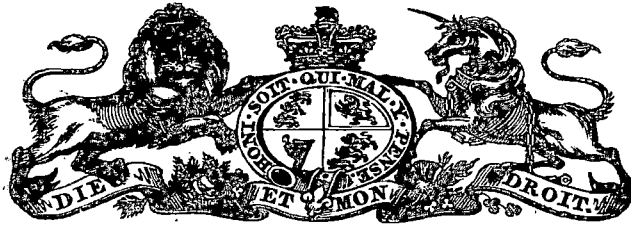


(No. 123.)



1890.

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA.

BRANCH RAILWAY TO CONNECT BEACONS-
FIELD WITH LAUNCESTON:

REPORT OF DEPUTY SURVEYOR-GENERAL ON
PROPOSED ROUTE.

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



Survey Department, 30th June, 1890.

SIR,

IN obedience to your instructions, I proceeded to Launceston on the 29th ult. to examine the routes proposed for a branch railway, from a point to be determined, between Longford and Westbury, on the Western Line, to Beaconsfield, or to connect the latter town by rail with Launceston by way of Glengarry, through the Parish of Bridgenorth, the Cormiston Estate, and across the South Esk River near the Cataract Bridge; and I have now the honor to submit to you my Report thereon.

Commencing at Wilmore's Lane on the Western Line, the route, as marked on the accompanying litho. chart, runs through agricultural farms varying from 100 to 300 acres (speaking in general terms) to Carrick. The distance is about six miles, and the country flat. The area in cultivation within two miles of this portion of the line is estimated at 10,000 acres, but it must be borne in mind that this estimate includes land up to the siding at Wilmore's Lane.

A bridge would be required across the River Liffey at Carrick, higher up the river than marked on chart. This would not be a very formidable piece of work if placed near the south-west corner of the Carrick Reserve, as the banks are sound and good.

The country is poor, but fairly level, from Carrick through the Silwood Estate to the Meander. The distance to the crossing of the river would be about two miles. The bridge over the Meander River at the proposed crossing, near the S.E. angle of 1260 acres granted to R. Dry, would require to be a considerable length, as the land is flat on the Silwood side of the river for some distance, whilst on the opposite side it is bold and comparatively high. It would, however, take a little time to ascertain the best site for a bridge, as some levels would have to be taken for comparison in different places. From the crossing of the Meander there is no difficulty in going almost anywhere along the route through the Westwood Estate. This property, lying to the north of the Meander, comprises some 15,000 acres, and was originally selected by the late R. Dry under location orders. More than half of this property would, I believe, be suitable for cultivation, and a considerable area is let in farms.

From Westwood through the Selborne estate the land is undulating to Rosevale, and of medium quality. I estimate the distance at five miles. Much of this land would be cultivated if brought within easy access of a railway. At present there are only some 2000 acres under cultivation.

From Rosevale towards Paling Flat the first three miles of the line as sketched is through very broken country, through which it would take some time to decide upon the best route. I am, however, convinced that a railway could be taken to the east of a range of hills running northerly from Rosevale, and at no great distance from where the road leading to Glengarry is located. Such a line would, of course, cut off the Frankford Settlement from the advantages of the railway; but, if the above section of the line should prove to be practicable, there is still a considerable difficulty in the way of reaching Paling Flat from the opposite direction, the extent of which difficulty can only be determined by actual results in taking the correct levels, as the fall thence to the lower lying land in Glengarry, distant about two and half miles, is 450 feet as recorded by my aneroid. As these are the only two places along this or the Westbury route that present any serious impediments to railway construction, and, if impracticable, will at once dispense with the necessity for a further examination of the latter, I therefore directed Mr. Lord (to whom the flying survey is entrusted) to take such levels as will enable him to decide this question at the outset, and thus, perhaps, save time and expense.

From Glengarry the route to be taken is unquestionably *via* the "Blue Tier," and I think may be taken pretty well as sketched on the chart; but if a further examination of the country should prove the same to be impracticable, a line could be taken over very easy gradients by keeping

round to the S.E. end of the "Blue Tier" without largely increasing the distance to Beaconsfield, and thence to deep water on the Tamar at Beauty Point, Ilfracombe. A station at or near the junction of the Glengarry and Winkleigh roads would serve the Winkleigh people.

The route from Beaconsfield to Launceston through Winkleigh and Glengarry (as marked on the chart), and thence through the Parishes of Bridgenorth, Ecclestone, and Stanley, is one that would require to be carefully examined, as there are probably some difficulties to be got over towards the Launceston end. I did not deem it necessary to go over this section, which will be traversed by Mr. Lord. The portion towards Glengarry lies through fairly easy country.

In regard to the different settlements throughout the course of the proposed railway, I desire to remark that they embrace almost all the good land in the whole district, the Crown land remaining being generally of a very inferior nature.

The Winkleigh Settlement (near the route), which for the purposes of this report may be said to include what is known locally as the Silver Mines, the Supply River, and Flowery Gully, comprising some 7000 acres, in say 50 lots, is assessed at an annual value of £1231, and Glengarry, 2909 acres, in 32 lots, at £315.

Rosevale, including Piper's Lagoon and part of Bridgenorth, say 7439 acres, in 30 lots, at £604.

Silwood, Westwood, and Spring Lands, 28 184 acres (in large areas), at £3353.

Frankford, Black Sugarloaf, and Selborne, 18,835 acres, at £1730.

These figures might be subject to corrections here and there, but they will be found sufficiently accurate for the purpose of conveying a general idea of the traffic that might be expected to support a railway through that portion of the country to which they refer. It is not necessary that I should make any further reference to the properties to the south of the Meander River, as they are already served by the railway or the main road to Launceston; by which I believe produce can be conveyed from Carrick at a lower rate than by rail if the line were constructed, the price from Carrick to Launceston by road being, I believe, 5s. per ton. At the same time, there is little doubt that if the railway proposed were running it would absorb the general traffic.

The shipping-place for the produce raised in the locality of Glengarry is near Stony Creek, on the Tamar, which may be estimated at six miles from the centre of the settlement. The distance by water thence to Launceston is about 13 miles. The Frankford Settlement is some 15 miles from Westbury, and may be estimated at 11 miles from Beaconsfield by the present road.

The estimated distance of the proposed route from Wilmore's Lane to Ilfracombe may be set down at 37 miles; from Westbury (if practicable), at 26 miles; and from Launceston to the same place, *via* the Cataract Bridge and Glengarry, at 30 miles. The estimated distance from Ilfracombe to Launceston by water is 30 miles.

Although my journey through the district was to some extent a hurried one, and the weather was most unfavourable, it enabled me to indicate the most practicable route, and to judge of what would be necessary in order to test the difficult sections leading to and from Tailing Flat.

The accompanying chart shows approximately the alterations that would be likely to prove necessary in locating the line.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your very obedient Servant,

E. A. COUNSEL, *Deputy Surveyor-General.*

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.

