent. of copper.

HARRY WHITE, called in and examined.

535. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—Your name, Mr. White? Is Harry White.

536. And you are a sharebroker? Yes.

536A. Carrying on business in Launceston? Yes.

537. Are you interested at all in recent discoveries between Mole Creek and West Coast? I am the secretary of an association whose operations are in that direction.

538. You are the secretary of an association whose operations are in that direction? Yes, since August last.

539. Since August last? About August last.

540. Have discoveries of any importance been made? Various discoveries have been made, particularly of coal, but until recently we did not deem them to be of any value.

541. Has anything taken place to make you alter your opinion? Yes, we have made one discovery as regards the value of the coal.

542. What particular value, then, does this coal possess? The coal is of a most favourable nature; it will make coke. I brought one or two samples to show the Committee.

543. Will you kindly produce them? Yes.

544. Have you coal in its original state as well as in the coke? Yes. [Specimen of coal and coke produced.]

545. *By Mr. Hartnoll.*—How far would this be down? Not far at all; it is on the surface.

546. Has it not been found in a quantity? No, up to the present time it has not.

547. Mr. Furrage says it is traced for some three or four miles? In its thickness it is of sufficient length to prove that there is a seam of coal six chains long.

548. Are you engaged in developing it further? Yes.

549. You say it has been analysed; would its analysis compare with that of the Newcastle coal? I am not in a position to tell the Committee that now, because I have not got the comparisons; they are

being obtained. I may tell you that pieces of that coal are in the hands of Mr. R. M. Johnston, the Government Statistician, and if your Chairman can wait upon him (with my permission) he can get his analysis.

550. Assuming that the coal can be delivered in large quantities and of good quality, where do you expect to find a market for it? On the West Coast Coast, of course.

551. What is the nature of the market there? A very large one for coke at the present time.

552. Do you think that the coke would be of sufficiently good quality? I am not prepared to say at the present time.

553. Do you know anything about the quantity of coke consumed there? No, I do not, except that I saw a letter from Mr. Sticht, the metallurgist, in March last, where he said the consumption was 50 tons per week, but the consumption has very much increased since that.

554. Look at that document and read the "facts and figures" compiled, and say what you find the consumption to be? [The witness here read an extract from the document, as follows:—]

ESTIMATE of Quantity of Freights to be imported into Strahan Harbour for the next year for the purpose of the Mount Lyell Reduction Works.

For construction purposes for second plant of five furnaces, machinery, timber, bricks, &c., and sundry stores.....	Tons. 8000
For consumption during the next year—	
Coke.....	18,000
Sundries	2000
	<u>28,000</u>
Export for the next year—	
Copper	7800

After the completion of the second set of five furnaces, which will extend the reduction works to a plant of ten furnaces, with a capacity of 1000 tons of ore per day, the consumption of imported material per annum will be as follows:—

	Tons.
Coke	36,000
Coal	27,000
Sundries.....	4000
	<u>67,000</u>

There are mineral discoveries of a similar nature to those of Mount Lyell.

555. Assuming there would be none, where would be the market for the material you have? On the West Coast, where these discoveries are proved.

556. To get that market what would you require? A better means of conveyance than there is now.

557. I assume this railway is necessary? Yes, for conveyance of coal and coke, you cannot possibly get it there without; and there would be no use of spending the money for development.

558. Can you tell the gentlemen of the Committee of any mineral discoveries that have been made? I know of one five miles distant from this coal, from which they are sending a lot of mixed minerals, and its assay for copper was 4 per cent., silver $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and gold 2 dwts. per ton.

559. What particular mine was that? No particular mine, the association I represent. It is 2 feet wide. There is nothing further proved: it is proving itself; it extends along the surface six or eight chains.

560. Have you been in touch at all with many persons who are acquainted with the nature of the country up there? Yes, there was Mr. Russell, who was the first one to go over the track, on more than one occasion; he was in constant communication with myself; but there are others, but more particularly him, because he went there when in a rough state, about ten years ago; but then he only spoke in a general way of its being mineral-bearing and coal-bearing. He has had some experience there because he was there with Mr. Will about two years ago.

561. Have you spoken to others? Yes, Aylett and Will, and others who have been out some time.

562. And what did they say? I enquired more particularly about minerals from them; they spoke favourably about the land in many places, stating that it was very good along the route.

563. What would be the effect on the mining industry in that direction if a railway were not constructed? Very disastrous, I should think.

564. Will it practically put an end to all operations there? No, I don't think that, because miners are not to be put out exactly; they will find another outlet by Zeehan. It is absolutely necessary to the development of that portion of the country that communication by rail be established, either by Mole Creek or Zeehan.

565. Do you mean those discoveries? I am not prepared to say that they are in such a state of development as will warrant a railway there.

566. But supposing they are in such a state of development? If there is not a possibility of a railway, there is no use spending money there.

567. The money that is being spent there is being spent purely in view of the possibility or probability of a railway being constructed shortly? Yes, in the hope of a railway being constructed.

FRANCIS W. HALES, called in and examined.

568. By Mr. Hobkirk.—Your name is Francis William Hales? Yes.

569. And you are an Accountant residing in Launceston? Yes.

570. You are the Secretary of a Company that has been formed for the purpose of acquiring the right of constructing a railway between Mole Creek and the West Coast? Yes.

571. Did you, Mr. Hales, originate this project? I was one of the first; I was probably one of the first to bring others together.

572. How long ago was it that you initiated the idea? I suppose it was twelve months ago.

573. What steps did you take in the first instance? I called a meeting of a number of others whom I met, and who were more directly interested in the matter.

574. How long since was it that you called that meeting? Some months ago.

575. When was that meeting held? Four or five months ago; up to that point it was all informal.

576. You spoke of several gentlemen from time to time, and the idea culminated in a meeting being held about four or five months ago? Yes.

577. *By the Chairman.*—The first meeting was held four or five months ago? Yes.

578. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—Have you any minutes of the first meeting? No.

579. Where was that meeting held? It was held in the Launceston Stock Exchange.

580. Can you give any idea of who were there? Yes, there were present, amongst others, S. J. Sutton, H. Button, W. Fordyce, Dr. Stewart, of Latrobe.

581. What was the result of that meeting? The result of the meeting was that the Direct Route Association requested that no movement should take place until a certain amount had been applied for to Parliament for a track.

582. Was anything decided upon? Nothing definite.

583. Nothing definite? No.

584. What was discussed? The probabilities of applying to Parliament to make the railway.

585. It was not resolved that you should apply to Parliament? It was then decided that we should not go and apply to Parliament; it was felt that it would be hopeless that we should go as a syndicate.

586. That is what I want to get at—was anything resolved upon? It was resolved to form a company prepared to make a railway.

587. You did not resolve yourselves into a company? No, not formally.

588. The meeting adjourned, you say, at the instance of the Direct Route Association? Yes.

589. What was the next active step taken in connection with this matter? Well, since the informal meeting took place nothing was done till the 28th September.

590. Then on the 28th September the first meeting of which any record was kept, was held? Yes.

591. Prior to that, there were informal meetings? Yes.

592. Where did they take place? Sometimes at my office, sometimes at Mr. Martin's office, sometimes at the Stock Exchange.

593. At those meetings was anything decided upon? Yes. It was decided so far to form a company.

594. Oh, it was decided that a company should be formed? Yes.

595. Was any decision then come to as to whether or not they should begin operations. Of course I am not dealing with the meeting of the 28th September, at that particular meeting when you say it was decided to do something. Why did you not do something? Because we kept adjourning to see what the feeling was outside among the traders.

596. Then, prior to the 28th you were feeling the pulse of the people generally on this question? Yes.

597. On the 28th September you held a meeting: who were present? W. Martin, W. R. Stewart, Hedley Button, James Boag, G. T. McKinlay, Thomas Bourke, Ernest Lodder, and others.

598. What was resolved upon? All those present formed a Committee to forward the proposed railway, with power to add to their number, and that Messrs. C. B. Grubb, D. N. Cameron, C. Youl, James Barclay, Thomas Gunn, Thomas Bourke, and S. Eardley-Wilmot act as promoters and trustees for the benefit of the company hereafter to be formed to acquire the rights if granted by Parliament.

599. Are these trustees the persons who are now applying for the Bill? They are.

600. Was anything else decided upon at that meeting? Yes, the result of the interview previously held with Mr. Sadler was reported, and that was all that was done, except the formal business that solicitors be instructed to apply to Parliament for leave to bring in a Bill, the object being to authorise the construction of a railway.

601. At that time were the promoters or gentlemen interesting themselves in the matter aware of any other scheme, or any other application for rights? They were aware of that on the morning before.

602. By what means were they made acquainted with the other scheme? On Monday morning, 27th September, by an advertisement in the paper.

603. That advertisement was a notice of intention to apply on behalf of R. J. Sadler? Yes.

604. Do I understand that that was the first intimation you, or any of those associated with you, had of the existence of the second project? Yes.

605. I understand you have said further that prior to that meeting it had been decided to apply for these rights? This will confirm it—(Witness read from minutes):—

On the 28th September Mr. McDonald reported, on behalf of the sub-committee, that he had interviewed Mr. R. J. Sadler in reference to the scheme Mr. Sadler was promoting with a view of ascertaining whether he meant to construct the railway, if power granted, or whether he was merely taking the matter up as a speculation. Mr. McDonald reported that he had not been able to get a satisfactory answer from Mr. Sadler.

606. When was that sub-committee appointed? It was appointed some weeks before.

607. The sub-committee was appointed to wait upon Mr. Sadler? Yes.

608. When? I am not very clear whether it was Monday, 27th, or Tuesday, 28th September.

609. Was a meeting held before Tuesday, 28th, with reference to Mr. Sadler's notice? Yes, repeatedly.

610. With reference to Mr. Sadler's notice? Yes.

611. When was that meeting held? It must have been the day before (Monday) or on that morning. I think it was Monday afternoon, 27th, or early on Tuesday morning. I am inclined to think it was Monday afternoon. I was not secretary: there was no secretary.

612. Were you present at any of the previous meetings? Yes, every one of them.

613. Although there was no minute to that effect, had it been virtually decided that application should be made for this bill? Yes.

614. Of that you have no doubt? No.

615. You think the meeting was held on Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning, at which a committee was appointed to wait on Mr. Sadler—what instructions were given? We were instructed to say to Mr. Sadler that if he had any *bonâ fide* capital at his back, and could satisfy us as business men, we would absolutely recede from the position we were taking up, and that if he felt confident of a fair amount of success, and wanted help, we would not only be glad to go in ourselves, but would use our influence to assist him.

616. Those were your instructions? Yes.

617. Acting on those instructions, did you yourself wait on Mr. Sadler? I did not.

618. Who waited on Mr. Sadler? Mr. McDonald. It was considered by myself and the other members of the sub-committee that Mr. McDonald should wait upon him.

619. Mr. McDonald having waited on Mr. Sadler, the committee attended this meeting on the 28th to report? Yes.

620. In consequence of that report, was it decided to do anything? Instructions were given to the solicitors to draw up the Bill.

621. It was decided to give instructions to the solicitors? Yes.

622. Was a subsequent meeting held for the promotion of the Company? Yes, on the 4th October.

623. Is that the next recorded meeting? Yes.

624. Who were present? William Martin, G. T. M'Kinlay, Thomas Bourke, Hedley Button, W. R. Stewart, F. W. Hales.

625. At that meeting what was decided upon? A company was formed for the purpose of providing direct railway communication with the West Coast mineral fields by a line starting from the Chudleigh Junction or Mole Creek Station, on the Government railway system, and connecting with the Government line now being constructed between Zeehan and Rosebery; the capital to be £5000 in 5000 shares of £1 each.

626. Were the provisional directors appointed? Yes.

627. Who were they? C. B. Grubb, T. Bourke, Thomas Gunn, Charles Youl, J. I. Boyes, W. Fordyce, W. Martin, F. Holmes, S. Eardley-Wilmot, D. N. Cameron, James Boag, David Ritchie, D. M'Kinnon, W. R. Stewart, F. W. Hales, Ernest Lodder, L. S. Holmes, P. Oakley Fysh, W. H. D. Archer, G. T. M'Kinlay, A. Hinman, Henry Reed, Hedley Button, J. T. M'Donald, James Barclay, A. Beaumont, and William Gibson.

628. There was a further resolution at that meeting.

629. Were you appointed at that meeting? I think it was at a later meeting.

630. Come to the next meeting: was there anything else resolved? Yes; it was decided that the promoters should take no pecuniary interest other than as subscribers to the company.

631. Was it the unanimous wish of those present that the matter should not be in any way carried on for the profit of the persons associated? Yes; in fact, at one of the informal meetings a resolution to make promoters' shares was swept away at once.

632. Was there anything else at that meeting? No.

633. When was the meeting held at which the company may be said to have been formed? Eighth October.

634. At that meeting the directors were appointed, and the secretary? Yes, and 1100 shares were subscribed for.

635. At that meeting were directors appointed? No directors were appointed.

636. Provisional directors? It has never been beyond that stage; we have appointed an executive committee out of them.

637. Let us have them? Charles Grubb, Thomas Bourke, Charles Youl, William Fordyce, S. Eardley-Wilmot, W. H. D. Archer, G. T. M'Kinlay, A. Hinman, J. T. McDonald, and James Barclay.

638. What class of men did they represent? They were picked out as being representative of all interests.

639. Individually they were practically the representatives of the different callings? Yes.

640. I presume this was the prospectus (prospectus produced)? A draft of that prospectus was submitted at the meeting, and approved of.

641. The prospectus was submitted and approved of at that meeting? Yes.

642. How many shares have been applied for? I have not got all the list—between 3500 and 4000.

643. Between 3500 and 4000 were applied for? We only wanted 2500, and then a company was to be formed when 2500 were subscribed.

644. And you say that 2500 were applied for—can you speak with certainty? For 3000 I received the money, and there were only the country lists to come in.

645. How many individuals would these 3500 shares comprise? I suppose, I should say, about 250 distinct individuals.

646. Distinct individuals? Yes.

647. What class of people took them up? Farmers, graziers, merchants, shopkeepers, and others interested in some form or other in getting the line.

648. What district did these 250 come from? Scottsdale, and, taking the line towards the midlands route, round Deloraine and down as far as Latrobe.

649. You say, then, that all the shareholders resided at places from Latrobe as far as Scottsdale? Yes.

650. The promoters who are named in the Bill asking for this concession—were they appointed, or were they trustees appointed by the company for the purpose of acquiring these rights? They are actually appointed, specifically as trustees, to acquire the rights—(witness read from the minutes): "Resolved, that all those present form a committee to forward the proposed railway, with power to add to their number:—Messrs. C. B. Grubb, D. N. Cameron, C. Youl, James Barclay, Thomas Gunn, Thomas Bourke, and S. Eardley-Wilmot to act as promoters and trustees for a company hereafter to be formed to acquire the rights if granted by Parliament."

651. If those rights be granted, what is the intention of the company? To hand them over to whoever will make a railway.

652. Is it the intention of the company to ask for any profit themselves? None whatever.

653. Has that been expressly stipulated? Yes, by the directors and many of the large shareholders, and it has been given out to the shareholders in speaking to them.

654. Can you say of your own knowledge of those 250 shareholders interested, that in taking up shares they are not getting any direct benefit beyond the construction of the railway? I think I can state that from my own knowledge I have spoken to almost all of them, and I have been very careful to impress them with the fact that the application is made purely on the ground of the necessity for the railway.

655. Assuming that you obtain the rights and succeed in getting the necessary capital, is it intended to ask the new company for anything more than cost, and what, for the present company? Only for the sum that it will cost us to get the rights.

656. You merely ask for out-of-pocket expenses? Out-of-pocket expenses.

657. Can you say what probability there is of obtaining the necessary capital to construct the railway, take it locally, for instance? Well, we have been fairly well assured that from one-fourth to one-fifth can be raised in the colony.

658. That is, in Tasmania? Yes, in Tasmania.

659. Is that opinion shared in general by the directors? Yes.

660. Some of the shareholders and directors are men of considerable means? Yes.

661. Have any of them expressed the intention to take up shares to any extent? Yes.

662. Apart from the money you expect to raise locally, what are your prospects as to raising the money? We have been already approached by one representative of English capital.

663. Is there any doubt in the minds of the company that the extra capital will be raised? No, if they can get the Bill through in its present form.

664. You have read the Bill? Yes.

665. Carefully? Yes.

666. Does the Bill contain any clause giving the promoters any particular advantage or emolument excepting the concessions asked for and the right to construct the railway? That is all that was contemplated.

667. As far as you know, is that all that the bill gives? Water-power is also asked for, but it is rather tied with restrictions.

668. As to what? For use for the purposes of the railway. Clause 100 of the bill states:—"It shall be lawful for the promoters to use all or any of the waters aforesaid for any of the purposes hereinafter specified—to work any machinery that may be erected by the promoters for generating, making, transmitting, and supplying electricity or other motive-power to the railway or other works authorised by this Act, and to the lands which the promoters are by Part XIII. of this Act empowered to select."

669. Does it give any for the purpose of sale? No, not for distribution or sale.

670. I suppose, in connection with the applications of persons to take shares, you have conversed with numerous people as to the advantage and route of the railway? Yes.

671. What class of people have you spoken to? Every class, I am sure, from the biggest merchant and biggest grazier down to the smallest farmer and smallest shopkeeper, and even the carter who will be employed in carting goods to the railway, and the small-produce man.

672. What is the universal opinion? Everybody in favour of the railway—the necessity for the railway.

673. Can you say what area of the country will be benefited by the construction of the railway? The whole of the western—by the western I mean the Deloraine and Westbury country, the eastern, and the north-eastern, and the northern portions of the colony—all these will be benefited.

674. How will the eastern and north-eastern, districts be benefited? By the fact (I am expressing the opinion of a grazier up there) that if you take the western stock that way, the Launceston market will be clear to us; a Fingal grazier told me that.

675. What is the opinion of yourself and those who are associated with you as to the possibility of this line coming into competition with any of the Government lines? It would not be possible, it would be exactly to the contrary.

676. Will any of the Government lines derive any benefit from the construction of this line? Yes, the Western line materially, and the Chudleigh line.

677. By what means? By the traffic between any point here—or of these lines—and the commencement of the Mole Creek line, of both passengers and goods.

678. What about the portion of the line between Deloraine and Devonport? Particularly Deloraine and Devonport, and in fact, right on to Sheffield. The farmers living in that portion of the country will be able to get their butter and potatoes and other produce—they produce butter and potatoes largely—into the mineral fields direct.

679. That will, in your opinion, be a more preferable route than going *via* Burnie? Yes.

680. Shorter, I presume? Yes, shorter by eighty miles.

681. Would it improve the Chudleigh line? The present Chudleigh line we understand to be a losing concern, but it will most certainly improve it into a paying one worth running.

682. I would ask you, is the gauge of the proposed railway to be two feet or more; if the capital be available, is it not suggested that the narrow gauge be continued to the Chudleigh and Western line? Yes.

683. Taking up the present 3 ft. 6 in. gauge? Yes, and making a continuation of the line from Chudleigh Junction to Rosebery.

684. And in that respect it is anticipated that the Chudleigh line will be turned into a paying one? Yes, the Government will get their proportion of the profits.

685. Have you had any conversation with any persons competent to give an opinion as to the mineral prospect on the intended line? Yes.

686. Could you mention any prospectors besides those who have given evidence? Well, I cannot call to mind at present, but I well know that I could produce five or six men, equally reliable men.

687. To whom you have spoken yourself? Yes.
688. And who have been backwards and forwards? Yes.
689. What is their opinion as to the probability of mineral developments? They seem to hold the one opinion that from Mount Pelion to Rosebery the country is a mass of minerals.
690. That seems to be the one opinion? Yes, that seems to be the one opinion.
691. What effect would it have on the developments, or possible developments, if the railway should not be constructed? There is no doubt that the large body of copper and coal would be valueless. You can develop a gold mine with the ordinary battery machine, but you could not develop the big lodes; that is absolutely impossible.
692. Is that only your own opinion, or is it the opinion of those others who are competent to give an opinion on this particular matter? It is not only my own opinion, but the opinion of others who are quite competent to form an opinion on the subject. I may state that when I was requested, twelve months ago, to enter into this syndicate I point blank refused to ask any of my friends to go into it at all.
693. Have you any friends who know the country? W. L. Field, who has been there 8 or 9 times himself, has told me on several occasions that he knows of from 20 to 30 thousand acres of really good land, of first-class pastoral or fairly good agricultural land, that would be served by the railway at present.
694. Mr. Field was asked to attend here to-day? Yes; he was most anxious to attend as a shareholder.
695. He is a shareholder? Yes, a large shareholder.
696. Has he ever given his opinion as to the effect of the line on the graziers? Yes; it was he who first drew my attention to the tremendous loss that is sustained in driving stock to the West Coast.
697. What did he tell you was the loss? He told me that the average loss was from 100 to 150 pounds in many instances per beast in weight—that the value of the meat when it got there was 9d. per lb., at Zeehan, without reckoning the proportion of deaths of beasts that got off the track, so that you may fairly say that, taking a mob of 100 bullocks, you would lose from £3 to £4 per head, as much as £5 per head in many instances: that is, the difference as between producer and consumer, and taking the cost of driving charges, and taking the number of deaths occurring during the 7 or 8 days' driving, you may fairly say that unless the season is an extremely beneficial one, the loss would be £5 per head, it costs so much to get there.
698. That loss will mean an increased expense to the consumer? Yes, undoubtedly, that is the difference between the beasts on the farm and the beasts as sold to the consumer, between £4 and £5.
699. The producer and consumer would both benefit by the railway communication? Yes, the producer would probably benefit; he would get better prices for his meat, having more or less risk; the consumer would get better meat, with more quantity and a lower price.
700. As regards sheep? No sheep can get through that country.
701. I was going to ask you, with reference to driving sheep, would it be possible if a good track were made? There is no feed on the route, and 1000 would not travel more than 10 or 12 miles a day in that country; they would be practically eight days without food.
702. That would make them practically valueless? Yes, almost valueless.
703. Whence is mutton obtained for the West Coast? A very large quantity from Victoria.
704. Do you know whether a great deal that is consumed comes from Victoria? No, not exactly.
705. What is the consumption of sheep? I do not know; between 13 and 14 thousand sheep were consumed; I do not know what proportion came from Victoria; a large proportion was sent from Victoria, a number from the Launceston and Bay ports, and shipped round. In one instance a farmer had been in the habit of shipping to his son, who is a butcher at Zeehan, sending the sheep to Ulverstone, and thence along the route to Bischoff to their destination.
706. The bulk of these sheep would travel by rail? I think the whole of them would.
707. And the railway would then, in your opinion, be largely availed of by graziers and pastoralists? Yes, by graziers and pastoralists.
708. As regards that particular point, can you give any other information as to the sheep that were taken by rail? Every sheep would be taken by rail, I think; they can only be brought from Victoria at a terrific cost to Victorians.
709. Have the promoters any idea of the probable cost per mile of this route? Yes; as nearly as we can get it, it is £2184 per mile.
710. That is based upon what? It is based upon the information that we can get from prospectors and Innes's surveys, and other information.
711. What is the anticipated cost? Not exceeding £2400 per mile. The £2400 per mile we base that on the fact that the North-East Dundas Tram ranged from £1100 to £3000 per mile, and we were given to understand that good stretches of country, fairly level country, would reduce the average cost to £2400 per mile. The information is from a fair source. I would like to state that one of the causes of the delay is this: some months ago we proposed to get a survey made first of all, before we did anything; but we found that the cost of the work of making the survey would be rather too heavy unless we had some reasonable prospect of getting power to make the line; that question was considered.
712. That was before the promoters asked for the grant of 50,000 acres? Yes.
713. 50,000 acres? Yes.
714. Is that the only concession you are asking for? Yes, as far as the land is concerned.
715. You are not asking for the land to be locked up? No; our plans and specifications are marked; but in the meantime anyone is empowered to take the land up.
716. There is no provision in the Bill protecting or locking up the land for all time? No.
717. It is open for selection to the general public up to the time of commencement? Yes, and the company must perform certain things.
718. At the present time, what is the view of the promoters as to the value of this land for which you are asking for a grant—what is its present value, this 50,000 acres? I don't suppose that people would give one shilling an acre for it in its present state.
719. It has no tangible value? No, not that I know of, in its present inaccessible state.

720. Then, the only way of making it of value to the colony is to build a railway? Yes; undoubtedly.

721. If you build the railway, the colony will benefit? Yes, we shall have to pay the Land Tax, and we must do something to it to pay the Land Tax, if it is agricultural land. If it is mineral land we have to pay royalty on all the minerals we take out. In that way, although the Government parts with an estate which, at the present time, represents nix, a probable source of revenue is provided by the Government, undoubtedly.

722. The Government will be able to avail itself of the nature of the mineral discoveries and of the extent and quality of the land? Yes.

723. As to the royalty, you are offering a royalty to the Crown on all minerals found? Yes, on the gross value of minerals raised from the ground.

724. I think you made some statement as to the probable quantity of stock that you expect would be carried over the line to Zeehan? That was based on last year's population and consumption, and estimating the probable growth of population there will be some twenty to twenty-five thousand people that will require supplies in 1899.

725. Where did you get the figures from? We know the population at the end of 1882 and also in 1896; we know the large increase that took place in the population in new districts that are now being developed, such as the Dora and Rosebery away to the Pieman; we know since the same increase has gone on with the Colebrook and Rosebery country. There will be smelters up there, certainly in Rosebery, that will mount up to quite as many as are at Mount Lyell, say 3000. We know that Mount Lyell employs an average of the population of 4 to 1: basing on these calculations we feel convinced that there will be 25,000 people by the end of the year 1898. These people will want between 20,000 and 25,000 sheep. There are no sheep in any quantity on the North-West Coast, so that the whole of the sheep must be supplied from the south and the west, and, as far as beef is concerned, it would be supplied from the Deloraine district.

726. What number of sheep do you anticipate carrying? We reckon practically almost the whole of them.

727. How many does the whole represent? 20,000 to 25,000 sheep.

728. What about bullocks? The western district will enter into competition to a certain extent with the north-west coast, but it seems to me, from what I can gather, that there will be room for both; the north-west coast does not seem to produce all they want, in fact you have heard of it in the evidence. If they supply 2500 or 3000, we will have the rest, that is, we will divide the beef traffic; with the north-west coast.

729. You will divide the beef traffic with the north-west coast? I suppose so.

730. What about competition against the other side—beef that comes across the sea? We don't get beef at this end of the island from the other colonies; it goes to Hobart.

731. Where does that come from? New South Wales.

732. Why does it not go to Burnie? They can supply themselves. Burnie and ourselves can supply all the beef business; we are always able to hold the beef business.

733. Have the promoters of your company made any estimate as to the passenger traffic? Yes, I am not anxious to make too definite a statement on that point, because we have not verified it properly, but assuming that where one travels by water now, we feel certain that five or six will travel by land.

734. And the passenger traffic will be drawn from whence? All over the island, midland and south; Hobart will have to go that way, the Launceston people will have to go that way, and the eastern and western districts—a large portion of the eastern. Then there is the Melbourne traffic; many of the visitors to the mines who interview the directors will go that way.

735. What about the passenger traffic to Burnie? There will be a certain amount of that. I think an increase by direct communication will be far greater than anything we will lose.

736. Have you had any information from prospectors as to their intentions if the Bill goes through? Yes, in fact I have been besieged by many syndicates. Several syndicates want to get an indication as to the line of country we will take exactly. They are not mere native prospectors, but they have foreign money behind them, men who are working with syndicates or have money of their own.

737. If the Bill be passed, will it lead to increased activity among prospectors? Undoubtedly, they look upon it as a new unknown country.

738. Where they may find another half a dozen Mount Lyells? Undoubtedly.

739. Can you give any reason why it is very desirable that the company should have its Bill through this session? Yes, it is felt that now is the most favourable time to commence to get a survey through; and if we don't get it through this session we practically lose the year.

740. Why is that? Because we cannot start the survey until October.

741. You lose this summer? We lose a year; losing this summer means losing a year.

742. If you don't get the Bill this year and you get it next, the survey would take place in the summers of '98 and '99, instead of in the summers of '97 and '98? Exactly, that is the reason for urgency. The reason for urgency is that the money market is extremely favourable for such projects as this, and we cannot tell how long it will last. I would like to state this: in considering the concessions that are to be asked for, the promoters studied most carefully to bring them down to the lowest possible level at which they considered it safe and reasonable to say that they could raise the money. They carefully eliminated from the request anything that would look as if they were apparently asking for too much. And I do not think that they can do with one iota less than they are asking for. I feel fairly confident they can get the money if they want it.

743. *By Mr. Croft.*—You say you have been connected with those who have been anxious to have a line constructed from Mole Creek to the West Coast mineral fields for about 12 months? Yes.

744. You had a number of informal meetings prior to this at which nothing took place? Nothing was recorded.

745. Nothing was recorded, and nothing done? We were like a ball of snow. We were growing, and growing, and growing.

746. Did you grow?—you have told us that a number of influential gentlemen met, and it was resolved that nothing should be done? No, that we should not proceed at once; that it did not stop us.

747. Was it not decided that you should not apply to Parliament? They said "Let us wait, otherwise we shall tread on the corns of the Direct Route Association." Mr. Sutton has promised the Committee to make that clear. If you want it he can give it much clearer than I am able to do.

748. Is it not a fact that you decided not to apply to Parliament? No, you are wrong, I meant not at that time.

749. You gave us to understand that unless Parliament advanced the sum of £5000, you would not proceed to Parliament: was it not decided not to do anything further until Government granted you or some other people the sum of £5000; you would not go any further? There is a body called the Direct Route Association having many members, in fact nearly all the leading men on the town are directly interested. It is a voluntary one. Some of these men and others attended these meetings and pointed out, "If you make application to Parliament now, you endanger our Direct Route Association getting £5000. Let it lie a little while and see if the Minister will meet us."

750. They wanted it to be patriotic, and you agreed to that? Yes, for the track.

751. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—To construct a track? Yes; three or four years ago the graziers wanted a track right through.

752. *By Mr. Croft.*—You say that during all this time you and others were feeling the public pulse generally, to see how they took it? Yes.

753. And during a considerable time the public did not show a great desire for the construction of this railway? On the contrary.

754. In what practical form did they give expression to that desire? By an expression of opinion that they would be glad to enter into it.

755. The opinion had taken no practical shape? We were not prepared ourselves to put forward any scheme.

756. You practically took no step, you or those gentlemen whom you have named, until the advertisement had been put in by Mr. Sadler? Yes, we had meetings.

757. Meetings that resulted in nothing? Oh, well, I was not Secretary. I cannot produce any written evidence of what took place before that day.

758. *By Mr. Page.*—Before the 28th October? The 27th.

759. *By Mr. Croft.*—Mr. Sadler's advertisement appeared on the 28th?—Can you put your finger upon anything definite whether it had been resolved by you or any other person that notice should be given to apply for a Bill to Parliament? I can give you no documentary evidence.

760. Can you point to any particular date upon which you or any other gentlemen had decided to apply? I cannot give you any documentary evidence.

761. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—You only know it is so? Yes.

762. *By Mr. Croft.*—The question I put was this, at that meeting it was decided, in response to Mr. Sutton's request that the time should be postponed, that application should be made for a Bill, but that the time should be postponed? I don't think at that meeting it was actually decided that a Bill should be applied for, but the time was certainly postponed.

763. Postponed? Yes.

764. *By Mr. Archer.*—What Mr. Hales said was that four or five months ago a meeting was called, and it was decided that no movement should take place until the £5000 asked for by the Direct Route Association had been granted by Parliament? Yes.

765. *By Mr. Croft.*—This £5000 was never obtained from Parliament? I do not know.

766. You do know, don't you? I have nothing to do with it.

767. You were present at that meeting at which you said they decided not to do anything until £5000 had been granted for something? No, not obtained; an application was to be made to Parliament.

768. You were to stay your hand? Yes, they asked us not to do anything.

769. Your hand was stayed until the 28th September? No.

770. Did you do anything? We still kept in existence as a body.

771. We can take it from your evidence up to the 28th September you had not decided to apply to Parliament for a Bill; then, having seen the advertisement, you summoned a meeting for Tuesday? No, on Tuesday, 28th, Mr. McDonald reported.

772. *By Mr. Page.*—That is, after Mr. Sadler's advertisement? Yes, I only know of one letter written by our solicitors and a reply from Mr. Sadler.

773. *By Mr. Croft.*—At the meeting on the 28th September can you say the names of the gentlemen who were present, and can you tell us to what extent they are interested in this company? I could not tell you.

774. You could not? No.

775. How many were present? Nine.

776. Can you say, collectively, how many shares they held or now hold in this particular company? I should say between 400 and 500; I should say 400.

777. And you say that if the whole liability were called up it would be £5000; they have paid 2s. 6d. already? Yes, half a crown.

778. You have only called up half a crown? Yes, only half a crown.

779. You told us you have been feeling the pulse of the people generally? Yes.

780. And they have not even up to the present time responded? It has not been registered yet.

781. Does the total number of shares that have been taken up or applied for exceed 4000 shares? No, I do not think so.

782. At half a crown per share the capital in hand now does not exceed £400? No.

783. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—There is a good call reserve? Yes.

784. *By Mr. Croft.*—If the capital was called up it would not exceed £4000? No; that is put in the prospectus that it should not exceed £2500.

785. You have not, in fact, registered any company yet? No.

786. Are there any foreign names in the company? Certainly not.

787. You believe in Tasmania for the Tasmanians? We had no foreign names at all.

788. You say that the promoters carefully considered their Bill, what they had asked for, and were prepared to pay. You asked for the freehold of the land? Yes. On the other hand, according to Section 83, Sub-section 3, "The promoters shall pay to the Minister for the use of Her Majesty royalties upon all gold and minerals obtained from every block of land granted to the promoters under the provisions of this Act at the rate of two and a half per centum of the gross value thereof on the ground. That the said royalties shall be paid twice at least in every year."

789. If you acquire your rights you expect to get capital on that condition? Yes.

790. You have not as yet agreed with any person or persons to take this concern over? We are not in a position to do so; we are not in a position to sell.

791. Do you think any capitalists or company would accept on that condition, viz., paying two and a half per cent. of the gross value of the ore? It is rather a high amount, but I think it will be taken.

792. Do you think capitalists will deal with you upon that? I think so.

793. You have had experience in other companies, I suppose? Yes.

794. With reference to the Bischoff Company, have you considered that company? Yes. In the evidence given in connection with the Great Western Bill it was shown that had the Bischoff Company paid one cent. on the gross value they would have paid £27,000 in the number of years it had been at work, about £2000 a year. I am not quite clear on those figures, but I think that is about it.

795. You say your promoters have considered that? They considered that.

796. And you believe that capitalists will take your Bill or Act when you get it and accept that condition? Yes.

797. *By the Chairman.*—Did I understand you to say that of the meetings held before 28th September you were not secretary nor convener? I may have been convener; they were held in my office, or at the Public Exchange.

798. You say that the reason for not going on prior to that meeting was that a number of those present were interested in the Direct Route Association? Yes; that was in the middle of the year.

799. They thought that your applying for the railway would prejudice the obtaining of this amount for Innes's track? Yes.

800. Was that the reason urged why you should not take any further steps? Yes.

801. That you were not to make any public announcement of the projected railway? Yes.

802. As a matter of fact, were you aware that application was made to the Minister for a sum to be placed on the Estimates for the purpose of constructing Innes's track, and that the reason why the application was declined was because these railway proposals were then before the public? I saw that in the public newspapers.

803. I presume that when you saw one application before Parliament you felt that, whatever result it might have upon the Direct Route Association, you could not long defer your application for this railway proposal? No, not if we considered the other application was unsound.

804. As I understand, you did not intend to apply to Parliament until some definite answer had been obtained with reference to the application for a grant by Parliament to construct Innes's track? Personally, I and a number of others were against it, but we listened to the advice of Mr. Sutton and others, and it was through their personal interest that we kept back.

805. It was in deference to their opinion that you did not take any further steps at that stage? Yes.

806. You said that the whole of the shares were not applied for? No.

807. Has your object in obtaining applications been frustrated by there being two schemes before Parliament? Undoubtedly, two or three influences have been operating: first of all, the fact that there were two schemes; secondly, it was never put into the hands of public brokers; and, thirdly, there was the difficulty of communication with people whom we really want to be shareholders.

808. This application that was to be made to Parliament by the Direct Route Association was in no way to assist your railway? No, nothing to do with it, nothing whatever.

809. A cattle track would be of no use to you? No, it was to be useful during the construction of the railway for the farmers in the Great Western District.

810. *By Mr. Page.*—You had some communication with Mr. Sadler. One letter was sent from your solicitors, and one was received in return. Was that after 28th September? Yes.

811. You say you grew. When was there anything definite first done that the outside world might know of the project? The first minutes are on the 28th: Mr. Sadler's advertisement appeared on the 27th; but these meetings were following up a series of others which were not recorded, and which were practically informal,—all of the same people.

812. You had put forward no prospectus or advertisements until Mr. Sadler's had appeared? I think not. Oh, yes, there was one four or five months before a circular convening a meeting had been sent,—that meeting which has been spoken of.

813. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—How far back before the 28th September was the last informal meeting held? I cannot tell you. There have been no records kept. There had been two or three. It would be a fortnight before that.

814. There had been an informal meeting no further back than a fortnight before Mr. Sadler's advertisement appeared? Yes, pretty well a week before, and things became pretty well to a head.

815. Before that advertisement appeared, a certain body of gentlemen had a definite purpose in view? Yes; and this grew from a desire to induce Parliament to construct a railway. Discussion after discussion took place; and, when we saw we could not get it, we said "could we make the railway ourselves?" The idea kept on growing until it began to take a definite shape, a few weeks before the 28th September.

816. *By Mr. Page.*—Was the purpose manifested in any way before the 27th September? Manifested to the public.

817. Was any expression given to it in any way from which we can get it through your own minutes or by circular to the public? A circular was sent to a large number of people of that meeting at the Exchange, all of whom I do not know.

818. Now, you speak of two schemes before Parliament, you call one unsound,—do you mean Mr. Sadler's? I did not use Mr. Sadler's name nor call his scheme unsound.

819. Was it your purpose or desire to ask Parliament to make a railway?—if Parliament would make the railway would you be perfectly satisfied? Undoubtedly.

820. *By Mr. Archer.*—You stated that nothing was done until the 28th September? There were no recorded minutes.

821. It was then decided that a company should be formed? Yes, that is right, that a committee should be formed.

822. Really it was not known to the public about your company? It was as much known then as it was some time afterwards. It was known to all the leading people about here. On the 30th it was advertised.

823. *By Mr. Croft.*—Did all these provisional directors act with Mr. C. B. Grubb, or did his name become attached after Mr. Sadler's advertisement appeared? I think Mr. C. B. Grubb rode in specially to that meeting at the Stock Exchange 5 or 6 months ago, but, unluckily, he did not attend it because he went to another meeting at Mr. Hart's; that fixes him.

824. As to these other gentlemen, did you see them? We were largely in touch with them before that.

825. The whole of them? Nearly all of them, for instance Mr. Burk.

826. How many shares has Mr. Burk? I cannot tell you—a hundred, speaking from memory.

827. Mr. Cameron was admitted as a member? Yes.

828. He is in your Bill as one of the promoters—how many shares does he hold in your company? I do not think he holds a share; he never held one, as far as my knowledge is concerned.

829. His name is unauthorised? No, he is not unauthorised; you appoint provisional directors without a share in every company that is floated.

830. You have not the authority of individual members? Yes; we have them.

831. You had Mr. Cameron's authority? Yes.

832. These other gentlemen do all this from patriotic motives? Yes.

833. Did Mr. Cameron's name appear with his authority? Yes, the project had his original authority, but he was not present, being unable to come.

834. The project had his authority? I am not responsible for putting his name there; I cannot give any definite statement as to Mr. Cameron.

JOHN T. McDONALD, *called in and examined.*

835. *By Mr. Hobkirk.*—Your name is John Turner McDonald? Yes.

836. You are partner in the firm of Salisbury and Company? Yes.

837. Are you a member of the company that has been formed for the purpose of constructing a railway to the West Coast silver-fields from Mole Creek? Yes.

838. Do you remember Mr. Sadler's notice to apply for a similar Bill to that which you apply for? Yes, I remember that.

839. Subsequent to that notice appearing, was there a meeting held of the company in which you are interested? Yes, on the same day.

840. On the same day? Yes.

841. It was Tuesday? Yes, it was Tuesday. At that meeting a small committee was appointed to interview Mr. Sadler and explain to him that this association being formed to build a railway, they were quite willing to withdraw if they were satisfied that his scheme would be carried out.

842. And who constituted this sub-committee? As a matter of fact, they did not act. They arranged one member of that committee should see Mr. Sadler.

843. And that member was yourself? Yes.

844. You saw Mr. Sadler and had an interview? Yes.

845. What took place between Mr. Sadler and yourself? The substance of the interview was, that I explained to him that the object of our association was practically the same as his. He said he was already aware of that.

846. How do you mean? He knew there was an association in existence. I think I am right in saying that.

847. Do you know that he was aware of that? That is my impression.

848. You explained to Mr. Sadler, you say, that an association was formed for the same purpose as his? Yes, but that the object of that association being to see a railway built, they were quite willing, if they were satisfied of his ability to carry out the scheme, to retire, and give him all the assistance they could. That point was made clear to him—that the object of the association was to get a railway built, and they did not care who did it. If they were satisfied that he was able to carry out the project to build the railway they were quite willing to stand aside and let his principals do it.

849. Well, what was Mr. Sadler's response to that? It was what I expected, that it was a matter of business, and that he did not care to show his hand.

850. Give us his words as far as possible? Those were practically his words, that it was a matter of business; he was asking for a Bill and expected to make a profit on the flotation of a company.

851. Did he say that? Certainly, that it was a matter of business to him, and it would be showing his hand to say who were his principals and what was their standing, and that therefore he declined to do it.

852. Was that all that took place between you and Mr. Sadler? At first Mr. Sadler seemed inclined, in confidence, to tell me who his principals were, and what was their standing, but on second thoughts he said he would require time to think over that.

853. Afterwards he said it was a matter of business out of which he expected to make a profit, and did not want to show his hand? Yes.

854. Did you understand that he distinctly refused to give you that information? Before the reply that he would think it over, he first said that he would tell me in confidence; I did not take him up at that moment, and later on when I spoke of it again he said, "I will think over that." Later on I said I would see him next day.

855. Did you see him next day? I saw him next day, and he did not give me the information; I understood him to say he would think the matter over.

856. Did he as a fact definitely refuse to give you the information? Yes, he did.

857. Did anything further take place between you and Mr. Sadler? Later on Mr. Sadler saw me again.

858. I mean on that Tuesday? Nothing further took place then.

859. I meant on that Tuesday. You know on the Tuesday a meeting was held at which it was decided to apply for a Bill. There was a meeting held to receive your report as to the nature of your interview with Mr. Sadler? I am not certain of the dates.

860. After the interview a meeting was held: did you report at that meeting what had taken place between you and Mr. Sadler? Yes.

861. What was decided at that meeting? It was decided as we were met in that way by Mr. Sadler there was nothing for it but to proceed.

862. Was it then decided to form a company? Yes.

863. Had you taken any active part in the direction of this business prior to the appearance of Mr. Sadler's notice? No; I was a member of the association, but I had not attended any of its meetings, but I came to that meeting, having been specially asked to do so.

864. You say you were a member of the association: what was the object of the association? To prepare the way for getting railway communication through to the West Coast.

865. As to what had taken place before that time, you know nothing? No, I know nothing.

866. *By Mr. Croft.*—You remember perfectly well Mr. Sadler's notice appearing in the Launceston papers? Yes.

867. Were you in Launceston at the time? Yes.

868. Was the first intimation you had of it gained through reading that paper in the morning, or was your attention drawn to it by some one else? From reading the paper.

869. I presume it was in the forenoon? Yes.

870. Had you acted with any association or syndicate prior to that, the object of which would be the obtaining of a railway from Mole Creek to the West Coast? Yes.

871. Had you any connection with any person or persons whose object was to obtain that railway? My name was on the list of the members of the association.

872. What association? I do not quite know the name of it. It was really an offshoot of the Launceston and West Coast Direct Route Association.

873. Was their object to get a road or something of that kind? Yes.

874. Not for a railway? That was the Direct Route Association; this was an offshoot. I am referring to the association that was in existence before that association was public.

875. You say you only went to one or two of their meetings? The first meeting I attended was on the day Mr. Sadler's advertisement appeared.

876. But there had been meetings before that, months before? I could not say.

877. You could not say? No, I only know that my first active connection with it was on the day that meeting was held.

878. What prompted you to go to that meeting? I was invited to attend the meeting.

879. By Mr. Hales? At his instance, I presume.

880. At his instance that meeting was held, where? At Martin and Hobkirk's.

881. At Martin and Hobkirk's office—then this notice of intention to apply of Mr. Sadler was discussed, I presume? Yes.

882. Did you know of any other company, or persons, prior to that time whose intention was to apply to Parliament for a bill to construct a railway, of your own knowledge? No, I simply know this association had that object in view. I did not know of any other notice.

883. What was the object in view—to get railway communication? Yes, railway communication.

884. Can you give that association a name? No, I could not, I presume Mr. Hales could give you the name.

885. No, he could not. Had that association taken any practical steps? Beyond meeting several times, and roughing out a programme, I do not think so.

886. Beyond a few meetings, they had done actually nothing as far as the public were concerned? As far as the public were concerned they had done nothing. I was a member of the association and I spent my money in it, I suppose, like everybody else.

887. This prospectus (produced) gives the names of the provisional directors—I presume your name is authorised to be there? Yes.

The Committee adjourned *sine die*.

APPENDIX A.

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly of Tasmania, in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of Charles Beaumont Barnes Grubb, Donald Norman Cameron, Charles Youl, James Francis Oliver Barelay, Thomas Gunn, Thomas Bourke, and Stuart Eardley-Wilmot,

SHEWETH :

1. That notice of the intention of your Petitioners to apply to the Parliament of Tasmania for leave to bring in a private Bill was published within three months previously to the presentation of this Petition, as follows, that is to say, in the *Hobart Gazette* on the fifth and twelfth days of October, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven; in the *Hobart Mercury*, being a public newspaper published in Hobart, in Tasmania, on the first and eighth days of October, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven; in the *Launceston Examiner*, being a public newspaper published in Launceston, in Tasmania, on the thirtieth day of September, and the seventh and fourteenth days of October, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven; in the *Daily Telegraph*, being a public newspaper published in Launceston aforesaid on the thirtieth day of September and the seventh and fourteenth days of October, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven; in the *Tasmanian Democrat*, being a public newspaper published in Launceston aforesaid on the first day of October, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven; in the *Zeehan and Dundas Herald*, being a public newspaper published at Zeehan, in Tasmania, on the eleventh day of October, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven; in the *Mount Lyell Standard*, being a public newspaper published in Queenstown, in Tasmania, on the ninth day of October, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven; in the *Monitor*, being a public newspaper published in Launceston aforesaid, on the first day of October, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven.

2. That the general objects of the said Bill are—

To enable the Petitioners to construct a railway from some point at or near the Mole Creek Station of the Chudleigh branch of the Tasmanian Railway Western Line to some point in the mining districts of Zeehan, Dundas, Queenstown, or Gormanston; and also such extensions and branches of and to such railway, or alterations, deviations, or variations thereof as may be authorised by the Parliament of Tasmania.

To construct, work, maintain, and repair the said railway, and all such extensions, branches, and deviations, together with all proper rails, crossings, bridges, culverts, tunnels, embankments, junctions, sidings, stations, buildings, piers, telegraphs, and other works and conveniences connected therewith or convenient for the purposes thereof.

To work the said railway by steam-power, or by use of electricity, or in any other manner.

To purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire, any land, timber, stone, or other material for the purposes of the said railway, and the works and appurtenances thereof; and to provide for the incorporation of "The Lands Clauses Act," (21 Vict. No. 11), or so much thereof as may be necessary for the said Bill, and otherwise for the acquisition of any such land, timber, stone, or other material.

To purchase, lease, or otherwise acquire lands and easements for mining purposes, and to carry on mining operations thereon, and to treat and dispose of the gold and minerals obtained thereby, and to sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of all or any of the lands or easements acquired for mining purposes, or of the right to mine thereon.

To construct and work the said railway and the said extensions, branches, and deviations over public roads and streets.

To demand and take tolls and charges for the carriage of passengers and goods upon such railways and the said extensions, branches, and deviations.

To provide for the due working and management of the said railway, and the said extensions, branches, deviations, and works; and to make by-laws and rules for the regulation of the said railway and the traffic and business thereof, and to provide for the infliction of penalties upon persons infringing the provisions of the said Bill, by-laws, or rules.

To borrow money for the purposes of the said undertaking upon security of the assets of the said undertaking or otherwise.

To give and obtain running powers over other railways and tramways.

To sell or lease the said railway and the said extensions, branches, and deviations, and the lands and works connected therewith, or any of them, or any part thereof, as shall be deemed expedient.

- To take water from the River Mackintosh, or any other source or sources of supply which may be available and capable of being used in connection with or for the purpose of supplying the towns, inhabitants, mines, and buildings in the Western and North-Western Mining Divisions of the Colony of Tasmania, and the said railway, with electrical and motive power, or water for motive power, or any other purpose whatsoever.
- To divert the course of any rivers, streams, or water-courses, returning the water to the original bed and course of the said river, stream, or water-course in as pure, unpolluted, and clean a state and condition as the same was in when so taken and diverted from the original bed or course of the said river, stream, or water-course, and to take and use the waters of any lake or other course of water supply whatsoever.
- To use the said water so taken as aforesaid to work any machinery that may be erected by the promoters, or any person or persons, company, corporation, association, or syndicate for the purpose of generating, transmitting, or producing motive-power, electricity, or any other power, or for the working of any other machinery whatsoever that may be erected by the promoters.
- To use the said water for any purpose whatsoever, provided that the same is not polluted, contaminated, or soiled in any way.
- To construct, maintain, repair, and work any machinery or mechanical contrivance for the purposes aforesaid.
- To provide for the construction of any waterworks, dams, drains, deviations, races, flumes, sluiceheads, and other necessary works or machinery to carry out the purposes aforesaid, or any of them.
- To provide for the assessment of all lands, buildings, or other property within the said Western and North-Western Mining Districts.
- To sell, supply, hire, or rent to any person or persons, company, corporation, association, or syndicate, motive-power, water-power, electricity, or any other power.
- To demand and take tolls, and levy rates and charges, for the use, supply, sale, hire, or rental of any motive-power, water-power, electricity, or any rights, privileges, and powers whatsoever.
- To make and construct mains, drains, conduit pipes, and run wires on poles or otherwise in, under, along, or across, through, over, or upon any street, path, right-of-way, or other passage the property of any person, company, corporation, association, syndicate, or municipal or other body, upon paying and giving them the proper compensation for the privileges aforesaid.
- To provide for the due working, protection, and management of the said machinery, works, deviation, races, flumes, sluices, and the making of by-laws and rules in connection or relation thereto, or for the infliction of penalties on persons infringing the provisions of the said Bill.
- To give, let, hire, or sell powers, rights, and privileges to any company, corporation, association, syndicate, or to any person or persons whatsoever, upon any terms whatsoever.
- To provide for the sale, exchange, lease, or disposition of the said machinery, works, flumes, races, sluices, and lands, or any other asset or assets belonging to the Petitioners, or belonging to any company, corporation, association, person or persons, or any assignee thereof, either to any Government, company, corporation, association, or any person or persons whatsoever, and for any consideration whatsoever, at such time and upon such terms as may be determined upon in the said Bill.
- The said Bill will also contain all clauses usual in Bills of a like nature, or deemed proper for enabling the Promoters to carry out the said works and undertakings, or any of them.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray for leave to introduce the said Bill.

Dated this fourteenth day of October, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven.

JAS. BARCLAY.
 THOMAS BOURKE.
 S. EARDLEY-WILMOT.

APPENDIX B.

*To the Honourable the Speaker and Honourable Members of the
House of Assembly of Tasmania, in Parliament assembled.*

The Petition of the undersigned Robert James Sadler, of Launceston, in Tasmania, Mining Agent,
RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH :

That he is opposed to a private Bill entitled "The Tasmanian Central and West Coast Railway Bill," and on the following grounds :—

- (a.) That prior to the introduction of the said Bill into the House of Assembly he, the said Robert James Sadler, had caused a private Bill dealing with the said subject to be introduced, entitled "The Great Midland and West Coast Railway Bill," and the Bill first introduced ought to receive the consideration which is due to priority.
- (b.) That the concessions asked in the Bill which he now opposes are so inadequate that it is impracticable to get a line constructed on the terms of the said Bill, and if the said Bill is passed it will endanger the prospects of the construction of a line under the Bill of the Petitioner.

Your Petitioner therefore prays that your Honourable House will protect his interests and cause due inquiry to be made, and that he may be heard by Counsel in opposition to the said Bill.

And your Petitioner will ever pray.

R. J. SADLER.