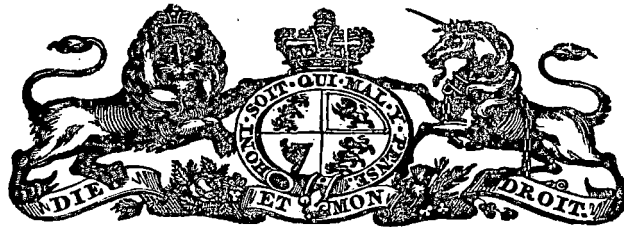


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1873.

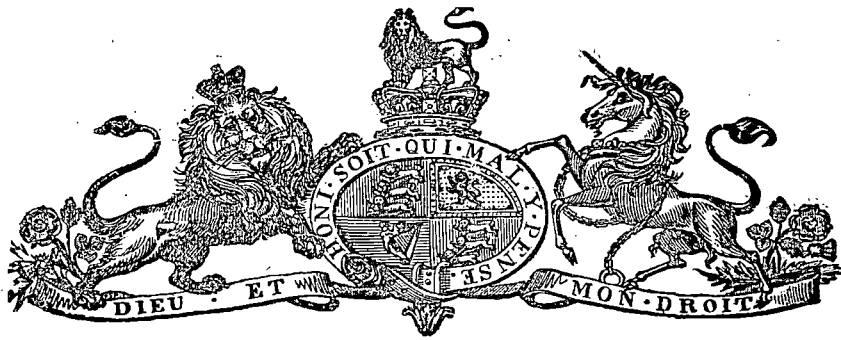
TASMANIA.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

MERSEY AND DELORAINE TRAMWAY.

MR. TIDY'S REPORT.

Laid upon the Table by the Minister of Lands and Works, and ordered by the House to be printed, June 24, 1873.



Launceston, 21st March, 1873.

DEAR SIR,

ACTING on your instructions I have been over the Mersey and Deloraine Tramway; and beg to submit my views on its construction, present state of repairs, and probable cost to put it in a fit state for traffic, &c.

The present terminus should be extended to the Jetty, a distance of 32 chains. The cost of this, including earthworks, sleepers, rails, chairs, spikes, &c., would be about £800. This, in my opinion, should be one of the first things done. The present terminus adding greatly to the cost of transit, besides the inconvenience to the sender, goods that are likely to patronise the Line, such as grain and timber, should go on to the shipping-place direct. This need not interfere with the present Station site.

The Bridges Nos. 1 and 2 over the Latrobe are of the same design, and in regard to repair appear to be about equal. The longitudinal beams carrying the permanent way will have to be taken out and dressed over. The shrinkage has been very irregular, owing no doubt to the timber being put in green; this, with the addition of a few extra bolts and old bolts screwed up, would put them in good order, and likely to last for many years. I consider the design a good one, both as regards strength and durability. The flood-opening, and bridges over the different creeks and water-courses, are all of the same design. I examined the one at Caroline Creek. The longitudinal timber will have to be dressed over—not from any fault of construction—but from uneven shrinkage; the structure itself appears to be in good order and likely to last with ordinary attention.

The Cuttings, with the exception of two small ones at about 16 miles 65 chains, are standing very well indeed: these two would require to be taken to a flatter slope, but being small the expense would be but little.

The Sleepers are split, and appear to be in good order and of good size, and for a light line will answer the purpose well; as they decay they can be replaced at a much less cost than sawn stuff.

There are a few places on the Line requiring more ballast, owing, I presume, to subsidence of banks.

The banks appear to stand well. It will be necessary, in my opinion, on some of the banks to put in a few more sleepers—the sleepers at present are three feet from centre to centre. This will do on good ground (with the present rolling stock), but on banks in wet weather will hardly prove sufficient; an extra sleeper on every rail length over banks or soft ground will make the line much more secure.

Mr. Oldham informs me the Line has been closed since April last, and there has been no one employed on the repairs since that date: taking this into consideration the Line is in much better order than I would expect. If this Line is put in order I am satisfied it is capable of doing all the traffic required for many years to come; and I consider the Line well laid out, and not likely to be expensive to keep in repair.

I was informed on the ground at the coal pit, where cropping out of the surface, that bores had been made a distance of 42 chains,—at the latter distance the bore struck coal at a depth of 90 feet: at this depth coal should be delivered into the trucks at 8s. per ton,—this itself should give a good return.

I must say from all I had heard of the Mersey and Deloraine Tramway, I expected to have found it a very poor affair; but I am satisfied if it was finished to Deloraine, and extended to the

jetty at Latrobe, it would increase the returns of the Launceston and Western Railway materially ; and I consider the Mersey Tramway a very good and serviceable light line, and fully equal to a large traffic with light rolling stock.

The Line could be repaired and put in good running order for about £500.

I have the honor to be,
Your obedient Servant,

THOS. TIDY..

The Hon. the Minister of Lands and Works.